Preface

This study of certain mutual interests of Abraham Lincoln and Charles Darwin argues that they had surprisingly similar values, purposes, and approaches. It is not a dual biography, although it does trace the somewhat parallel development of the two men and their perspectives mainly in chronological order—except in the introduction, which uses a particular point in their lives to bring forward the subtitled themes regarding the mid-nineteenth-century collision between science and abolitionism. Lincoln and Darwin had no family link, did not share a common profession, were not rivals, came from very different backgrounds, and never met or even visited each other's country. They did not directly influence each other's views, yet they shared certain ideas that actually set them apart from most of their contemporaries. Of course, some contemporaries—and predecessors—did endorse ideas similar to theirs, providing a "common context" that must not be ignored.[1] However, Lincoln and Darwin were not running with the pack but were ahead of it, and they managed to draw it along a path it might not otherwise have chosen (or at least not so soon). When we recognize that Lincoln and Darwin were both leading society toward greater freedom of thought and a greater acceptance of human equality, we begin to understand the debt we owe them.

Lincoln and Darwin could not have been more "contemporary," having been born on the same day, a link significant only for an astrologer, which I am not. My interest in each man had separate origins: the first biography I can remember reading as a boy was of Lincoln, and my fascination with him has never ceased, while my curiosity about Darwin developed only a dozen years ago.

In 2005, a study collated surveys in thirty-four countries where people were asked to respond "true," "false," or "not sure" to the statement "Human beings, as we know them, developed from earlier species of animals." Of those surveyed in the United States, 39 percent answered "false," and the only country with a larger percentage was Turkey (51 percent).[2] Turkey was the only Muslim country in this study, but it was included in a later study of six Muslim countries that indicated that most were even less accepting of human evolution than Turkey, "one of the most educated and secular of Muslim countries."[3] For a quarter of a century, I have taught in an international school in Britain where half of my (highly affluent) students come from America and another large group from Islamic countries. A significant minority of students from these two groups has been raised to accept a religious rather than a scientific view of the origins of mankind, and a few have been openly hostile toward Darwin—while knowing little about him. While endeavoring to learn more about Darwin and about creationism, I increasingly became aware that certain values and interests of

Darwin overlapped those of Lincoln, and this awareness in turn made me wish to examine Lincoln in a new light.

I began serious research about 2001, thinking I might easily produce a small book in time to cash in on the 2009 bicentenary of their births. However, relevant material proved far more abundant than I had expected, partly thanks to the digitization of Lincoln's and Darwin's writings. In the spring of 2008, as I was completing my rough draft, David R. Contosta published *Rebel Giants: The Revolutionary Lives of Abraham Lincoln and Charles Darwin*, which, ultimately, did not explore the topics that interested me and only strengthened my feeling that a brief dual biography was not the best approach to these men and their ideas. Another study, Adam Gopnik's *Angels and Ages: A Short Book about Darwin, Lincoln, and Modern Life*, appeared just before the 2009 bicentenary, but the main focus of this brief work was on the two men's literary qualities. Dozens of other books about Lincoln or Darwin individually appeared at this same time, and two works particularly overlapped my own interests. Darwin scholars Adrian Desmond and James Moore produced an excellent book-length treatment of the influence of Darwin's abolitionism, *Darwin's Sacred Cause: Race, Slavery, and the Quest for Human Origins*.[4] And Jason Emerson's brief but well-researched *Lincoln the Inventor* touches on some issues that appear in this book.

When comparing any two men from roughly the same period who lived in radically different and rapidly changing environments, a good "Darwinian" would note divergent adaptations that might prove instructive. However, in the present case, the test is certainly skewed by the fact that Lincoln and Darwin were not "any two men" but extraordinary figures of the nineteenth century whose impact continues to the present day. Excellent biographies exist for each—all the less reason for a dual biography. It is frequently remarked that in America, annually, only Jesus has more books published about him than Abraham Lincoln; while Darwin has the rare distinction among scientists of never becoming obsolete: his texts are still *in print* a century and a half after he wrote them, and Darwinism shows no signs of being eclipsed by some new "ism." Measured by any standard of greatness—even down to having one's bearded face on one's national currency—the iconic status of Lincoln and Darwin is confirmed. Yet the fact that they achieved their greatness in very different professions has distracted us from an important point regarding similarities of character that helped to fashion those achievements.

Lincoln, the self-educated lawyer, the brilliant statesman, the Great Emancipator, was also fascinated by science, something rarely mentioned by biographers because he seemingly achieved nothing in that field—except the distinction of being the only president to have obtained a U.S. patent. Before Emerson's recent work, the book that came closest to elaborating Lincoln's scientific interests was Robert V. Bruce's *Lincoln and the Tools of War*, although this excellent work, now half a century old, concentrates mainly on Lincoln's concerns (as commander-in-chief during the Civil War) regarding innovative armaments. Darwin, the brilliant theorist who was also imaginative in experimentation and masterful at marshalling evidence, was probably not fully aware himself of how much his research was driven by his deep-seated loathing of slavery, as Desmond and Moore have shown. I try to carry further the story of how Darwin's abolitionism influenced his relationships with other naturalists and his treatment of issues and evidence that arose specifically out of the conflict in America over slavery.

The general public knows little about Darwin's hatred of slavery and less about Lincoln's scientific interests, yet an understanding of these can offer new perspectives on the choices and decisions of these men. The abhorrence felt by Lincoln and Darwin toward the rise of what eventually came to be known as "scientific racism" fueled their opposition to two proponents of that view: Lincoln's great political foe Stephen A. Douglas and Darwin's most influential rival (and America's best-known scientist in the mid-nineteenth century), Louis Agassiz.

Although shaped by vastly different environments, Lincoln and Darwin developed similar views on the clash between rationality and religion, views alien to the mass of their contemporaries. However, both took deliberate steps to avoid causing unnecessary offense, and by the time of their deaths, Lincoln was viewed with quasi-religious awe and Darwin with something close to reverence.

I believe that many people, especially in America, who are inclined to reject natural selection and even to demonize Charles Darwin probably at the same time revere Abraham Lincoln. They might dismiss my view that significant parallels exist in the thoughts and values of the two men, yet I would like to convince such people that if they admire Lincoln's intelligence and humanity in fighting the greatest evil of his time, they should also admire Darwin for similar reasons. And if they would denigrate Darwin's rationalism and materialism as reflecting an unwholesome rejection of religious beliefs, then they are in for a shock when they look more closely at Lincoln's attitude toward conventional religion. In a nutshell, if one of these men is great, then so is the other and for similar reasons.

The controversies surrounding these two giants of the nineteenth century are not fading. The recent bicentenary celebrations dwarfed those of a century ago, when some old men still survived who could speak of their personal acquaintance with Lincoln or Darwin. And a few of those who commemorated that first centenary may even have been old enough to recall that half a century earlier, neither Lincoln nor Darwin had yet—at the age of fifty—achieved enough to make anyone think either one was destined for greatness.

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Lincoln & Darwin

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Introduction

A man reaching his fiftieth year is more certain than he was at forty that he now possesses more past than future. After weighing his half century of achievements against the narrowing prospect of attaining any more, he might accept that his unfulfilled dreams will remain so and narrow his interests to the comforts of family and friends. Abraham Lincoln and Charles Darwin, upon reaching the age of fifty, each understood that following his own demise and that of surviving family and friends, he would be largely forgotten. It was a fate both men fought against, and, as it happened, within two years both achieved lasting fame. One published the results of two decades of the most far-reaching and contentious scientific research; the other was elected to the highest office in a country that then fell into civil war. Each met great opposition and overcame it to leave a mark still visible and highly controversial a century and a half later.

Charles Darwin on his fiftieth birthday, 12 February 1859, was not with his wife and seven children at their charming home in the Kent village of Downe but was fifty miles away, in Moor Park, Surrey, undergoing a "water cure" at Dr. Edward Lane's hydrotherapy establishment.[1] Ill health had plagued Darwin for years, so the fear of impending death was nothing new. He had long since arranged that what he considered his most important work might yet be given to the world in some form in the event of his early demise. For over twenty years, he had delayed publishing his particular theory—that species came into existence not through God's creative power but through the transmutation of previously existing species by means of natural selection. He knew this would cause great controversy, yet it was not fear of this that made Darwin delay but his keen desire to marshal substantial evidence to support his theory, a process requiring vast reading, consultation with specialists, and even experimentation.[2]

Eight months earlier, in June 1858, that slow effort of gathering and organizing data was suddenly accelerated as ambition—a desire for a certain type of immortality—overwhelmed him. Darwin was thunderstruck to learn that fellow naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace, living on the other side of the globe, had reached conclusions quite similar to his own regarding the mutability of species. Without doing any injustice to his colleague, Darwin was now determined to bring forth his theory, and he was laboring to produce a book, not as large as the multivolume work he had already begun writing yet more extensive than the earlier sketches shown only to a select few.

Until mid-August 1858, death and illness in his family kept Darwin from his work, but during the following six months, the intensive effort to produce a single-volume "abstract" affected his own health so severely that he was too ill to attend the February meeting of the Geological Society that awarded him the much-coveted Wollaston Medal for his many past contributions to geological science. So Darwin was at Moor Park on his fiftieth birthday, the single record of which is a brief letter to his cousin William Darwin Fox, a country parson with a passion for natural history who had trained at Cambridge back when Darwin was there thinking he, too, might become a clergyman.

> I have been extra bad of late, with the old severe vomiting rather often & much distressing swimming of the head; I have been here a week & shall stay another & it has already done me good. . . . My abstract is the cause, I believe, of the main part of the ills to which my flesh is heir to; but I have only two or more chapters & to correct all, & then I shall be a comparatively free man. I have had the great satisfaction of converting Hooker & I believe Huxley & I think Lyell is much staggered.[3]

The abstract was, of course, *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, and Darwin was struggling to reduce his mass of evidence to a single five-hundred-page volume. Had Wallace not forced his hand, he might well have taken several more years to finish his multivolume study. Instead, he spent his fiftieth birthday regretting that he was ill, away from his family, and still two chapters short of completing a lesser work.

After rushing to boil down two decades' research, Darwin suddenly found it difficult to compose the book's ending. A month after his birthday and back at home, Darwin noted in his journal "finished last chapter." A fortnight later, the last chapter was "not even fully written out," and after another two months, he had "now written half." Four days later, Darwin finished—and immediately suffered a physical collapse that sent him back to Moor Park for another week's water cure before he could begin checking proofs.[4]

Despite, or because of, that agonized effort, the last paragraph of *The Origin* achieved an eloquence rivaling some of Abraham Lincoln's finest speeches:

> It is interesting to contemplate an entangled bank, clothed with many plants of many kinds, with birds singing on the bushes, with various insects flitting about, and with worms crawling through the damp earth, and to reflect that these elaborately constructed forms, so different from each other, and depen-

> dent on each other in so complex a manner, have all been produced by laws acting around us. These laws, taken in the largest sense, being Growth with Reproduction; inheritance which is almost implied by reproduction; Variability from the indirect and direct action of the external conditions of life, and from use and disuse; a Ratio of Increase so high as to lead to a Struggle for Life, and as a consequence to Natural Selection, entailing Divergence of Character and the Extinction of less-improved forms. Thus, from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, directly follows. There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved.[5]

That last word, "evolved," is the closest Darwin came in *The Origin* to using the term most often associated with his name, "evolution," a word not then possessing its modern meaning. Darwin instead used terms such as "development" or "transmutation" for the broad notion of changing species and phrases like "descent with modification" and "natural selection" to describe the mechanism of that change.[6] Darwin discussed how species *change*, not how—from nothing—the *first species* came into existence or whether "species" would then be plural or singular. Darwin equivocated, saying vaguely, with a biblical echo, that "life" was in some way "originally breathed into a few forms or into one."

Darwin endeavored to leave God out of the discussion. He was pursuing scientific truth, not trying to assist those who attacked the majority's belief that God had designed the universe. Yet, he also hoped the weight of his evidence might protect him against that majority's wrath. Darwin's purpose was to show how natural selection worked, not how it began or how it, in one sense, ended: with man. The book contained only two references to man, one frequently quoted, the other not (but discussed further below). The former is on the third page from the end, after Darwin had filled over four hundred pages discussing a myriad of *other* species: "In the distant future I see open fields for far more important researches. . . . Light will be thrown on the origin of man and his history."

Avoiding natural selection's beginning and ending did not prevent those concepts from seizing the popular imagination, causing great controversies that swirl to the present day. Yet Darwin left out God and man for separate reasons. Logically, although God might have created natural selection, he was not necessary to its ongoing operation. Darwin saw no way to collect data about God's creative activity, and the issue was fraught with other difficulties, social, familial, and personal. Regarding man, Darwin's premise was that natural selection applied to him if it applied at all; and there was more information on man than any other species—yet, when still working on his multivolume study (and before they knew of each other's theories), Darwin told Wallace in December 1857, "You ask whether I shall discuss 'man.' I think I shall avoid [the] whole subject, as so surrounded with prejudices; though I fully admit that it is the highest & most interesting problem for the naturalist."[7]

Although *The Origin* gave no direct account of man, everyone assumed it did: "man-descended-from-apes" was the theme of most reviews and subsequent debates. Darwin eventually produced two books that did focus on man, and throughout Darwin's earlier research the subject of man was always as important as his beloved beetles, the tortoises, mockingbirds, and barnacles. However, Darwin never mused on "man's fate" or asked, "Why are we here?" Even the more objective question, "Who are we?" became a matter of taxonomy: "*What* are we?" One important version of that question—one that motivated much of Darwin's research—had been made famous by Darwin's grandfathers before he was born. It involved the image of a black slave, kneeling and in chains, around whom was inscribed the question "Am I not a man and a brother?"

Darwin's family was committed to the abolition of slavery, and his scientific work became his contribution. Although Darwin deliberately challenged explanations of the natural world he found untenable, he also mounted an attack on the growing body of opinion, both popular and scientific, that theorized that slavery was somehow "natural" because, after all, black Africans were clearly not like "us." In *The Origin*, Darwin implies and in later works argues explicitly that man is part of the animal kingdom, and just as men share ancestors with other species, the human races have a common ancestor—though it was not Adam as many others in the antislavery movement were inclined to believe.[8]

The Origin did not discuss "negroes" or any particular human racial group; however, Darwin's second (and less frequently quoted) reference to "man" is this: "I may add that some little light can apparently be thrown on the origin of . . . the differences between the races of man, which are so strongly marked [and caused] chiefly through sexual selection of a particular kind." He hastened to add, "But without here entering on copious details my reasoning would appear frivolous." Darwin thus hinted at his deep concern with the common ancestry of human racial groups.[9]

Those details were later presented in *Descent of Man*, yet the topic was just below the surface in *The Origin*. In the book's full title, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, "races," of course, was another way of saying "varieties," applicable to plants and animals as well as man. For many of Darwin's contemporaries, the phrase "favoured races" might conjure images not only of man but particularly of white men; however, Darwin had bitter experience of the way natives in Latin America, New Zealand, and Australia suffered at the hands of more "civilised" races, and he had no wish to justify any exploitative colonial practices and was revolted by arguments that slavery was somehow "natural." For this reason, Darwin was greatly disturbed when he saw with his own eyes for the first time an example of animal behavior that suggested slavery might in some sense be "natural."

During an earlier sojourn at Moor Park in April 1858, when Darwin was supposed to be resting and reading novels, his habit of observation caused him during one of his walks to notice a rare type of ant, *Formica sanguinea* (or *rufescens*) the "slave-making" ant, and its "slave" *Formica nigra*. For over a decade, the cruel habits of these "African" ants had appeared in naturalist literature and had even been used to "justify" human behavior, before entomologist Frederick Smith first discovered such ants in England itself in 1854. It was to Smith that Darwin had recently sent enquiries, but now seeing these particular ants himself caused Darwin to mention them in letters, record his observations and experiments, and use this information in the massive work he was then still writing. A year later, when reducing this work to create *The Origin*, Darwin actually expanded his account of the slave-making ant.[10]

According to biographer Janet Browne, Darwin's "understanding of these biological relationships was probably influenced by his former colonial experiences. Recalling the horrors he encountered in South America, he regarded the red ants' behavior as enslavement rather than any comparable social structure such as symbiosis or co-operation." By writing "slavery" rather than "symbiosis," Darwin simply used the terms employed by earlier naturalists, yet Browne is certainly right that Darwin "felt very uncomfortable providing biological parallels for human practices he found abhorrent."[11] Darwin admitted approaching the subject "in a sceptical frame of mind, as any one may well be excused for doubting the truth of so extraordinary and odious an instinct as that of making slaves." He began humbly enough—"By what steps the instinct of *F. sanguinea* originated I will not pretend to conjecture"—but then *did* conjecture that natural selection could explain such an "odious" instinct. Various species of ants feed off the pupae of other species of ant; some develop the useful modification of stealing and storing those pupae; as a next step, some might discover their looted pupae hatching before they had been eaten and put the hatched alien ant to work just like every other ant in the colony; from there it could be a short step to stealing pupae precisely for the future labor rather than for nutrition.

Darwin concluded, "I can see no difficulty in natural selection increasing and modifying the [slave-making] instinct—*always supposing each modification to be of use to the species*—until an ant was formed as abjectly dependent on its slaves as is the *Formica rufescens*" (emphasis added).[12] Here is the implied contrast between ant slave-making and human slavery: one species of ant enslaved a different species of ant, but man enslaved other men, so human slavery is not something of use *to the whole species*. Moreover, in no other case did Darwin declare that a modification made a species "abjectly dependent," but perhaps the phrase reflected his low opinion of plantation owners. In any case, Darwin dismissed any idea that this animal behavior might somehow justify human slavery as "natural."

Although *The Origin* made no direct reference to human slavery and only brief references to man and human races, all three subjects frequently appeared in Darwin's early notebooks made between 1837 and 1840.[13] Fourteen years before writing *The Origin*, Darwin had published vivid expressions of his loathing for human slavery. As Darwin spent his fiftieth birthday at Moor Park trying to finish off the last chapters of *The Origin* and wandering around the familiar grounds, the slave-making ants he had first seen there a year earlier were still on his mind.[14]

Darwin is far less famous than Lincoln for his abhorrence of "slave-making." The Great Emancipator terminated the foulest evil in the American states although half of them had previously permitted slavery, including Lincoln's native state. He once said that he had always felt that if slavery was not evil, nothing was evil, yet his early political career had not been focused on slavery. However, in his fiftieth year, Lincoln was aware that over the previous five years, his various political campaigns had been entirely devoted to that issue.

To preserve national unity, compromises at every political crossroads since the onset of the War of Independence had allowed the continued existence of slavery, which in the 1850s had become the defining political topic. The Republican Party had recently arisen to address the issue ignored by the older parties, and Lincoln had raised himself up from his origins in frontier poverty to become the leader of the Republican Party in his adopted state of Illinois. Through an extraordinary process of self-education, Lincoln had turned himself into a successful lawyer and politician, serving four terms in the Illinois state legislature before spending one term in the U.S. House of Representatives. Twice in the last three years, 1856 and 1858, Lincoln had tried to win a seat in the U.S. Senate, and he reached his half century three months after his second defeat. Although his recent campaign debates with the victor, Stephen A. Douglas, had brought Lincoln much acclaim even beyond Illinois' borders, shortly after that defeat Lincoln wrote to a friend, "Though I now sink out of view, and shall be forgotten, I believe I have made some marks which will tell for the cause of civil liberty long after I am gone"—a consoling thought clearly outweighed by disappointment.[15]

Having failed twice to win a U.S. Senate seat, Lincoln also saw no prospect of winning Illinois' governorship and had no desire to return either to the state legislature or the House of Representatives. The 1860 presidential election was less than two years away, but the Democrats would almost certainly nominate the man who had just beaten Lincoln, and plenty of Republican officeholders back east had greater claims to the party's nomination than the prairie lawyer. The next senatorial election in Illinois was three years away, but the incumbent was a friend Lincoln had helped to elect, while Douglas's seat—unless Douglas was elected president in the meantime—was now safe until 1864. Lincoln was justified in thinking he himself might be all but forgotten by then. A month after his latest defeat, Lincoln wrote to another friend “merely to let you know that I am neither dead nor dying.”[16]

Lincoln might have felt tempted to accept that his political career was over and that he should now devote himself to his legal practice and to his wife, Mary, and their three sons. Resuming legal work would restore depleted funds and take Lincoln’s mind off his lack of political prospects. Some historians have even perceived an attempted career shift, from lawyer/politician to lawyer/lecturer. The lyceums, young men’s clubs, and debating societies provided a ready market for touring lecturers who offered information along with entertainment. Lincoln admired lecturers, possessed broad interests, enjoyed research, and was a highly experienced public speaker with a notorious sense of humor. However, Lincoln only dipped his toe, rather than plunged, into the lecture circuit, beginning in April 1858, a few months before his last senate race—not, therefore, a result of his defeat. It was hardly a new career, lasting only two years (until Lincoln became preoccupied with his presidential bid) and consisting of delivering pretty much the same lecture on five or six occasions, two of them near his fiftieth birthday. Lecturing helped keep Lincoln’s name before the public, but his lecture did not greatly impress many who heard it at the time, and few scholars, until recently, have seen much value in it. However, it was about a topic that Darwin, had he for some reason travelled four thousand miles to be in the audience, would have been able to appreciate—even amid the muddle of examples, political asides, and jokes. Lincoln’s subject was the nature of man.[17]

We know exactly where Charles Darwin was on that shared birthday, but we have no record of Lincoln’s activity. It was formerly thought that Lincoln spent part of that day on a forty-mile train journey home after delivering his lecture the previous evening in Jacksonville, Illinois, but Wayne C. Temple’s research demonstrates that that lecture took place a week earlier, and it was delivered again just over a week later, this time in Lincoln’s hometown, the Illinois capital, Springfield.[18] The very first delivery had occurred ten months earlier, and the last would take place fourteen months later. Only the last couple of deliveries drew large audiences because of Lincoln’s rising political status. Three weeks after presenting his lecture for the last time—and in no way because of it—Lincoln was nominated for the presidency. Friendly newspapers gave glowing reports of the lecture (or chided readers for meager attendances), while others shared the view of one listener who wrote, “I think people generally were disappointed in his lecture as it was on no particular subject and not well connected,” adding that if Lincoln had stuck to politics, “he would have done justice to his subject.”[19] Lincoln’s law partner and later biographer, William Herndon, wrote that the lecture “was a lifeless thing . . . no spirit and no life. The whole thing was a kind of farce and injured Mr. L.’s reputation as a man of sense among his friends and enemies.”[20] Shortly before the last delivery, Lincoln himself wrote, “I am not a professional lecturer. Have never got up but one lecture; and that I think, a rather poor one."[21] He left a manuscript of the lecture with other loose papers in the care of his wife's cousin before departing for the White House, where he later said, "When I get out of this place I'll finish it up and get my friend [Noah] B[rooks] to print it somewhere."[22]

Death intervened, and the manuscript was divided between two private collections and later published as two separate lectures. Thus mangled, considered nonpolitical, and doing little for Lincoln's reputation anyway, the lecture was ignored until recent decades when scholars began to explore the material, especially after Temple demonstrated that the two lectures were really one.[23]

The manuscript's division probably resulted from the fact that one half *seems* different from the other.[24] Temple suggested that Lincoln wrote it in sections because his legal practice interrupted. Perhaps Lincoln simply rewrote parts: a newspaper account of the lecture's first delivery mentioned topics not in the existing text and ignored others that are. The lecture's second delivery—shortly before his fiftieth birthday—came ten months after the first and also three months after his second senatorial defeat, so he had plenty of spare time for revision.

The lecture, variously titled as "Inventions," "Inventions and Discoveries," and "Discoveries and Inventions," seems to have several themes, most of them ostensibly nonpolitical. Much in the lecture would have interested, or at least amused, Lincoln's contemporary Charles Darwin. Just as Lincoln would have been fascinated to learn of this English gentleman's abhorrence of slavery, Darwin would have been surprised by this frontiersman's curious fascination with science and technology. Probably few who attended the lectures on "Inventions" knew that the speaker had actually taken out a U.S. patent a decade earlier.[25]

Although the lecture had gained Lincoln no obvious financial or political benefit from his unimpressed audiences, he was probably not joking when he later said he planned to "finish" the piece someday. Historian Jason Emerson recently discovered that Lincoln's son Robert knew of a copy of the lecture that his father had carefully written out in a blank book bound with a black cover, and this version may have included some material mentioned in contemporary newspaper accounts but not appearing in the existing fragments.[26] Lincoln may indeed have had future publication in mind—for a lecture that, until recently, was largely dismissed by historians. So what made Lincoln compose this lecture in the first place?

In 1855, Lincoln was riding the Eighth Circuit with two other lawyers, all taking turns reading aloud a lecture entitled "The Necessity, the Reality, and the Promise of the Progress of the Human Race," which George Bancroft had delivered to the New York Historical Society a year earlier. One of the lawyers, Henry D. Whitney, reported that Lincoln informed them "that he had for some time been contemplating the writing of a lecture on *man*; he said he proposed to review man from his earliest primeval state to his present high development, and he detailed at length the views and opinions he designed to incorporate in his lecture" (original emphasis).[27]

At some time Lincoln acquired a copy of Bancroft's lecture.[28] However, Lincoln did not seek to "imitate" Bancroft, as Garry Wills suggests, but rather to refute Bancroft's emphases.[29] Whitney's account indicated that Lincoln had *already* thought a great deal on "man and his progress" and discussed how *he* would approach it—differently from Bancroft.

Other accounts of the origins of Lincoln's lecture do not mention Bancroft. Noah Brooks, a journalist and friend, recalled Lincoln saying in 1865 that his lecture "was not defined, but his purpose was to analyze inventions and discoveries—'to get at the bottom of things'—and to show when, where, how, and why such things were invented or discovered; and, so far as possible, to find where the first mention is made of some of our common things," showing "at least in a fanciful way, that all the modern inventions were known centuries ago."[30] A third source, the wife of Lincoln's fellow lawyer and political ally Norman Judd, said Lincoln and a friend once discussed "the relative age of the discovery and use of the precious metals [after which] he went to the Bible to satisfy himself and became so interested in his researches that he made memoranda of the different discoveries and inventions." Lincoln became "convinced . . . that the subject would interest others, and he therefore prepared and delivered his lecture on The Age of Different Inventions."[31]

That the lecture possibly started off as one thing and became several others perhaps explains its lack of coherence—or even a straightforward title. Mrs. Judd's reference to "precious metals" rings true, for Lincoln had a particular interest in geology (discussed later), and the lecture actually began with the line, "All creation is a mine, and every man, a miner."[32]

Man, Lincoln declared, has had to "dig out his destiny," a characteristic distinguishing him from the animal kingdom. "Man is not the only animal who labors; but he is the only one who *improves* his workmanship." Darwin might have been impressed when Lincoln, giving several examples of industrious but nonimproving animals, mentioned ants! Lincoln went on to say that man improves his workmanship through "discoveries and inventions." While Lincoln could admire many points in Bancroft's lecture (especially the stress on the unity of mankind), Bancroft's examples of human workmanship were rather parochial—though fitting the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the New York Historical Society, for Bancroft had emphasized inventions of the last half century (especially contributions by such NYHS members as Robert Fulton). Although Lincoln sought the *origins* of inventions—not Fulton's steamboat but the earliest use of steam power—he actually explored the very concept of invention and what it says about man. Unlike Bancroft, who depicted God as aiding man in his progress, Lincoln subtly argued that God had little to do with it.[33]

Without being offensively explicit, Lincoln depicted Adam not as "falling" from a blessed and perfect condition but as a backward savage. He gently made Adam the butt of several jokes. Adam "seems not to have been a very observing man," taking a long time to notice "the obvious fact" that he was naked. Also, after making a serious point about the communication of ideas, Lincoln said Adam used speech "even before the creation of Eve. He gave names to the animals while she was still a bone in his side; and he broke out quite volubly when she first stood before him, the best present of his maker." Having conjured that titillating image, Lincoln next declared that the world's first invention, the "fig-leaf apron," should be credited to Eve rather than Adam, who perhaps did "no more than to stand by and thread the needle" (the last phrase being sometimes used as slang for sexual intercourse). Lincoln could not resist piling on two more jokes: "That proceeding may be reckoned as the mother of all 'Sewing societies'; and the first and most perfect 'world's fair': all inventions and all inventors then in the world being on the spot."[34]

The jests were mild, and Lincoln neutralized any sacrilege by larding the first half of his lecture with authoritative quotations from Scripture. When listing the earliest evidence for the first inventions—clothing, spinning, weaving, iron, transportation by animal and by boat, agriculture, wind power, water mills, and steam power—Lincoln cited biblical evidence, chapter and verse, no less than thirty-seven times. Darwin, who would soon be adding "by the Creator" to the concluding paragraph of *The Origin*, was in no position to throw stones about such lip service to popular piety—although this may be one reason why the free-thinking Herndon considered Lincoln's lecture such a failure. But Herndon was less likely than Darwin to comprehend Lincoln's cautiously camouflaged point.

One audience member, apparently familiar with Lincoln's courtroom tactics, wrote that the lecture's two halves "forcibly reminded us of his legal argument, wherein he first states the facts in a clear and simple manner, and then reasons from those facts backward and forward to cause and effect."[35] A fellow lawyer once asserted that Lincoln "stated the case of his adversary better and more forcibly than his opponent could state it himself . . . [then] he presented his own case."[36]

After apparently paying homage to the Bible, Lincoln undermined its usefulness for explaining human development. Without blatancy, Lincoln suggested that man had not fallen but risen and not through divine assistance but through a gradual improvement brought about by man's own effort along with a degree of unexplained contingency—chance. For Lincoln's curious mind, the Bible simply left too much unexplained, a point he made humorously: "We can scarcely conceive the possibility of making much of anything else, without the use of iron tools. Indeed, an iron *hammer* must have been very much needed to make the *first* iron hammer with. A *stone* probably served as a substitute. How could the '*gopher wood*' for the Ark, have been gotten out without an axe? It seems to me an axe, or a miracle, was indispensable."[37]

Clearly, Lincoln was not relying on miracles any more than primitive man relied on divine assistance to invent a boat: "The sight of a crow standing on a piece of drift-wood floating down the swollen current of a creek or river, might well enough suggest the specific idea to a savage." Similarly, when Lincoln allowed that "it would appear that speech was not an invention of man, but rather the direct gift of his Creator," he immediately equivocated: "But whether Divine gift, or invention, it is still plain that if a mode of communication had been left to invention, *speech* must have been the first."[38]

Darwin and Lincoln lived a century before the development of scientific dating techniques, but Darwin, like most geologists of his time, already rejected the estimate (extrapolated from the Bible) that creation took place six thousand years ago. Many thoughtful people still assumed that however old the Earth might be, mankind's history was only six thousand years old. As discussed later, Lincoln understood that the Earth was far older than the biblical chronology, but the first part of his lecture seems to nod to the traditional chronology with regard to mankind. Whether or not he accepted that chronology, he let his audience think he did. He also seemed to concede the Bible's scrupulous accuracy when he said that although some "profane [i.e., nonreligious] authors" think spinning and weaving originated in Egypt, "this is not contradicted, or made improbable, by anything in the Bible," because the patriarch Abraham's mention of "thread" did not occur till after his sojourn in Egypt. Of course, this "concession" was again typical of Lincoln's courtroom technique, for it established that the "profane authors" were right that Egyptians, not God's chosen people, invented cloth making.[39]

Thus, Lincoln laid out the Bible's (and Bancroft's) version of man's early development in a way that suggested one could not use "God's will" to explain what made man advance further than animals (as Adam did) or what made some men advance further than others. The second half of the lecture offered Lincoln's own explanation, scarcely mentioning the Bible.

The opening discussion of the second half seems out of place—probable evidence of rewriting and of Lincoln's inability to avoid a bit of politicking. Between a slight reference to unexploited steam power near the end of the first half and a more extensive discussion of its utilization in the second half, Lincoln inserted a long and sarcastic digression on "Young America." Although Lincoln attempted a tie-in ("Is he not the inventor and owner of the present, and sole hope of the future?"), his audience would have understood that Lincoln was launching an attack on the Democratic Party in general and on Lincoln's political foe Douglas in particular.[40] Before long, Lincoln worked his way back to his main topic by borrowing a phrase that the "Young America" faction within the Democratic Party had formerly used against its rivals—"Old Fogy"—and applying it to "the first of all fogies, father Adam," who "*according to his chance*" was "quite as much of a man" as his descendants. Lincoln then argued that all the advances since Adam's time were the "result of *Discoveries*, *Inventions*, and *Improvements*. These in turn, are the result of *observation*, *reflection* and *experiment*," by which man built on "all he has learned from others" (original emphases).[41]

Learning from others was enormously facilitated by the inventions of "phonetic writing" and later printing. Writing was not divinely given to men, for which reason its development has been uneven among them: "That it was difficult of conception and execution, is apparent . . . [since] so many tribes of men have come down from Adam's time to ours without ever having possessed it."[42]

To writing and printing, Lincoln then added two more "inventions and discoveries" that were "of peculiar value on account of their great efficiency in facilitating all other inventions and discoveries": the discovery of America in 1492 (arguing, "a new country is most favorable—almost necessary—to the emancipation of thought") and the introduction of the first patent laws in 1624 (which "added the fuel of *interest* to the *fire* of genius, in the discovery and production of new and useful things").[43]

There the manuscript abruptly ended, leaving the lecturer perhaps to ad-lib some peroration. But there also seems to be a strange insertion between Lincoln's first reference to America's discovery and the patent laws and his actual discussion of them: "Though not apposite to my present purpose, it is but justice to the fruitfulness of that period, to mention two other important events—the Lutheran Reformation in 1517, and, still earlier, the invention of negroes, or, of the present mode of using them, in 1434." Listing the Reformation among inventions "of peculiar value" probably pleased Lincoln's Protestant audience—unless they thought about why he was calling their religion an "invention" and pairing it with another that was worthy of condemnation, slavery. Lincoln gave no further explanation for bringing up either topic (the larger significance of "the invention of negroes" is discussed later).[44]

In his lecture, Lincoln used the word "race" three times, always referring to the entire "human race." He spoke of different "tribes of men," some characterized as "savages." But while he agreed with Bancroft's view that "every man is in substance equal to his fellow man," Lincoln accepted that men have developed differently: not because God made them different or bestowed "inventions" on some but not others but exactly because inventions and discoveries were made by men, giving some advantages over others.[45]

Just as Darwin's phrase "favoured races" did not mean some blessing by God but rather a higher level of development, so Lincoln argued that it is to the invention of writing, for example, that "we owe everything which distinguishes us from savages." Although the institution of slavery had stimulated a degree of "fruitfulness" (or profit) at least for some, slavery, like writing, was an invention. Moreover, its modern version was based on another invention: negro inferiority. Lincoln saw nothing natural, innate, or divinely ordained to justify making blacks into slaves. As Lincoln could read in the *Encyclopaedia Americana* (which he possessed and cited elsewhere in the lecture), Africans' bondage to Europeans was "invented" in 1434, when a Portuguese captain kidnapped some Africans and sold them to some Moorish families in southern Spain. Unlike slaves in antiquity, these were not debtors, war captives, or even time-indentured laborers. Six years later, the captain repeated the effort, broadened the market, and found others who wished to join in or compete.[46]

Dr. Francis Lieber, who later as president of Columbia College conferred on President Lincoln an honorary doctorate of laws, edited the *Encyclopaedia*. His article on "slavery" called it "the greatest bar to civilization" and added the "melancholy reflection" that Europeans reestablished slavery in their colonies in modern times after ending it at home in the Middle Ages. Moreover, this "atrocity at which nature revolts . . . could never have reached the height it did, if the color of the slave had not given rise to the idea of his being by nature a degraded being." But Lieber touched on more than mere color, declaring in the article entitled "Negro" that the shape of the cranium allowed "less space for the brain than in some other varieties" of man. However, Lieber asserted, "The opinion formerly maintained, that they were of an inferior variety of animals, would not now find an advocate, or a convert, even in the ignorance or the worst passions of the whites."[47]

By the time he gave his lecture, Lincoln knew that that last assertion was out of date, for in the twenty-seven years since Lieber wrote it, there had indeed arisen serious advocates of the idea that blacks were if not "an inferior variety of animal" then at best an inferior variety of human, one created separately from Adam and on an inferior model. Important men of science were now effectively endorsing the prejudices of those who had some interest or need to view blacks as subhumans. It was a view that neither Lincoln nor Darwin ever accepted. Lincoln's lecture may have been stimulated by Bancroft's—as Darwin needed the catalyst provided by Wallace to produce *The Origin*—but Lincoln and Darwin also had a larger purpose: to address the incorrect thinking (whether based on religious dogma or weak science) used by some humans to justify enslaving others.

For Lincoln, slavery was wrong because, like it or not, it violated the principle that "all men are created equal." For Darwin, a special creation of mankind (or, worse, of separate groups of men) was wrong because, like it or not, the principle of natural selection applied equally to men and animals. Both principles faced considerable opposition—and still do because neither is subject to mathematical proof, and many people have an interest in treating others as inferiors. Yet, the principles advocated by Lincoln and Darwin have come to be accepted generally, advancing our understanding of man's place in relation to the rest of mankind and to the universe. For crystallizing these views and acting upon them, both Lincoln and Darwin have earned their iconic status as men who not only were products of their times but actually changed their world. Such enduring fame had been quite inconceivable during their first fifty years.

1

Origins and Education

Abraham Lincoln was named after his paternal grandfather. His maternal grandfather's name is unknown, and probably Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks, never knew it herself. Lincoln once confided that his mother "was the daughter of a nobleman," that is, a Virginia planter. This is unconfirmed but not unlikely.[1] The elder Abraham died twenty-three years before his namesake was born: Lincoln's own father, Thomas, was only eight years old when he saw his father killed by Indians in Kentucky. The youngest of three sons, Thomas inherited nothing and lived a hard-working life up to and after his marriage to the illegitimate Nancy Hanks. Abraham Lincoln, like his older sister, Sarah, was born into frontier poverty and raised by illiterate parents.

Although both of Charles Darwin's grandfathers died before he was born, at least he knew their names, as did thousands of other people in the late eighteenth century. Erasmus Darwin was a highly respected doctor, an accomplished poet and writer, a religious skeptic, and a "natural philosopher" (as "scientists" were then called) who once authored a book, *Zoonomia*, which featured a clear belief that the species of the world were the result not of a single creation but of some evolutionary development. Erasmus was a close friend of Josiah Wedgwood, the prosperous potter, technological innovator, and reform-minded Unitarian. Erasmus arranged for his son Robert to marry Wedgwood's daughter Susannah in 1796. Her £25,000 inheritance added to the wealth coming in from Robert's successful medical practice in Shrewsbury. Thus, both of Charles's parents descended from intelligent and affluent men who were religious dissenters, and his earliest memories were of an imposing five-bay, two-and-a-half-storied house, The Mount, overlooking the Severn River on the edge of Shrewsbury, where he, his older brother, and his four sisters were all born. Until he married and set up his own household, Darwin knew no other home than The Mount.

Lincoln had no memory of his birthplace in Kentucky, being only two when his family left the one-room cabin to rot and moved to better soil ten miles away. When Lincoln was seven, his family moved again, this time ninety miles northwest, out of Kentucky, across the Ohio River, and into Indiana. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787, parts of which did not apply south of the Ohio River, meant that land in Indiana was properly surveyed, and slavery was prohibited, so Thomas Lincoln no longer had to argue with wealthier men's clever lawyers or compete with their slave labor.

Thomas's motivation was not self-interest alone: he was a religious man and believed that slavery was wrong. His son later wrote, "I am naturally anti-slavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I can not remember when I did not so think, and feel."[2] Darwin, too, came from antislavery stock, with both grandfathers and an aunt active on abolitionist committees.

Abraham Lincoln was raised close to nature, living in unbroken forest, shooting wild turkey through the chinks in the cabin wall, and using an axe almost every day till he was twenty-three. For Charles Darwin, nature was landscaped, conquered by roads and canals, tamed in the greenhouse and orchard and pigeon cot, and read about in his father's vast library. Darwin became fascinated with the natural world, which for Lincoln had always meant grinding labor and something to escape.

When their mothers died, Darwin and Lincoln were, respectively, eight and a half and nine years old. Charles had little memory of the event. His mother was fifty-two and had been an invalid for years, so Charles was mainly looked after by his older sisters before and after their mother's death. Abraham's mother was about thirty-five when she died suddenly, leaving a gaping hole in the vulnerable family. The tragedy would have been far more damaging if his father had not swiftly remarried to a widow with three children who expanded and stabilized the family. Abraham's stepmother proved wonderfully affectionate. Nevertheless, he idealized his "angel mother" and once said, "All that I am or ever hope to be I get from my mother, God bless her."[3] This may be an irrational appraisal of his mother's possible influence, the real message being that Lincoln felt he had inherited no characteristics from his father.

Darwin's whole career revolved around issues of inheritance and "nature versus nurture," yet he never suggested that he had inherited anything from either parent (except considerable wealth). Once, describing his early "taste for natural history," he wrote, "The passion for collecting . . . was very strong in me, and was clearly innate." In the manuscript, the word "innate" replaced "inherent," which had been illogical since he also wrote, "None of my sisters or brother ever had this taste."[4] Darwin saw his own development as being unusual and largely inexplicable. He declared that his "passion for collecting" set him apart, but it was hardly a unique activity for a boy of his era and class, especially one whose mother had raised fancy pigeons, whose father had a fine library well stocked with tomes on natural history, and whose elder brother showed an early interest in science. Yet, the word "innate" subtly excluded any necessary influence from his parents. In his autobiography, Darwin went to great lengths to depict and praise his father's professional skill, extraordinary memory, "powers of observation and his sympathy" yet added, ambiguously, "I do not think that I gained much from him intellectually, but his example ought to have been of much moral service to all his children."[5]

Tales exist—almost certainly untrue—that Abraham Lincoln himself was not actually Thomas's son. Such rumors surfaced during Lincoln's presidency, but whether Lincoln was a source or gave them any credence is unknown.[6] One can empathize with the attitude, hardly unique, "This cannot possibly be my real father!" Lincoln grew unusually tall and lanky, unlike his stocky, five-foot-nine-inch father, which may have added to the other anomaly: the son far outstripping his father's intellect.

Although it is unlikely that Lincoln doubted his father's paternity, he may have believed he inherited fewer qualities from his father than from the anonymous aristocrat who fathered Nancy Hanks. Lincoln later attained a reputation for great powers of sympathy, yet he showed little for his father when he mentioned in an autobiographical sketch that his father "never did more in the way of writing than to bunglingly sign his own name."[7] The harsh adverb would not have been used on his "angel mother"—who could not write her name even bunglingly.

Looking back on their childhoods, Lincoln and Darwin saw themselves, with differing degrees of justification, as self-created through self-education. Indeed, their educational experiences, though radically different, caused tensions with their fathers. Lincoln's expected him to become, like father and grandfather, useful on the farm, which required no schooling; Darwin's father expected his son to follow his father and grandfather into the medical profession. Both fathers were dissatisfied by their sons' education: in Darwin's case because he seemed to gain too little from it and in Lincoln's because he gained too much.

Darwin was tutored by his sister Caroline before the age of eight, then had twelve years of formal education, including two years of medical studies in Edinburgh and three years at Cambridge University—all of which Darwin described disparagingly in his later autobiography. His school's classical curriculum "as a means of education to me was simply a blank," and his verdict on himself was worse: "I believe that I was considered by all my masters and by my father as a very ordinary boy, rather below the common standard in intellect." Yet, Darwin did develop a deep love of reading, partly thanks to the positive example of his older brother, Erasmus. Charles "used to sit for hours reading the historical plays of Shakespeare" as well as Byron, Scott, and Thomson's *Seasons*. He felt "intense satisfaction" in Euclid's proofs and "a wish to travel in remote countries" after reading a book entitled *The Wonders of the World*. Erasmus led him into collecting minerals and insects, drying plants, and experimenting in chemistry, an activity sufficiently odd to earn Darwin the nickname "Gas" among his fellow students. White's *Selborne* sparked an interest in the habits of birds, though he also developed a "zeal" for shooting them.[8] Lincoln, as far as we know, collected nothing and hated hunting, although, almost of necessity, he was a good shot.

Although young "Gas" thought his chemistry experiments with his brother were the best part of his education, he was once "publicly rebuked by the headmaster" for wasting his time "over such useless subjects," and to his "deep mortification" his father once said, "You care for nothing but shooting, dogs and rat-catching, and you will be a disgrace to yourself and all your family." Since Charles "was doing no good at school," his father sent him at an earlier age than usual to Edinburgh, where Erasmus was already studying medicine. The lectures, except those on chemistry, "were intolerably dull," and when Charles attended two operations (in the days before anesthesia), "I rushed away before they were completed. Nor did I ever attend again." Darwin effectively abandoned medical studies, regretting only that he never practiced dissection, which "would have been invaluable for all my future work." Around this period, Charles also "became convinced" that his property inheritance from his father would obviate the need to earn a living, which news "was sufficient to check any strenuous effort to learn medicine."[9]

However, Darwin still enjoyed studying natural science. This was not, like medicine, a respectable profession but mainly an eccentric avocation for gentlemen, often country vicars not obliged to spend much time saving souls. It was actually Darwin's father who "proposed that I should become a clergyman." Sent to Cambridge, he attended only a few compulsory lectures and found the mathematics instruction "repugnant." Darwin later recalled that his time at Cambridge was "worse than wasted" and that his passion for shooting led him into "a sporting set, including some dissipated low-minded young men." Darwin was fairly amazed when his exam results earned him a pass degree.[10]

"But no pursuit at Cambridge was followed with nearly so much eagerness or gave me so much pleasure as collecting beetles." A friend's joke that one day Darwin would be a Fellow of the Royal Society seemed "preposterous" to him. And yet, just as he had attached himself in Edinburgh to a mentor, the sponge expert Robert Grant, Darwin in Cambridge became a devoted acolyte of some of the leading naturalists of the day, the clergymen/geologists J. S. Henslow, William Whewell, and Adam Sedgwick. Darwin attended their lectures and soirées and joined field trips that provided practical experience in geology: "Looking back, I infer that there must have been something in me a little superior to the common run of youths, otherwise the above-mentioned men, so much older than me and higher in academical position, would never have allowed me to associate with them. Certainly I was not aware of any such superiority." These men raised Darwin's self-esteem and offered a model, as did his cousin William Darwin Fox, a devoted naturalist who had just obtained a curacy. After his examinations, Darwin accompanied Sedgwick to Wales on a geological tour that made him yearn for more. He planned an excursion to Tenerife, a Canary Island, having recently read Alexander von Humboldt's *Personal Narrative*, which, along with John Frederick William Herschel's *Introduction to the Study of Natural Philosophy*, "stirred up in me a burning zeal to add even the most humble contribution to the noble structure of Natural Science."[11]

Darwin's formal education ended when he was twenty-one, but his self-education—his real education—had begun when he was a child assisting Erasmus's chemistry experiments and expanded in stages, always accompanied by intense and wide-ranging reading. In addition to works on science, his interest in poetry continued for many years, yet eventually waned in middle age, while "books on history, biographies and travels . . . interest me as much as they ever did." He kept up with scientific journals, perused the *Times* regularly, and found fiction "a wonderful relief and pleasure." Darwin's leisure reading overlapped his scientific interests: he "happened to read for amusement" Malthus's *Essay on Population*, which greatly influenced his work.[12]

From various sources, one could compile a list of works read by Darwin that would number in the thousands. We have far less evidence regarding what Lincoln read.[13] His autobiographical sketches, legal work, and correspondence mention few books, and his speeches do not cite sources even though they were often based on wide research. Early poverty developed in him the habit of borrowing and reading books rather than buying and displaying them, but he did eventually have a small private library. Much of it was kept at the law office and was intermingled with the much larger collection owned by his bookish law partner, William Herndon. Both Lincoln and Darwin were passionate readers, and if Darwin ultimately read more, it is mainly because he had no need to earn a living and lived longer. While their purposes and opportunities differed greatly, both read far more widely than one might guess, and they read (or, in Lincoln's case, at least had access to) a large number of the same books, which brought Lincoln and Darwin into surprisingly close contact with each other's mental development. Books also helped them to escape their presumed destinies, on the one hand, that of a Shropshire doctor or provincial vicar with a penchant for entomology and, on the other, that of an Illinois farmer or carpenter.

Darwin shared Lincoln's love of Shakespeare, Milton, Gray, and Byron but never mentioned Robert Burns, whom Lincoln adored. A fortnight before his own fiftieth birthday, Lincoln attended a dinner celebrating Burns's centenary. Lincoln "could very nearly quote all of Burns' Poems from memory. . . . He had acquired the Scotch accent and could render Burns perfectly"—though possibly with a Hoosier twang.[14] Darwin, who met people in Edinburgh who had known Burns, may have found Burns's dialect writing unpalatable and felt little "auld lang syne" for Edinburgh. He could not share Lincoln's close identification with Burns's background of poverty, his satirical view of religion, and even his habit of always walking around with a book in one hand. Long before Darwin began to theorize himself out of orthodoxy, Lincoln had already become a religious skeptic partly because of Burns, who, as one early acquaintance said, "helped Lincoln to be an infidel I think—at least he found in Burns a like thinker & feeler."[15]

That Lincoln loved reading Burns or any poet is less surprising than that he was able to read at all. His parents and stepmother were basically illiterate, subscription schools cost money, schooling must have seemed a luxury for others to enjoy, and Abe experienced only a few months of it. He later wrote that "what he has in the way of education, he has picked up."[16] Probably many acquaintances had a similar education, which then languished through disuse. Darwin's environment overflowed with affluent and well-educated people, but in Lincoln's boyhood Indiana, "If a straggler supposed to understand latin, happened to so-journ in the neighborhood, he was looked upon as a wizzard." Darwin met nothing but high expectations at home, at school, in university; but in Pigeon Creek, wrote Lincoln, there was "absolutely nothing to excite ambition for education."[17]

By the time Darwin wrote about his education in his *Autobiography* in 1876, he was a world-famous scientist who could deprecate his neglect of the opportunities offered by his formal education and even believe his achievements came *in spite of* that education. When Lincoln wrote in December 1859 of his own education, he was consciously positioning himself as a possible presidential candidate, playing down any hint of intellectualism that might dampen popularity. There is no doubt that Lincoln was actually proud of his hard-won attainments.[18]

"He was the learned boy among us unlearned folks," according to a classmate.[19] Lincoln's ability and eagerness set him apart, and apparently from an early date, he saw education as the means to set himself free. But the path was strewn with obstacles. As one neighbor put it, Lincoln "was a constant, and I may say stubborn reader."[20] His father sometimes had to "slash" him to do his chores. "Lazy" is the word frequently used by contemporaries who shared Thomas Lincoln's inability to accept that his son had ambitions beyond farming. Because his family and neighbors were unaccustomed to seeing anyone in the *act* of reading, they found Lincoln's habits memorable. "He read setting, lying down & walking in the street"; he read while the plow horse caught its breath; cocked on a haystack; astraddle a woodpile; while others went to a dance; between customers in the post office; under a tree; up a tree. Most often, the descriptions include "lying down": on a trundle bed while rocking a cradle with his foot; flat on his back on a cellar door; usually stretching his six-foot-four-inch frame on the floor.[21] All this was odd to his "unlearned" neighbors—and even to us who love reading but do not live in a cabin crowded with children and devoid of sofas and good lighting.

Reading is largely a solitary activity, but Lincoln was always a sociable character who rubbed along well with his family (except for his father) and was never viewed as an upstart or a snob by his neighbors. He was happy to read aloud to those who couldn't and explained things patiently without showing off, though correcting his father on occasion earned him a slap. As a teenager, he wrote documents for illiterate adults, perhaps even assisting his "bungling" father.

Darwin, like his father and grandfathers, possessed a library. His books were often heavily annotated, and he developed the habit of cutting through the spine of particularly thick books so he could read half at a time. In contrast, there are few examples of marginalia by Lincoln, and mutilating such sacred items was unimaginable. Living in frontier communities with illiterate parents meant a dearth of books in Lincoln's home. During his brief periods of schooling, his teachers used the simplest textbooks, but young Abe's self-education was greatly aided by his stepmother, Sarah, who, though illiterate, at least appreciated learning and brought from her deceased first husband's house not only a *King James Bible* but also, perhaps, Bunyan's *Pilgrims Progress*, Aesop's *Fables*, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, and *Sinbad the Sailor*. In the forests of Indiana, Lincoln's first glimpse of Western civilization came through William Scott's *Lessons in Elocution* with its excerpts from Shakespeare, Homer, Virgil, Milton, Dryden, *The Spectator*, Pope, Hume, and Dr. Johnson. While loving poetry, Lincoln never shared Darwin's pleasure in reading novels: Lincoln said that he "never read an entire novel" in his life, having once commenced but never finished *Ivanhoe*; however, a friend testified that Lincoln read at least one whole novel, Nathaniel B. Tucker's *George Balcombe* (1836). If little of Lincoln's reading was fictional, *all* of his reading was for pleasure while also being purposeful. Lincoln read William Grimshaw's *History of the United States* (all forty-nine years of it), Mason Locke Weems's *Life of Washington*, and David Ramsay's biographies of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin—all providing heroes to emulate.[22] Someone loaned Lincoln *The Revised Statutes of Indiana*, which also contained the *Constitution* and the *Northwest Ordinance*. One piece of campaign literature in 1860, perhaps for the propaganda value, mentioned that Lincoln had read Captain James Riley's popular *Authentic Narrative of the Loss of the American Brig "Commerce"* (1817), recounting the author's experience as a white slave in North Africa.[23]

When Lincoln left his father's house to live in New Salem, Illinois, his self-education moved up a gear. Having measured the gap between his spoken English and literary English, he worked intensely to master the rules laid down in Kirkham's *Grammar* and after a relatively short time told a friend, "Bill, if that is what they call a science, I'll subdue another."[24] When Lincoln became a postmaster, newspaper subscribers found their latest issues well thumbed, and customers who struggled with the alphabet appreciated Lincoln's fondness for reading aloud. When not in the post office, he was often by the bank of the Sangamo River with his friend Jack Kelso, a curiously cultured hunter and fisherman, who may have introduced Lincoln to Burns's poetry. They spent hours discussing Shakespeare while Kelso fished and Lincoln didn't. But Lincoln's interests ranged well beyond newspapers and poetry. According to a friend, after grammar, Lincoln studied

> Arithmetic, then Natural philosophy, Astronomy & Chemistry, then Surveying, and Law, In the mean time read history & other books, the news papers of the day, in fact any and all books from which he could derive information or knowledge. . . . [Lincoln would] alternately, entertain and amuse the company by witticisms jokes &c, and study his lessons. He never appeared to be a hard student as he seamed to Master his studies with little effort, until he commenced the study of the Law, in that he became wholly engrossed.[25]

To turn himself into a surveyor, Lincoln read Flint's *System of Geometry and Trigonometry* and Gibson's *Treatise on Practical Surveying*.[26] By the age of twenty-one, he was perhaps already contemplating a career in law as he worked through Blackstone's *Commentaries* with the help of a pocket dictionary and Murray's *English Grammar*, and it was his habit "after reading or studying Murray or Blackstone for two or three hours, to take up Burns' poems, which he read . . . with that hilarity which usually was so peculiar to him."[27] Later friends in Springfield loaned him law books, and he could research his cases in the State Supreme Court library.[28] Later still, as a congressman in Washington, D.C., Lincoln was deemed a "bookworm" because he spent so much time in the old Congressional Library, from which he later borrowed books on military science during his presidency.[29]

Lincoln's interest in geology is discussed later along with the scientific interests of Herndon, his law partner, but for now note that Lincoln, like Darwin, had a special regard for Euclid whose work (as he told a campaign biographer) he "studied and nearly mastered . . . since he was a member of Congress."[30] Lincoln also read the eighteenth-century natural theologian William Paley, whose work greatly influenced Darwin.[31]

The horizons of both men were broadened not only by books but also by the direct effect of travel. While Darwin's youthful voyaging was more extensive and famously life changing, Lincoln's traveling at a slightly younger age was also important to his development. Lincoln never shared Herndon's great interest in botany, and we have no evidence that either of them ever read Darwin's wonderful account of his experiences as a naturalist in *The Voyage of the Beagle*. Had Lincoln read it, he would have discovered that the book raised issues about slavery that might well have set Lincoln reminiscing about his own experiences voyaging down the Mississippi River.

2

Voyages and the Experience of Slavery

In the spring of 1828, nineteen-year-old Lincoln made the first of two journeys by flatboat down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, and about the time when the second one ended, Darwin embarked on a voyage that carried him around the globe. Lincoln's travels lasted a few months while Darwin's trip was supposed to finish in two years but lasted five. Lincoln's purpose was to transport farm produce as frontier settlers had done since moving west of the Appalachian Mountains. Lincoln's father had made the same journey and after selling off his produce downstream (and breaking up his flatboat to sell as firewood) had returned home on foot, but Abe was able to make his return trips by that wonder of the age, the steamboat. Darwin's purpose was anything but commercial—indeed, his father had to pay his expenses. Having recently graduated from Cambridge University, Darwin sought to delay becoming a clergyman by pursuing his interests in natural science. A plan to explore the Canary Islands with some friends fell through, but Professor J. S. Henslow arranged for Darwin to be invited aboard HMS *Beagle* for its projected two-year voyage charting the coast of South America. Captain Robert FitzRoy needed a "gentleman" to serve as his companion, but it was understood that Darwin could also pursue his naturalist's interests, although a naturalist had already been assigned to the mission.

Before Lincoln's second river journey, he and three companions had to build the flatboat themselves. It was eighteen by eighty feet and made to carry themselves, sacks of corn, barrel pork, and a small herd of hogs on their twelve-hundred-mile journey. HMS *Beagle* was only ten feet longer and six feet wider than Lincoln's flatboat. There were no live hogs, but salt pork featured prominently among the victuals. There were also the normal supplies and spares for a long-distance voyage, ten cannon and ammunition, seven additional boats carried onboard or on davits, an array of scientific equipment, and a sixty-five-man crew with nine "supernumeraries," Darwin among them. His quarters were in the ten-by-eleven-foot chart room in which he could not stand upright and had to sleep in a hammock above the four-by-six-foot chart table that competed for space with Darwin's personal belongings, his naturalist's accoutrements, and the ship's mizzen mast, poking up through the decks.

FitzRoy's obsessive surveying lengthened both the voyage and Darwin's opportunities to explore the Cape Verde Islands, Brazil's rain forest, the pampas, the Andes, and later Tahiti, New Zealand, and Australia, not to mention the Galapagos Islands. "The voyage of the *Beagle*," Darwin wrote four decades later, "has been by far the most important event in my life and has determined my whole career."[1] With hindsight, one can see that Darwin's voyage merely confirmed the course he had vaguely set for himself. He had never longed to be a doctor or a clergyman, and science was no longer a hobby. The specimens Darwin regularly sent to Cambridge fascinated the scientific community while his letters to Henslow were read to scientific bodies and printed for private distribution even before Darwin returned. Less than a month after that, the twenty-six-year-old was proposed as a Fellow of the Royal Geological Society.

As Darwin now turned his back on any career other than science (and never stepped aboard another ship), Lincoln decided there was more to life than being a farmer, carpenter, or even a river man. Circumnavigating the globe is quite unlike floating down and steaming up the Mississippi, yet the most significant difference is that Darwin was traveling away from civilization and Lincoln toward it. The Englishman left behind his managed countryside and highly stratified society to experience tropical forests, deserts, mountain ranges, and primitive peoples. Upon first seeing tropical vegetation, Darwin wrote in his diary, "It has been for me a glorious day, like giving to a blind man eyes," and his first walk in a rain forest was practically a religious experience: "The mind is a chaos of delight."[2] To Lincoln, a forest meant being handed an axe and told to start clearing. Trees were meant to be sawed in a mill that rivers were meant to power. The novelties Lincoln experienced on his voyage were social: towns and cities, especially New Orleans, "by far the largest city the two country boys had ever seen, with imposing buildings, busy shops, and incessant traffic. Here they heard French spoken as readily as English." Historian David Herbert Donald thus expressed what Lincoln never did: "perhaps it was too overwhelming."[3] Although Darwin was well read on natural history, his voyage brought him an essential experience of the vast diversity of species and varieties in the natural world. Likewise, although Lincoln's reading had opened worlds beyond the Ohio valley, seeing the diverse cities and peoples of the lower Mississippi must have been illuminating to a frontiersman.

Lincoln's later autobiographical sketch devoted four sentences to his first flatboat trip and ten to the second, though half of those were taken up with an irresistible yarn about someone's idea of sewing up the eyes of the live hogs so they would be easier to drive onto the flatboat; it didn't work.[4] He also later joked that during the first stage of one journey, the Sangamo River meandered so severely that he camped in the same place three nights in a row.[5] Other contemporaries later added some details to these stories, but none of this can compare with the classic travel narrative produced by Darwin, commonly known as *The Voyage of the Beagle*. The book contained a solid diet of factual and scientific information supplemented with lively opinions, all drawn from the extensive diaries, notebooks, and letters he wrote during his travels.

One common experience upon which both these two young travelers commented was slavery. Although both had already gained various impressions of human bondage, these were broadened during their voyages, probably more so in Darwin's case.

Among Lincoln's four sentences (in third person) about his first flatboat trip to New Orleans, he mentioned that "one night they were attacked by seven negroes with intent to kill and rob them. They were hurt some in the melee, but succeeded in driving the negroes from the boat, and then 'cut cable' 'weighed anchor' and left." Contemporaries later corroborated, or elaborated, parts of this story: "Abe told me so—saw the scar myself," and "Abe fought the Negroes . . . pretended to have guns . . . the Negroes had hickory clubs—my husband said 'Lincoln get the guns and Shoot'—the Negroes took alarm and left."[6]

The story of seeing a slave auction in New Orleans during the second trip is even more dramatic if less reliable. According to Herndon's interview notes, John Hanks, Lincoln's cousin and fellow flatboatman, said, "We saw Negroes Chained—maltreated—whipt & scourged. Lincoln saw it—his heart bled—Said nothing much . . . was thoughtful & abstracted—I can say knowingly that it was on this trip that he formed his opinions of slavery."[7] Hanks had not actually gone all the way to New Orleans and later suggested he heard the story from the third crew member, John Johnston, who had.[8] Nevertheless, the story appeared in Herndon's biography, with the embellishment of Lincoln saying to his fellows, "By God, boys, let's get away from this. If ever I get a chance to hit that thing [slavery], I'll hit it hard." Herndon assured readers that he had "also heard Mr. Lincoln refer to it himself."[9]

Until the age of seven, Lincoln lived in a slave state, where he probably saw slaves marched along the road in chains. After his family crossed the Ohio River, he saw slaves brought across to labor temporarily on land where slavery was supposedly forbidden. The sight of shackled slaves being transported by steamboat "was a continual torment to me; and I see something like it every time I touch the Ohio, or any other slave-border."[10] Even in supposedly free Indiana and Illinois, slavery was a familiar presence, and the only *novelties* Lincoln could report from his travels were being personally attacked by blacks and sickened by the sight of an actual auction.

Darwin's family was as strongly antislavery as Lincoln's, but before the *Beagle* voyage, Darwin had no immediate experience of slavery. Less than two months into the trip and shortly after reaching the first slave country Darwin ever visited, Brazil, he quarreled severely with Captain FitzRoy, who "defended and praised slavery, which I abominated." According to Darwin, FitzRoy mentioned that "he had just visited a great slave-owner, who had called up many of his slaves and asked them whether they were happy, and whether they wished to be free, and all answered 'No.' I then asked him, perhaps with a sneer, whether he thought that the answers of slaves in the presence of their master was worth anything. This made him excessively angry."[11] Darwin was later gratified when a visiting Royal Navy captain recounted the story of a slave who was very well treated by his master yet said, "If I could but see my father & my two sisters once again, I should be happy. I can never forget them." Darwin commented archly in his diary, "Such was the expression of one of these people, who are ranked by the polished savages in England as hardly their brethren, even in God's eyes."[12]

Like Lincoln, Darwin also learned something of the desperation of fugitive slaves. He heard that a group were contriving "to eke out a subsistence" in mountains near Rio de Janeiro when a party of soldiers found them. "One old woman, . . . sooner than again be led into slavery, dashed herself to pieces from the summit of the mountain." Darwin added with bitter irony, "In a Roman matron this would have been called the noble love of freedom: in a poor negress it is mere brutal obstinacy." And the notion of slave auctions also shocked Darwin. While staying on a hacienda,

> I was very nearly being an eye-witness to one of those atrocious acts which can only take place in a slave country. Owing to a quarrel and a law-suit, the owner was on the point of taking all the women and children from the male slaves, and selling them separately at the public auction at Rio. Interest, and not any feeling of compassion, prevented this act. I do not believe the inhumanity of separating thirty families, who had lived together for many years, even occurred to the owner. Yet I will pledge myself, that in humanity and good feeling he was superior to the common run of men.

Darwin often indicated how much his own impressions differed from the perceptions of other whites. He was also interested by the slaves' self-perceptions, as he mentioned in "one very trifling anecdote, which at the time struck me more forcibly than any story of cruelty." While trying to make himself understood by a black ferryman, Darwin gesticulated overmuch, and the black, expecting to be hit, dropped his hands to his sides: "I shall never forget my feelings of surprise, disgust, and shame, at seeing a great powerful man afraid even to ward off a blow, directed, as he thought, at his face. This man had been trained to a degradation lower than the slavery of the most helpless animal."[13]

Lincoln and Darwin, while still young men, both had reactions against slavery that were as admirable as they were untypical. Slavery had been widespread for centuries, was taken for granted by most people, and was thought by many to be sanctioned by the Bible. Writing in his *Beagle* diary, Darwin came close to prophesying about an unknown flatboatman in Illinois: "As far as my testimony goes, every individual who has the glory of having exerted himself on the subject of slavery, may rely on it his labours are exerted against miseries perhaps even greater than he imagines."[14]

The Declaration of Independence proclaims that "all men are created equal," and although Jefferson and many others who signed his composition were slaveowners, it is an important fact—which Lincoln highlighted later in his career—that they viewed slavery as an evil, somehow imposed on America by the British, and now destined for extinction as British rule ended. Many northern states began to abolish slavery through various methods and time scales and assumed the southern states would soon follow, although it was acknowledged that they faced a more complex set of problems. Recognition of that shared conviction and those divergent situations made it easier to tolerate compromises on any *national* issues relating to slavery on the assumption that such expedients were temporary.

The first national compromise was the 1787 law forbidding slavery in the western lands north of the Ohio River but not south of it—one reason why many small farmers such as the Lincolns later moved north of the river. In that same year, the founders drafting the Constitution thrashed out a set of compromises that they viewed as necessary, temporary, and embarrassing (for which reason they avoided the words "slave" or "slavery"). The Fifth Amendment, protecting property from federal encroachment, effectively guaranteed that the power to abolish slavery would remain as it had been, solely with the individual states.

That year, 1787, also marked two important developments in Britain's antislavery evolution. American independence removed two-thirds of the slaves over whom Britain had previously had jurisdiction, but the Atlantic slave trade itself was still a vast part of the British economy. Recognizing that abolishing the slave trade was the first step toward ending slavery itself, antislavery leaders such as Granville Sharp and Thomas Clarkson founded the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the African Slave Trade. Darwin's grandfather Josiah Wedgwood was the committee member who designed the famous medallion bearing the motto, "Am I not a man and a brother?" He sent some examples to the president of the Abolition Society in America, Benjamin Franklin, to show that abolition "is daily more and more taking the possession of men's minds on this side of the Atlantic as well as with you."[15] Darwin's other grandfather, Erasmus Darwin, described the image in verse:

> The Slave in chains, on supplicating knee,
> Spreads his wide arms, and lifts his eyes to Thee;
> With hunger pale, with wounds and toil oppress'd,
> "Are we not brethren?"—Sorrow choaks the rest.[16]

Also in 1787, Sharp was instrumental in establishing the Sierra Leone Company, which was perceived as a parallel effort: to colonize freed blacks back to

Africa. While slaves were scattered throughout various parts of the United States, principally in the south, most British-owned slaves lived in the West Indies, four thousand miles from Britain. About fourteen thousand slaves or freedmen resided in England, and in 1787, the first ships began implementing their repatriation to Africa. Although some black leaders who preferred to remain permanently in Britain withdrew their support for a project that suffered great difficulties, most people viewed colonization not as futile or racist but as the most obvious redress for the original crime of kidnapping Africans—although this remedy was not applied where most British-owned slaves resided, in the West Indies.[17]

The American Constitution had provided that the federal government could end the slave trade after a twenty-year moratorium, and many expected slavery to die out in the United States shortly after the slave trade's scheduled ending in 1808. British abolitionists could look forward to no such date, but after years of political activism—and with the Americans about to cease being consumers or competitive suppliers—the antislavery forces finally obtained Parliamentary approval to outlaw the British slave trade in March 1807.

Despite legal prohibitions, an illicit trade may have brought into America as many as 250,000 slaves between 1808 and 1860, but the growth in slave numbers was mainly the result of natural increase. The slave population grew by half a million in the decade before 1830, when the total stood at two million.[18] This growth would not have occurred without an increased demand. Late-eighteenth-century British inventions helped mechanize the process of producing cotton cloth, and the American invention of the cotton gin in 1793 reduced costs for producing the particular species of cotton that was easiest to grow. The Industrial Revolution in Britain stimulated the growth of King Cotton in the American south.

Private emancipations decreased as the dollar value of slaves rose and as southern legislatures worried that the presence of freed slaves might undermine the slave system. To address this problem, some prominent citizens, mostly southerners, organized in 1817 the American Colonization Society (ACS) to promote the repatriation of blacks to Africa, imitating the Sierra Leone Company.[19] This project soon spread to nonslave states as well but overall had a far greater task and far less success than the British effort. The ACS ultimately failed, yet Lincoln became and long remained a supporter of colonization.

Eventually both the British and American antislavery organizers realized that ending the slave trade had not killed off slavery. Further actions were required, but there was disagreement about how gradual these steps should be. After British antislavery activists formed the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery in 1823, Sarah Wedgwood, daughter of Josiah and the aunt of the teenage Charles Darwin (and of his later wife), was involved in protests that led to the removal of the word "gradual" from the organization's title, although it continued an essentially gradualist approach.[20] Gradualism was even more strongly challenged in America by William Lloyd Garrison, who in his abolitionist newspaper, the *Liberator*, made it abundantly clear that he would have nothing to do with gradualism, compensation schemes, or constitutional impediments. Although many American abolitionists later distanced themselves from Garrison's radical "immediatism," the gradualist middle ground was eroded not only by the greater activism of the immediatists but also by the stiffening resistance of slaveowners to any type of change.[21]

In 1831 two unsuccessful slave revolts in Jamaica and Virginia highlighted the difference in the British and American situations. The Jamaican revolt hastened Parliament's passage of the Abolition of Slavery Act in 1833, which ordered the end of slavery on 1 August 1834. Yet, the measure was gradualist: only children under six were immediately freed; older slaves became "apprentices" for up to six years, working three-quarters of the time for their owners; and the owners themselves (but not the slaves) were compensated by the British tax-payer to the tune of £20,000,000, or about £37 per slave.[22] Darwin cheered from aboard the *Beagle*, "What a proud thing for England, if she is the first European nation which utterly abolishes it."[23] Meanwhile in Virginia, the unsuccessful Nat Turner uprising in 1831 influenced a month-long debate in the Virginia legislature about slavery's future. The legislators voted by seventy-three to fifty-eight to continue slavery.[24] Had that important state revived the former trend of state-by-state abolition, patient hope might have been restored. Instead, while Britain was abolishing slavery on all British soil, in America it was increasingly difficult to see how slavery would, or even could, end. "How well I remember thinking," Darwin later wrote, "that Slavery would flourish for centuries in your Southern States."[25]

While Darwin, departing from Brazil, sighed, "I thank God, I shall never again visit a slave country," and his Aunt Sarah fretted as abolition proceeded too gradually, American abolitionists like Garrison adhered to immediatism, causing many other Americans, such as the clerk devouring newspapers in New Salem, Illinois, to see nothing but danger in their approach.[26] The former expectation that slavery would wither away was crushed by its increasing profits and the growing costs, potentially, of compensation or repatriation. Yet, white Americans were loath to accept that such an evil institution must continue solely for economic reasons. With no simple solution in sight, many people resolved the tension by either looking the other way or looking at slavery in a new way: as something *not* evil. Toward this end, efforts were made to depict slaves as something less than human and more like cattle—an endeavor against which both Lincoln and Darwin later fought.

3

The Racial Background, Personal Encounters, and Turning Points in 1837

Why blacks were so “suitable” for slavery was a question for which there was no obvious answer. Lincoln’s line about “the invention of negroes” opposed the view that slavery was natural for blacks or divinely planned. But opposition is not refutation. Today, we are still in the process of learning about race, but in the 1830s, this process was in its early stages, with ideas multiplying and diverging just as Lincoln and Darwin embarked on careers that, separately, helped to shape the debate.

The Great Chain of Being had developed from ancient and medieval concepts as a system of classification, or taxonomy, that grouped together plants and animals possessing a collection of similar features. But the metaphor of a chain allowed too many contrary interpretations: unity and relationship, multiplicity and difference, hierarchy, not to mention the purpose of the chain maker and whether he manufactured it all at once or over time. If chain links were grouped into distinct families, one suddenly had several chains, either destroying the metaphor or sending one in search of missing links. In any case, a chain implied permanence, and individual links were not expected to multiply or divide.

As European plants and animals were studied more closely thanks to the microscope and overseas exploration, it became difficult to keep even broad classes separate: even plants and animals overlapped with “zoophytes.” Worse, the sacred distinction between animals and men came under assault. European explorers encountered *widely* different types of men: not just black men in Africa but also Indians, Orientals, Malays, Lapps, and Hottentots, among others; and newly discovered animals—orangutans and chimpanzees—seemed uncomfortably similar to humans.[1] Alexander Pope expressed it darkly, “[Man] hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest: / In doubt to deem himself a God, or Beast.”[2] It was one thing to be *between* God and animals, perhaps even part angel; it was something else to be partly a brute. Mankind seemed no longer a link but a set of links, with some men more brutish than others.

Establishing how many groups of men existed proved difficult. In 1684, the Frenchman François Bernier came up with four, but sometimes six, categories of mankind. Richard Bradley (1721) said five; David Hume (1748) four or five; Carl Linnaeus (1758) had four; Oliver Goldsmith (1774) six; and Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1775) four and later (1781) five, after which five was fairly standard.[3] With multiplicity came ranking, for even the great Linnaeus's characterizations were usually value laden, so that whites (or Europeans or Caucasians) came out best. More difficult than description was explanation: how did humans come to be so varied? The Bible, as usual, allowed contrary interpretations: one view—later called "monogenism"—holds that variations must have arisen *after* God's single creation of Adam and Eve, while the other—"polygenism"—proposes that the variations resulted from separate divine creations implied elsewhere in Scripture.[4] On one level, polygenism simplified matters: human races were not only different but designedly so. However, polygenists then diverged over whether God had expressed this racial distinction through some mark on Cain or on Ham or on some earlier pre-Adamite creation or on some separate creations in regions unknown to the Hebrews. Monogenists were spared that debate yet were burdened with explaining how Adam's descendants diverged. Climatic differences or degenerative diseases were often cited to explain variations in color and just as often refuted. Some said that men started out white and then degenerated; others that the original color of man was "tawny" with changes spreading in either direction from there. Few suggested an essentially black origin (the more common view today).[5] Because color seemed an awkward measure of variation, "facial angle" was regularly employed after the 1770s. When distinguishing between humans and animals, many placed blacks outside of the human species, while those who insisted that all races of men were members of the same species found it necessary to repeat the view frequently in the face of disbelief.[6] But the very concept of a species had become a problem even though by the 1750s Linnaeus had extended to animals and men the principle John Ray had used back in 1682 to define a plant species: a set of individuals who reproduce new individuals similar to themselves.

By this definition, blacks' ability to breed with (for example) whites and produce fertile offspring indicated they were members of the same human species. Yet, some refused to believe this, and even Linnaeus was troubled by alleged examples of fertile offspring successfully bred from separate species. It was mooted that blacks were not fully human because they were themselves hybrid products of some early intercourse between men and apes. Tales of man/ape couplings had multiple (and somewhat contradictory) purposes, supposedly explaining how blacks came into existence and why they are so "bestial," and usually involving a male ape breeding with an unwilling (or sometimes willing) black female—which nonsensically made blacks progenitors of their own hybridity. Nevertheless, the garbled theory was deemed at least possible by such men as Linnaeus, the influential French naturalist Le Comte de Buffon, Lord Monboddo, Thomas Jefferson, Dr. Benjamin Rush, and Dr. Charles White.[7]

Some observers connected physical variations with mental capabilities. Those who agreed that blacks were mentally deficient might dispute whether this resulted from historical deprivations (the ravages of slavery) or simply being inferior by nature, the former being remediable, the latter not. David Hume declared that blacks were "naturally inferior to whites" and that blacks enslaved in the colonies showed none of the "symptoms of ingenuity" evident in even the "most rude and barbarous of whites."[8] In 1812, Georges Cuvier, the French Aristotle, deemed Africans "the most degraded of human races, whose form approaches that of the beast and whose intelligence is nowhere great enough to arrive at regular government."[9]

By the 1830s, the Great Chain of Being had become a collapsed cat's cradle, with no agreed definition for "species," "man," or "race" and with contradictory explanations for the causes and future outcomes of perceived racial differences. Today, despite DNA evidence that the genetic difference among human races is negligible, many people still take for granted that biological difference implies intellectual inferiority in certain races; and in the early nineteenth century, whatever philosophers or scientists had to say, the vast majority of people held that view. Lincoln and Darwin were raised in a world in which European superiority seemed proved, not by physical but by social data: comparative technology, social organization, and imperial control. It is not amazing that both men were affected by this view, but it is surprising how much they rejected it. Both gave an early demonstration of this at about the age of twenty-three.

For a generation, the U.S. government's policy toward the Indian tribes east of the Mississippi had been to move as many of them west of the river as could be bribed, threatened, or tricked into going. But the Sauk and Fox tribes soon regretted their decision to cooperate, and their leader, Black Hawk, led two thousand of them back into Illinois. The state governor called for militia to drive them out, and Lincoln joined Sangamon County's company. Militiamen chose their own officers, and Lincoln's unit elected him—a man they had known less than a year. It was, Lincoln recalled in 1859, "a success which gave me more pleasure than any I have had since."[10] Lincoln's company never saw any action, but having nothing better to do and needing the money, he reenlisted twice, until honorably discharged.

Popular with his men, Lincoln demonstrated real ability as a leader and made friends later important to his career. In an era when politicians boasted of any military exploits, Lincoln forever cracked jokes about fighting no Indians but having "a good many bloody struggles with the musquetoes."[11] Lincoln was only once in serious danger—from his own men.

An old Indian wandered into the militia's camp, and though he carried a certificate of good character from American authorities, some of Lincoln's men prepared to shoot the man, saying, "We have come out to fight the Indian and by God we intend to do so."[12] Lincoln had no reason to like Indians. They had killed his grandfather "by stealth," and he evidently had no qualms about fighting Indians or about the removal policy. Every frontiersman knew these wars involved atrocities on both sides. Lincoln's men had already seen another militia unit's casualties: "horribly mangled—heads cut off—heart taken out—& disfigured in every way"; and "strong men wept" over mutilated civilians. The militiamen's blood was up, and killing this old Indian was, to them, different from killing a white man. But in the end this popular captain placed himself between his men and the Indian and reportedly said, "Men, this must not be done. He must not be shot and killed by us."[13]

Unlike a commissioned officer in the regulars, an elected captain of short-term militia could expect arguments: "The Indian is a damned spy"—before, it had been enough that he was an Indian. Then some fool suggested Lincoln lacked guts. "If any man thinks I am a coward let him test it," said the young captain. Assuming he meant a wrestling match—and they had admired his prowess in plenty of those—they grumbled about his advantage in strength and size. "Choose your weapons then," he replied, showing he would risk serious harm to himself or to his opponent—and all for the sake of a savage that most of Lincoln's men, like most of his contemporaries, barely considered a human being. The militiamen calmed down, and the old Indian was spared.

About three months after Lincoln's discharge, Darwin had his first opportunity to learn how Europeans in Latin America treated the native populations. While collecting specimens in the interior, he heard stories about the frontier war between whites and Indians: "The Indians torture all their prisoners & the Spaniards shoot theirs."[14] One "very intelligent" soldier recounted how in the most recent campaign more than a hundred Indians, men, women, and children, were taken or killed—"for the soldiers sabre every man" while "all the women who appear to be above twenty years old are massacred in cold blood." When Darwin exclaimed that this seemed "inhuman," the soldier replied, "Why, what can be done? They breed so!" Darwin rightly called this a "war of extermination" and related tales of the Indians' desperate courage. When three Indian prisoners were killed one after the other for refusing to betray information, the last said, "Fire, I am a man and can die!" Darwin added, "Not one syllable would they breathe to injure the united cause of their country!"[15]

Part of FitzRoy's purpose on this voyage was to return to Tierra del Fuego three natives who had been taken to England three years earlier and schooled in English and Christian ways. Darwin, having lived with these "civilised" natives for several months, was shocked when he first saw Fuegians in their original habitat: “These poor wretches were stunted in their growth, their hideous faces bedaubed with white paint, their skins filthy and greasy, their hair entangled, their voices discordant, and their gestures violent. Viewing such men, one can hardly make oneself believe that they are fellow-creatures, and inhabitants of the same world.”[16] And yet, Darwin believed in their essential humanity and attributed the differences between the “civilised” and the “savage” to social development rather than to any specific racial differences. On first seeing the Fuegians, “the reflection at once rushed into my mind—such were our ancestors.”[17] Darwin also pondered how the physical environment might influence development. After observing that the Fuegians’ numbers were not decreasing, Darwin explained, “Nature by making habit omnipotent, and its effects hereditary, has fitted the Fuegian to the climate and the productions of his miserable country. . . . I believe, in this extreme part of South America, man exists in a lower state of improvement than in any other part of the world.”[18]

Back in his Edinburgh days, Darwin had been privately tutored in taxidermy by a black freedman, John Edmonston, who had been trained by the eccentric English naturalist Charles Waterton. Darwin called Edmonston “very pleasant and intelligent.”[19] Becoming acquainted with FitzRoy’s “civilised” Fuegians aboard the *Beagle*, Darwin was “incessantly struck . . . how similar their minds were to ours.”[20] At the first landfall, the Cape Verde Islands, Darwin enthused that he had never seen anyone “more intelligent than the Negros, especially the Negro or Mulatto children,” who showed curiosity and perception about his silver pencil case and percussion gun.[21] Darwin seemed to expect his readers to doubt his descriptions of positive qualities in nonwhites.

Comparing FitzRoy’s “civilised” Fuegians and the original article, Darwin saw the effects of social conditioning. The precivilized Fuegians’ lack of private property “must for a long time retard their civilisation,” whereas in Tahiti, where missionaries had “inculcated the value of property,” the natives “now fully understand the value of money, and prefer it to old clothes or other articles.” Revealing some conditioning of his own values, Darwin noted, “It requires little habit to make a dark skin more pleasing and natural to the eye of an European than his own colour.” Darwin was quite willing to reject other observers’ views, as when he wrote that the Australian aborigines “appeared far from being such utterly degraded beings as they have usually been represented.” Sometimes he praised the work of missionaries, sometimes not, but always asserted that groups can make forward or retrograde steps: “It is a pleasant thing to see the aborigines advanced to the same degree of civilisation, however low that may be, which their white conquerors have attained.” But he noted that while the Fuegians had had little contact with Europeans, the number of Australian aborigines “is rapidly decreasing,” and the same was happening to the Indians of Patagonia. Like Lincoln during the Black Hawk War, Darwin hovered above other men’s racial prejudices: "The varieties of man seem to act on each other in the same way as different species of animals—the stronger always extirpating the weaker"—thus differentiating men as "varieties" not "different species."[22]

As the *Beagle* neared home Darwin wrote in his diary the same thought that had struck him when he first saw the wild Fuegians: "One's mind hurries back over past centuries: could our progenitors be such as these?"[23]

While Darwin encountered different human varieties by traveling overseas, Lincoln could observe "aliens" by staying in America, the land of immigrants. In the 1830s, the population was swelled by over half a million immigrants—four times as many immigrants as in the previous decade, while in the following decade the number nearly trebled. Along with Englishmen following in the footsteps of Lincoln's English forebears, increasing numbers came from Germany and Ireland. And while European immigrants were pushing aside Native Americans, they were also dragging in Africans in chains. The social, economic, and political issues that ensued from all this mixing of people were of importance to political leaders—and Lincoln became one when he managed to win a seat in the state legislature shortly after his service in the militia.

Some Americans, unhappy that politicians had not stemmed this flow, joined the anti-immigrant American Party, better known as the Know-Nothings—a nickname reflecting either secretiveness or embarrassment about the party's discriminatory basis. If such a party could establish itself in a nation comprising immigrants' descendants and could rant about foreign tongues and religion in a country that had always absorbed foreign speakers and was the only one on Earth to have religious tolerance written into its Constitution, then one can imagine how exercised that nation could become about men of other races.

Lincoln expressed the link between antialien feeling and antiblack feeling when explaining in 1855 why he could never be a Know-Nothing:

> How could I be? How can any one who abhors the oppression of negroes, be in favor of degrading classes of white people? Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid. As a nation, we began by declaring that "*all men are created equal.*" We now practically read it "all men are created equal, *except negroes.*" When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read "all men are created equal, except negroes, *and foreigners, and catholics.*"[24]

When the *Beagle* returned to England in 1836, Darwin discovered that antislavery agitation in Britain continued because immediatists like his Aunt Sarah were fighting the gradualist legislation that had established an "apprentice" system intended to keep adult blacks in forced labor for another six years. While that campaign continued in Britain, in America, twenty-eight-year-old Abraham Lincoln—now, in 1837, a lawmaker himself—took his first public position on the issue of slavery.

As abolitionist activity expanded both in Britain and America, proslavery elements in America's southern states grew increasingly angry. Their legislatures appealed to northern colleagues to denounce abolitionism, and the Illinois legislature found itself debating a lengthy resolution to that effect. On the national stage, Henry Clay regularly denounced abolitionists for endangering the Union, and Lincoln allegedly once said of his political hero, "I never had an opinion upon the subject of slavery in my life that I did not get from him."[25] Yet, in 1837, Lincoln reacted to abolitionism in a significantly different way.

The antiabolitionism resolution before the legislature maintained "that the right of property in slaves is sacred" under the federal Constitution, adding that "the General Government cannot abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, against the consent of the citizens of said District without a manifest breach of good faith."[26] The upper house approved the resolution unanimously. In the lower house, the voice vote proceeded alphabetically all the way to the *L*s before anyone voted nay. After that, only five more colleagues joined Abraham Lincoln's vote against the seventy-seven-vote majority.

No political advantage was to be gained by opposing the resolution or in submitting a written "protest" some weeks later to explain his negative vote. Most of Lincoln's fellow Whigs had voted for the resolution, and only one, Dan Stone (a native of Vermont), cosigned the "protest" that stated that he and Lincoln

> believe that the institution of slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy; but that the promulgation of abolition doctrines tends rather to increase than to abate its evils; . . . that Congress . . . has no power, under the constitution, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the different States; . . . that the Congress has the power . . . to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia; but that power ought not to be exercised unless at the request of the people of said District.[27]

"The kernel of the whole event," as historian William Lee Miller rightly stresses, "is that Lincoln and Stone did, and the assembly did not, say plainly that slavery is unjust." Some have suggested that Lincoln and Stone delayed their "protest" until other issues were settled, but a "more striking point," as Miller puts it, is "that they issued any written 'protest' at all."[28]

The apparent disharmony in condemning slavery as immoral *and* abolitionists as harmful is resolved by understanding Lincoln's concept of how slavery might best be ended. "Like many of his contemporaries," comments biographer David Herbert Donald, "Lincoln viewed slavery as an institution that would die out if it was confined to the areas where it already existed."[29] Although Lincoln himself did not record that particular view until 1845 and a decade later began to doubt the possibility of a "peaceful extinction of slavery," presumably in 1837 he *did* believe slavery was destined to die a "natural death"—exactly what abolitionists had stopped believing.[30] Their evidence was the growth of King Cotton, the increasing number of slaves despite the cessation of the slave trade, and the fight over Missouri's admission in 1820, which demonstrated southern leaders' reluctance to accept any geographical limit to the spread of slavery. But in 1837, none of this had yet convinced Lincoln that the abolitionists were right.

Lincoln had plenty of straws to grasp at. The British were debating whether to accelerate their abolition process, and their navy was actively suppressing the Atlantic slave trade. In the last two decades, emancipation had either begun or been completed in a dozen other countries. Mexico abolished slavery in 1829—a major reason why American slaveowners living in Texas had revolted against Mexican rule and were now seeking (to the horror of abolitionists) admission to the United States as a slave state. The Virginia legislature nearly voted for abolition and might yet do so. In 1832, Clay had secured a form of federal funding for the American Colonization Society. Lincoln might even have taken heart from the desperation of southern efforts to shield slavery from abolitionist propaganda by preventing the distribution of antislavery writings in the mails, by imposing a "gag rule" in Congress to counter a massive petition campaign, and, of course, by appealing to northern legislatures for antiabolitionist resolutions.

The two-month gap between Lincoln's negative vote and his protest may not signify a delay as much as a reaction to a new provocation. John C. Calhoun, the south's most eminent voice, speaking on 6 February in favor of extending the "gag rule," startled the Senate by urging that slavery "is beyond the jurisdiction of Congress" and that "Abolition and the Union cannot coexist." More shocking was Calhoun's *rejection* of the notion that slavery was evil: "far otherwise; I hold it to be a good, as it has thus far proved itself to be to both [races]."[31] Whether or not Calhoun's speech influenced Lincoln and Stone, it was on this key point that they drew a moral line that others refused to draw and Calhoun was willing to cross.

In the same month as Lincoln's "protest," there occurred in London a "moment more than any other in Darwin's life" that, according to biographer Janet Browne, "deserves to be called a turning point." Darwin had recently received important information from ornithologist John Gould regarding specimens brought back on the *Beagle*. Darwin scribbled in a notebook, "The same relation that common ostrich bears to Petisse, extinct guanaco to recent: in former case position, in latter time." In essence, this means that since two types of South American "ostriches" could be shown to be two different species, this geographical difference might somehow relate to the chronological difference between extinct South American mammals and existing ones. Here was evidence that species were not immutable but could somehow change. Darwin now realized, as Browne points out, that "[Charles] Lyell's general principles linking past with present could be applied to the biological world as much as to the geological."[32]

Six years earlier, Darwin had boarded the *Beagle* without planning to test any theory about species, yet early in the voyage, he found evidence to support someone else's theory about geology.[33] In preparation for the voyage, J. S. Henslow advised him to study the recently published first volume of Lyell's *Principles of Geology* but "on no account to accept the views therein advocated." Darwin ignored the latter advice and instead became a disciple—for long the only one—of Lyell's theories. "I am proud to remember," Darwin wrote in old age, "that the first place . . . which I geologised, convinced me of the infinite superiority of Lyell's views over those advocated by any other work known to me."[34]

Lyell's theory, dubbed "uniformitarianism," maintains that geological evidence did not fit the Christian story of a creation of the Earth followed (as most geologists then believed) by a gradual cooling of the Earth's core, after which the planet was stable. Instead, according to science historian Martin J. S. Rudwick, Lyell argues that landmasses are continually rising and falling according to pressure from internal molten rock while rain, rivers, and glaciers cause erosion and sedimentation and that these present-day processes are "fully representative of those that have acted in the past, not only in *kind* but also in *degree*." There is no beginning or end in Lyell's "system," because "the overall pattern of earth history has been steady-state or cyclic, and not directional at all."[35] Along with this cycle of new land being made and old land destroyed, Lyell accepts that there were "new species arising and old ones becoming extinct in a gradual 'birth' and 'death' of species. . . . [H]e found causes for species extinctions in disturbances to the fine balance of interspecific competition, disturbances initiated by climate, land and sea changes," but because Lyell rejects the transmutation of species, "he left unexplained how new species were 'created.'"[36] According to Rudwick, because the fossil evidence was then so limited, "Lyell has no great difficulty in arguing here that the apparent progress in the rank of organic life is an illusion, owing simply to the differentially selective preservation of terrestrial and aquatic animals." Lyell recognizes no progression from simpler to more complex organisms, thus rejecting the radical thinking of Jean-Baptiste Lamarck and of Darwin's own grandfather Erasmus Darwin. Lyell felt that his nonbiblical view of geology actually supports a biblical view of organic life: only God created species which were "immutable," and if the fossil record suggests that new species sometimes appeared, then these result from subsequent phases of *new* creation, the creation of man being the greatest of these and of an entirely different order. Although fossil evidence suggests man first appeared in geologically recent times, Lyell argues that this is not evidence of "a progressive system." "Lyell maintains this inconsistent position," according to Rudwick, "because he makes a sharp separation between man's physical and mental characteristics: man's evident superiority is due to his power of reason, particularly his power of *improvable* reason, which is precisely the feature that distinguishes him from other animals" (original emphasis).[37]

Although Darwin felt that Lyell's ideas liberated science—or at least geology—from dependence on the Bible to understand nature, he would later address Lyell's inconsistency in applying uniformitarianism to both geology and organic life—but not to man. Eventually, Darwin employed Lyell's gradual elevation and subsidence of landmasses as part of an explanation for changes in organisms: changes that were "uniform" in their law-like causes but "progressive" in their long-term effects. As Darwin later said in a different context, he eventually "out-lyelled Lyell" by applying an important aspect of uniformitarianism to all species.[38]

Yet all that was in the future. During the *Beagle*'s voyage, Darwin was overwhelmed by the tremendous variability he found in plant, animal, and most intriguingly, in human life, all seeming at first glance to conflict with uniformitarianism. Observing how Australian marsupials were so similar and yet so different from analogous species on other continents, Darwin jested in his diary, "An unbeliever in everything beyond his own reason might exclaim 'Surely two distinct Creators must have been [at] work.'" But after puzzlement at God's failure to come up with a more uniform blueprint, Darwin found reassurance when he saw how an Australian lion-ant caught its prey in the same intricate way that European lion-ants do: "Now what would the disbeliever say to this? Would any two workmen ever hit on so beautiful, so simple & yet so artificial a contrivance? It cannot be thought so.—The same hand has surely worked throughout the universe."[39]

During the last weeks of the voyage, Darwin began to reflect more deeply on the variations noticed among similar animal groups in the separate Galapagos Islands and among similar yet differentiated foxes in East and West Falkland islands, noting that "the zoology of Archipelagoes will be well worth examining; for such facts would undermine the stability of Species."[40] Six months later and back in England, the specialists' reports on the specimens he had brought back made Darwin think his wild speculation about the mutability of species might be valid.

In March 1837, Darwin received confirmation that the Galapagos mockingbirds differed not only from any other known species but also from each other, depending on which island they inhabited.[41] These diversities, not just of variants but also of species, were also apparently true of the tortoises, and now there was further corroboration regarding Galapagos iguanas. And the evidence was not only from the islands. Gould, who declared the mockingbirds separate species, saw a similar diversity between Darwin's specimens (some fossil) of South American ostriches. Darwin now saw a pattern of distribution that was not confined only to islands or determined solely by geography but also related to the patterns of extinctions found in geologists' fossil discoveries.

This was the turning point at which Darwin embraced the concept of transmutation advocated by his own grandfather Erasmus and Lamarck, even though their explanations for how transmutation worked seemed utterly insufficient. Unfortunately, Darwin could not openly discuss the issue with colleagues because transmutation was tarred by the Lamarckian brush, and the religious implications were severe.

Groping for some explanation of how transmutation actually occurred, Darwin found "a theory by which to work" in the following year.[42] When, two decades later, Darwin published a theory regarding transmutation of species, he avoided any discussion of the human species: it would take another dozen years before he published on that. And yet, from the start, mankind was on Darwin's mind and particularly the issues of race and slavery, as his notebook jottings from 1838 demonstrate. Early in that year, as Parliament was finally ending slavery on British soil, Darwin scrawled, "Animals—whom we have made our slaves we do not like to consider our equals.—Do not slaveholders wish to make the black man other kind?"[43] In May, Darwin showed that he disagreed not just with slaveholders but with most of his own race:

> Has not the white man, who has debased his nature by making slave of his fellow Black, often wished to consider him as other animal.—it is the way of mankind & I believe those who soar above such prejudices yet have justly exalted nature of man—like to think his origin godlike, at least every nation has done so as yet.[44]

In August 1838, Darwin jotted in a notebook "origin of man now proved."[45]

Both Darwin and Lincoln considered slavery immoral and recognized that any notion that blacks were not fully human helped to delay abolition. Lincoln supported efforts to circumvent the majority's bigotry or apathy (rather than attack it head on) by advocating policies of gradual change and, later, colonization. Darwin would not only assert that men were all of one species: he also sought to prove it. Darwin needed to convince an opposition of elite scientists, many of them his mentors, while Lincoln had to win votes among the prejudiced masses from which he himself had sprung.

Bigotry and bad science were obstacles to an enlightened view of races and their relationships, but another obstacle was religion. And soon, both Lincoln and Darwin had to make crucial choices about the way to present their own evolving religious views.

4

Religious Reformation

The literature about Lincoln's and Darwin's religious opinions is vast because those beliefs in differing ways posed a challenge in their own time and for subsequent generations. Darwin's work has greatly influenced the Western world's view of divine purpose, and Lincoln's amalgam of unorthodoxy and religiosity remains a puzzle. Since both men had reasons to be deliberately ambiguous about personal views that not only influenced public opinion but also changed over time, the evidence is controversial and needs plenty of context—therefore, the topic must be discussed at more than one stage in each life.

England had an established church, but both of Darwin's parents came from a nonconforming tradition. In the United States, there was no established church but a mass of competing denominations, particularly on the barely settled frontier. Britain exhibited more religious toleration than most countries, yet religious dissenters still faced practical disadvantages and even civil disabilities. No such inequalities existed in America, though extralegal forms of prejudice could have similar effects. During Darwin's childhood, his comfortably middle-class family actually leaned away from mild dissent and toward loose conformity. Lincoln's formative years were passed in places like Pigeon Creek, where the "meeting house" still smelled of freshly cut timber and the preachers were often itinerants, or New Salem, where there was no real church at all.

Having lost their mothers at an early age, Lincoln and Darwin felt the influence of their fathers' religious views, to which they reacted quite differently. Darwin's father had turned against his own father's radical deism, keeping his views to himself and having his children baptized in Shrewsbury's Anglican church—although, in the Wedgwood tradition, their mother led them to the town's Unitarian chapel on Sundays. After her death, the family attended the Anglican church. For Dr. Darwin, the issue was social rather than theological, appearances mattering more than doctrine. Lincoln's family lived amid the fluctuations of denominational splits and evangelical competition. His parents were married by a Methodist preacher but joined local Baptist congregations.

However different the English and American religious environments, children generally adopted their parents' religious choices, a pattern followed by young Charles and his siblings and also by young Abe's sister—but not by Abe.

Up to his early twenties, Darwin barely gave a thought to religious matters and certainly did not question the literal truth of the Bible. Although he spent morning chapel cribbing Virgil, when running late to class he prayed for God's assistance to avoid a beating.[1] Lincoln, on the other hand, seems to have looked askance at religious practices from a remarkably early age. There is no obvious explanation, but it may reflect Lincoln's intellectual precociousness and antipathy toward his father.

Lincoln's father and stepmother were formally accepted into the Pigeon Creek Baptist Church when Lincoln was fourteen; his older sister joined three years later; and when the family left the area, the twenty-one-year-old Abe had still not joined. He attended services, enjoyed reading the Bible, and (as his affectionate stepmother later recalled) "would hear sermons preached—come home—take the children out—get on a stump or log and almost repeat it word for word." Another source put it differently: ten-year-old Abe's mimicry of the "style & tone of the old baptist preachers" interfered with chores until his father "would come and make him quit—send him to work."[2] While his father may have been less concerned about blasphemy than work-shyness, Abe may have begun to link his father's lack of ambition to his religious piety.

After his family moved to Illinois in 1830, Lincoln was helping to clear a neighbor's land when Peter Cartwright, a well-known Methodist circuit rider then running for governor, came by. The neighbor recalled that Lincoln, "awkward and very shabbily dressed," argued with Cartwright, who "laid down his doctrines in a way which undoubtedly seemed to Lincoln a little too dogmatical." The neighbor admired how Lincoln "met the great preacher in his arguments, and the extensive acquaintance he showed with the politics of the State—in fact he quite beat him in the argument."[3] It may have been on political rather than religious points that the uneducated Lincoln, barely twenty-one, scored against an experienced orator, but his later encounters with the famous evangelist were decidedly about religion.

While the lanky farmhand was sparring with a preacher, Charles Darwin was at Cambridge supposedly preparing for the Church. Darwin was not averse to becoming a country clergyman with leisure for natural history pursuits, and yet "I had scruples about declaring my belief in all the dogmas of the Church of England." This was putting the point mildly, considering his Unitarian antecedents, but becoming a clergyman—even obtaining a degree at Cambridge—required acceptance of the Thirty-Nine Articles. "Accordingly I read with care Pearson on the Creeds and a few other books on divinity; and as I did not then in the least doubt the strict and literal truth of every word in the Bible, I soon persuaded myself that our Creed must be fully accepted."[4]

At Cambridge, Darwin preferred "beetling" to theology, but a useful overlap was found in the writings of William Paley, some of which were required texts. Darwin admired the "clear language" of Paley's *Moral Philosophy*, the "logic . . . of his *Natural Theology*," and "could have written out the whole of the *Evidences* [*of Christianity*] with perfect correctness." Paley considered nature so full of design that there had to be a designer: his famous analogy was of a pocket watch found by the wayside that proved the existence of a watchmaker. According to historian John Hedley Brooke, there are two main interpretations of Darwin's embrace of natural theology in his youth. One view is that he "found God *in* nature rather than deduced God's existence *from* it" (original emphases), as when during his first walk in a Brazilian rain forest, he felt moved by nature. The other view is that Darwin narrowed the scope of natural theology by taking the view that God's designs were to be seen "in providential combinations of laws rather than in specific organic structures."[5] But whether nature revealed God as the creator of laws or as the author of repeated interventions, Paley provided Darwin with a theology that was logically organized and buttressed by nature, and this helped make conventional religion acceptable to Darwin. Still, Darwin was concerned that when the time came for ordination, he might not be able to answer yes when some bishop asked if he felt "inwardly moved by the holy spirit."[6] He overcame his scruples sufficiently to take his degree in 1831 and then found opportunities to delay ordination until the voyage of the *Beagle* eventually shelved the whole idea.

As Darwin set off on his life-changing trip, Lincoln returned from his second journey down the Mississippi River and settled in New Salem, Illinois, where later reports from acquaintances suggest Lincoln was developing highly unorthodox views, influenced by the skeptical writings of Voltaire, Thomas Paine, Constantin-François Volney, and Robert Burns. Calvinist predestination and eternal punishment for all but the "elect" were satirized in Burns's poem "Holy Willie's Prayer," which Lincoln quoted so fondly that a friend said, "That was L[incoln's] religion."[7] Doubting that God would inflict eternal damnation was the mildest part of Lincoln's unorthodoxy. More shocking was that Lincoln followed Paine in rejecting the Bible's literal truth and Jesus's divinity.[8]

Lincoln and Darwin were in their early twenties when the former, just entering politics, became most extreme in his infidelity, while the latter, circumnavigating the globe, reached the high-water mark in his orthodoxy. Darwin's "firm conviction of the existence of God, and of the immortality of the soul" was heightened while experiencing "the grandeur of a Brazilian forest." Darwin's faith withstood the corrosive influence of hard-nosed seamen, who once "heartily laughed" at him "for quoting the Bible as an unanswerable authority on some point of morality."[9] Others recollected that Darwin attended Protestant religious services wherever possible and felt "shock" when a shipmate "openly avowed disbelief in the flood."[10]

Meanwhile, in New Salem, it was Lincoln who caused “shock” around the cracker barrel in Sam Hill’s store by expounding on the fallibility of scripture and the lack of evidence for Jesus’s incarnation and resurrection and by writing two pieces on religion in 1834, one of which was probably destroyed at the time, while the other was only identified in 1994. Lincoln had boarded and worked at Hill’s store, which was his campaign headquarters when he ran for the state legislature. One candidate, who had defeated Lincoln in 1832 but was defeated by him in 1834, was Cartwright, the politically ambitious Methodist preacher. Cartwright had previously defended in a newspaper his opinion that more Methodists should be appointed locally as teachers in the growing “common school” movement. Lincoln wrote a scathing reply, accusing Cartwright of all manner of hypocrisy and adding, “I believe the people in this country are in some degree priest ridden.” The letter, paid for as an advertisement, was not signed by Lincoln but by Sam Hill, who had his own reasons for disliking Cartwright but lacked the ability to write such a piece. Whether or not Lincoln wrote it as a favor for Hill, Hill signed it as a favor for—or to protect—Lincoln.[11]

Evidence strongly suggests that, also in 1834, Lincoln wrote a “book” (more likely some folded sheets) on “infidelity” that attacked “the divinity of Christ—special inspiration—revelation &c.” Apparently, Lincoln showed it to Hill, who promptly threw it in a red-hot stove to save Lincoln’s reputation. Some voters in the recent election had been reluctant to back Lincoln because he was said to be a “deist” or an “infidel,” and certain friends realized that he must stop. The matter was generally hushed up: over three decades later, former acquaintances were reluctant to discuss it, and one who was away from New Salem at the time claimed that he never learned anything of it on his return.[12] But many years after Lincoln’s death, it was reported that Hill’s wife had once asked Lincoln, “Do you really believe there isn’t any future state?” and he allegedly replied, “Mrs. Hill, I’m afraid there isn’t. It isn’t a pleasant thing to think that when we die that is the last of us.”[13]

Albert Taylor Bledsoe, a fellow Kentuckian transplanted to Illinois and close friend of Lincoln in the 1840s, later felt Lincoln had deliberately disguised his attitude toward religion. After West Point and a stint in the Episcopalian ministry, Bledsoe turned to law, practicing in Springfield from 1839 to 1848. Bledsoe was one of the few men who had known Lincoln well—sometimes having an office adjoining Lincoln’s and living in the same boardinghouse for a while—yet later came to despise him. After Lincoln’s death, Bledsoe wrote a review of the biography by Ward Hill Lamon, who had employed William H. Herndon’s evidence about Lincoln’s early years as an “infidel.” “From our various conversations,” Bledsoe commented bitterly, “. . . we had supposed that we had some adequate idea of his religious sentiments, but Colonel Lamon’s work has dispelled this illusion.” While Lincoln never pretended to believe “in the being of God, or in a moral government of the world, much less in the truth of Christianity . . . he always seemed to deplore his want of faith as a very great infelicity, from which he would be glad to be delivered; and all this was uttered with an air of such apparent modesty, that his gloom . . . awakened in our minds no other feeling than one of deep compassion."[14] That compassion clearly dissipated after Bledsoe read Lamon's biography.

Lincoln's religious views were submerged sufficiently so that in 1836 he received more votes than any other candidate in his district. Spending more time in Springfield to attend the legislature and study law, Lincoln became a political ally and friend of Ninian W. Edwards, leader of the Springfield's loftiest social set. Edwards gave Lincoln a present, *The Works of William Paley*, perhaps thinking Lincoln's faith in God's existence needed shoring up.[15] Paley's "natural theology" may have succeeded, just as it had earlier bolstered Darwin. Yet Lincoln did not entirely stop criticizing Christian orthodoxy and scriptural authority, and he apparently began to use "nature" in his arguments.

Early in 1837, shortly after Lincoln settled in Springfield as a partner in John T. Stuart's law firm, he wrote (ungrammatically) to a friend, "I've never been to church yet, nor probably shall not be soon. I stay away because I am conscious I should not know how to behave myself."[16] Lincoln avoided church but not religious debate. The law office was next door to the court clerk's office, and one clerk, James H. Matheny—nine years Lincoln's junior but later a groomsman at his wedding—recounted to Herndon that:

> Lincoln used to talk Infidelity in the Clerks office. . . . Lincoln attacked the Bible & New Testament on two grounds—1st From the inherent or apparent contradiction under its lids & 2ndly from the grounds of Reason—sometimes he ridiculed the Bible & New Testament—sometimes seemed to scoff [at] it. . . . Sometimes Lincoln bordered on absolute Atheism: he went far that way & often shocked me. I was then a young man & believed what my good mother told me. . . . Lincoln would come into the clerk's office where I and . . . others were writing or staying; & would bring the Bible with him—read a chapter—argue against it.[17]

Significantly, Matheny's very next phrase is: "Lincoln then had a smattering of Geology if I recollect it." Lincoln was now using "expert testimony," employing not just reason but also science against revelation. Allen C. Guelzo argues that Lincoln probably read Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, but he might also have read the American edition of Robert Bakewell's *Introduction to Geology* (1813), or William Maclure's *Observations on the Geology of the United States of America* (1817) or even the 1804 translation of *A View of the Soil and Climate of the United States*, by Volney, the French deist whose skeptical *Ruins* supposedly influenced Lincoln's religious thinking.[18] In addition to reading, Lincoln's surveying job may have sparked his interest in geology, and certainly, he was later acquainted with at least three geologists in Illinois.

While Lincoln may have brought geology into religious debates, Darwin probed the subject deeply during the *Beagle* voyage, just as his faint interest in a church career waned.[19] After the voyage, as Darwin groped for some mechanism to explain transmutation, he read widely and sought information from colleagues without sharing with them his scientifically unorthodox notions. After reading Lyell's latest thinking in the fifth edition of the *Principles*, published in 1837, Darwin wrote in the margin, next to Lyell's argument that variation in species can only go so far before it must stop: "If this were true, adios theory."[20]

Wary of revealing his theorizing to his colleagues, Darwin poured his thoughts into a series of notebooks. He expressed his frustration that religious feeling tolerated new laws discovered by astronomers and geologists but balked at "fixed laws of generation" because they touched mankind too closely.[21] "Why is thought being a secretion of the brain, more wonderful than gravity a property of matter? It is our arrogance . . . our admiration of ourselves."[22] Increasingly seeing evidence for those "fixed laws" in the *Beagle* specimens, Darwin gradually abandoned some conventional religious beliefs. Darwin spent hours conversing with the free-thinking intellectuals who made up the London coterie in which his brother Erasmus moved. "During these two years," he later wrote, "I was led to think much about religion. . . . I had gradually come by this time, to see that the Old Testament from its manifestly false history of the world, . . . was no more to be trusted than the sacred books of the Hindoos, or the beliefs of any barbarian."[23]

Darwin did not suddenly lose faith. Not "until a considerably later period" of his life did he think much "about the existence of a personal God." Perceiving that the New Testament contradicted the Old, he wondered if God made "a [new] revelation to the Hindoos," would he let them retain their earlier beliefs? "This appeared to me utterly incredible." Darwin believed that the New Testament did not have to be discarded with the Old; however: "The clearest evidence would be required to make any sane man believe in the [Christian] miracles; . . . the men at that time were ignorant and credulous to a degree almost incomprehensible by us; . . . the Gospels cannot be proved to have been written simultaneously with the events . . . they differ in [too] many important details . . . to be admitted as the usual inaccuracies of eye-witnesses." While claiming no "novelty" in these "reflections," Darwin "gradually came to disbelieve in Christianity as a divine revelation." His "complete" disbelief in orthodox Christianity developed so slowly as to cause "no distress, [and] . . . I have never since doubted even for a single second that my conclusion was correct." Far from distressed, Darwin felt relief. The teaching that "men who do not believe, and this would include my Father, Brother and almost all my best friends, will be everlastingly punished" he called "a damnable doctrine."[24] This was the same criticism that Lincoln found so agreeable in Burns's "Holy Willie's Prayer." Like Lincoln, Darwin avoided throwing out the baby with the bath water—the moral with the miraculous—for, while writing of one "damnable doctrine," he also used the words "beautiful" and "perfection" to describe "the morality of the New Testament."

Darwin apparently discussed religion with his father in 1838, at the same time that the subject of marriage arose. His father advised Darwin "to conceal carefully my doubts, for he said that he had known extreme misery thus caused with married persons. Things went on pretty well until the wife or husband became out of health, and then some women suffered miserably by doubting about the salvation of their husbands, thus making them likewise to suffer."[25]

Dr. Darwin sought to preserve his son's future happiness in marriage, just as Hill hoped to secure Lincoln's political prospects by throwing his "book on Infidelity" into the red-hot stove. Lincoln gradually became less blatant about his views, while Darwin, though already circumspect, presently failed to follow his father's advice.

Darwin may have couched his religious views in the best possible terms when he proposed to his cousin Emma Wedgwood in 1838. Ten days after he had returned to London to prepare the house for his future wife, Emma wrote to him, mostly with family news but adding a long expression of her "fear that our opinions on the most important subject should differ widely. . . . My reason tells me that honest & conscientious doubts cannot be a sin, but I feel it would be a painful void between us. . . . I should dread the feeling that you were concealing your opinions from the fear of giving me pain." She asked Charles as "a favour" to read a passage from the Gospel of John.[26]

Lincoln's marriage courtship was far more complicated, but after one broken engagement, Lincoln finally married Mary Todd, whose intellectual attainments, social graces, and political connections far exceeded those of most of the women he had encountered previously. Although Mary did not inform her sister and brother-in-law of her plan to marry Lincoln until a few hours before the ceremony, and Lincoln did not tell his "best man" until late in the afternoon, the wedding, on the evening of 4 November 1842, was not an impulsive move: Lincoln had obtained the license, booked a clergyman, and had the wedding ring engraved: "Love is eternal." The two weddings were barely sacramental events. The Darwins' Anglican ceremony was modified to respect Unitarian sentiment, the attendance was small, and within two hours the newlyweds were eating sandwiches on a train for London. The Lincolns' suddenly announced wedding was conducted in Mary's sister's house by a minister of the Episcopalian church that Lincoln did not attend and that Mary abandoned for another a decade later. The Darwins' first child was born eleven months after their marriage, but when the boy was baptized, there were no godparents because Charles and Emma objected to "religious proxies." Lincoln's first child came along almost exactly nine months after Lincoln's marriage, and apparently only the last of their four sons was baptized.[27]

Despite marital disharmonies—not only more public in the Lincolns' case but also probably more exaggerated by contemporary notice—both marriages, begun in some trepidation, successfully lasted "until death us do part," with none of the partners ever being unfaithful. "Infidelity" was a problem only in the religious sense. Mary Lincoln was superficial in her religious sensibilities and probably felt satisfied that her husband, though not an orthodox Christian, was a truly good and moral being. He was careful—at least by the time she met him—not to disturb other peoples' religious feelings, although Mary had difficulty getting Lincoln to attend church. Compared with Mary Lincoln, Emma Darwin was far more devout, despite coming from a Unitarian tradition. Her husband—the erstwhile trainee for a country parsonage—had by the time of their marriage developed ideas that would shake the Christian world and create a painful wound in their marriage.

Sometime after Lincoln used geology in arguing against scripture in 1837, he became more wary about discussing religion at all. In October, Lincoln wrote a letter to a newspaper expressing concern that a political opponent had asked one of Lincoln's friends if "he ever heard Lincoln say he was a deist."[28] His friend Matheny reported that as Lincoln "grew older he grew more discreet—didn't talk much before strangers about his religion."[29] The change must have been fairly swift, for by 1838 or 1839, when Herndon came into the circle of Matheny and Lincoln, he apparently never heard about the "book on Infidelity" even though Herndon himself was a freethinker.[30] Lincoln now kept to himself views that might alienate clients, voters, and members of the Edwards circle with whom he increasingly socialized. Any rumors of Lincoln's unorthodoxy failed to prevent his reelection to the legislature in 1838 and 1840.

In January 1841, Lincoln was depressed after his first engagement with Mary Todd broke down, so he stayed for a month with Joshua Speed, his closest friend for the last three years but recently returned to his (and Lincoln's) native state, Kentucky. A skeptic himself, Speed knew as much as anyone about Lincoln's religious views, but when Herndon later sought his opinion, Speed wrote cautiously, "I think that when I first knew Mr L he was skeptical as to the great truths of the Christian Religion. I think that after he was elected President, he sought to become a believer—and to make the Bible a preceptor to his faith and a guide for his conduct."[31] Speed offered one story to Herndon (and alluded to it in two later letters) that cast a pious light on Lincoln's religious views. Speed's mother had presented the "moody & hypochondriac" Lincoln with a Bible, advising him to read it and "adopt its precepts and pray for its promises." Later, as president, Lincoln sent Mrs. Speed a photograph with an inscription recalling that gift.[32]

After returning from Kentucky, Lincoln wrote to Speed's sister in Louisville, recounting the surprisingly cheerful behavior of a group of slaves being transported in chains on the same steamboat that carried Lincoln. He added the pious comment, "How true it is that 'God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,' or in other words, that He renders the worst of human conditions tolerable, while He permits the best, to be nothing better than tolerable. . . . Tell your mother that . . . I intend to read [the Bible] regularly when I return home. I doubt not that it is really, as she says, the best cure for the 'Blues' could one but take it according to the truth."[33]

Those sentences epitomize Lincoln's self-presentation regarding religion. An avid reader of the Bible, Lincoln knew that his ability to quote scripture with great appropriateness always impressed listeners. However, Lincoln qualified Mrs. Speed's suggestion that the Bible was a cure for melancholy by adding "could one but take it according to the truth"—the difficulty being that he did *not* take much of it as true. To say so bluntly would offend; not to say it at all would be hypocritical. The balancing bar that kept him from falling off that tightrope was his use of language: if his Bible-quoting, his use of scriptural analogies, and his carefully phrased allusions to himself made people feel comfortable about his religious views, that was fine with Lincoln.

Darwin also became more careful about how he presented his interlinked religious and scientific views. Although some were discussed with his father and possibly his brother's progressive friends in London, Darwin remained cautious toward his scientific colleagues.[34] It was his own reading of Malthus's *Essay on the Principle of Population*—which stated that as human populations grow faster than resources, some of the population will always fail in the competition to survive—that gave Darwin a "theory by which to work." He called his theory "natural selection" in contrast to the artificial selection applied by men in the breeding of plants and animals. Although the idea needed much filling out, Darwin felt he had identified a mechanism for transmutation excelling (if not entirely supplanting) Lamarck's "acquired characteristics." This success occurred shortly before he married Emma, and some aspects disturbed her.

After the newlyweds were living under the same roof in London, Emma was reluctant to discuss religion face-to-face and wrote her husband another letter. She couched her feelings in terms that might appeal to his scientific sensibilities, expressing concern that his absorption in "following up yr own discoveries" might prevent him giving "attention to both sides of the question." She connected Erasmus's influence with Charles's loss of "some of that dread & fear which the feeling of doubting first gives & which I do not think an unreasonable or superstitious feeling." Darwin's response is unknown. He could not stop his research or the conclusions to which it led, as Emma must have realized. Darwin folded up the letter and at some point wrote on the outside "When I am dead know that many times I have kissed & cryed over this."[35]

When Joshua Speed wrote to thank Lincoln for helping him through a crisis regarding Speed's upcoming marriage, Lincoln's reply suggested that, however skeptical both men were, they could accept the notion of a Supreme Being who is in control—although perhaps Lincoln worried that Speed would not believe he was being sincere. "I am not sure there was any merit, with me, in the part I took in your difficulty; I was drawn to it as by fate; if I would, I could not have done less than I did. . . . I always was superstitious; and as part of my superstition, I believe God made me one of the instruments of bringing your Fanny and you together, which union, I have no doubt He had fore-ordained." After reassuring Speed that his marriage was, as it were, made in heaven, Lincoln applied the concept to himself: "Whatever he designs, he will do for *me* yet. 'Stand *still* and see the salvation of the Lord' is my text just now."[36]

Either Lincoln retained some predestinarian aspect of his parents' religion despite, like Darwin, rejecting all Christian orthodoxy or he simply determined for himself that, logically, an omnipotent and omniscient God might well direct events according to His own plan, however unknowable. Lincoln had scraped his religion down to this essence, and the (admittedly ambiguous) evidence does not compellingly suggest that he ever abandoned this position or developed it further. Referring to his religion as "my superstition" was perhaps meant to reassure Speed that Lincoln was not abandoning rationalism and had circumscribed this bit of "faith."

Much has been written of Lincoln's fatalism, determinism, and belief in "the doctrine of necessity."[37] Of course, reconciling such a view with free will and moral responsibility is an age-old problem, and balance is harder to achieve than simple vacillation. In Lincoln's case, the conflict was intense. He seemed to believe in an all-knowing Creator who can direct events, but he had also freed himself from his own most obvious destiny by laboring hard to raise himself up through education and experience. As historian William Lee Miller expresses it, "We might say that his own life, which would be shot through with choices that made a difference, would disprove his own youthful theory [of necessity]."[38] Lincoln's dilemma came from recognizing that he was exceptionally able, ambitious, and successful—without ever discovering what made him so.

The scientifically minded Lincoln tried but failed to put everything down to reason. In a speech in 1842, Lincoln could declare, "Happy day, when, all appetites controlled, all passions subdued, all matters subjected, *mind*, all conquering *mind*, shall live and move the monarch of the world," yet eight months later, he could ask his newly married best friend: "Are you now, in *feeling* as well as *judgement*, glad you are married as you are? From any body but me, this would be an impudent question not to be tolerated; but I know you will pardon it in me."[39] Lincoln was "impatient to know" Speed's answer because such feeble evidence as another man's feelings about his married state might help Lincoln decide whether to propose again to Mary Todd. Thus did Lincoln juggle emotion and reason just as he juggled fatalism and free will.

In the middle of 1842, Darwin found time, amid numerous projects, to write out a thirty-five-page sketch of his transmutation theory. Employing the phrase "natural selection" for the first time, Darwin laid out his basic argument, beginning with the "unnatural selection" of domestication of animals by men, bringing in the struggle for resources derived from Malthus, carefully noting the numerous potential objections to his theory but holding back the detailed evidence building up in his notebooks. Man as a selector (domestication) was contrasted with nature as a selector (natural selection), but the effect of selection on humans themselves was studiously avoided, even though the subject had featured prominently in Darwin's notebooks for the last four years. Not only was the topic too emotive but also Darwin accepted that God might still be deemed the instigator of natural selection as a primary law, something that "should exalt our notion of the power of the omniscient Creator."[40] With his theory on paper and no clear plan for its future, Darwin returned to other publishing tasks and continual note taking.

At the same time, the ambitious Lincoln, while becoming a successful lawyer, planned his next political move as his fourth term in the legislature drew to a close. He began maneuvering in 1842 for a party nomination for a congressional seat and found himself the victim of a whispering campaign. Accusations that his upmarket marriage made him "the candidate of pride, wealth, and aristocratic family distinction" were patently absurd, but Lincoln was worried by "the strangest combination of church influence against me . . . it was every where contended that no Christian ought to go for me, because I belonged to no church, was suspected of being a deist."[41]

When he failed to get the nomination—for reasons relating more to party seniority than religion—Lincoln cleverly pushed through a resolution effectively creating a "succession" so his turn would come in the election after next. Lincoln settled back, concentrated on the law, and waited for the congressional election of 1846 to roll around. If Lincoln thought that by saying nothing offensive about religion during the interval he could bury the religious issue by 1846, he was wrong.

In 1843, a year after writing out the first sketch of his theory, Darwin briefly overcame his reluctance to mention it to any of his scientific colleagues. When zoologist George Waterhouse sought Darwin's advice about problems he and every other naturalist had with taxonomy, Darwin knew the problem was in the very endeavor "to discover the laws according to which the Creator has willed to produce organized beings . . . [which] means just nothing. According to my opinion, (which I give everyone leave to hoot at . . .) classification consists of grouping beings according to their actual relationship, i.e. their consanguinity, or descent from common stocks." After revealing a bit more about "linking all, say the Mammals, into one great, quite indivisible group," Darwin pulled back: "But it is no use my going on this way." The seed fell on stony ground: Waterhouse's eventual publication attacked any notion that groups of animals "blend perceptibly into each other."[42]

Six months later, Darwin tried again, this time with Joseph Dalton Hooker, eight years his junior, an admirer of *The Voyage of the Beagle,* and recently returned from a similar voyage. Hooker was a fine botanist whose father supervised the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. In the midst of a growing and mutually admiring correspondence, Darwin suddenly confided in Hooker, explaining the circumstances that led to the "very presumptuous work" he had been engaged in for seven years, before breaking the news: "At last gleams of light have come, & I am almost convinced (quite contrary to opinion I started with) that species are not (it is almost like confessing a murder) immutable." After disclaiming any connection with "Lamarck nonsense," Darwin added, "I think I have found out (here's presumption) the simple way by which species become exquisitely adapted to various ends. . . . You will now groan & think to yourself on what a man have I been wasting my time in writing to. I should five years ago, have thought so."[43]

Darwin waited several agonizing days for Hooker's reaction, which proved positive, though measured.[44] Hooker's intelligent questions evinced no shock about religious implications but rather a willingness to help. Emboldened, Darwin soon revised his first sketch, producing one over two hundred pages long, perhaps intending someday to show it to Hooker. Again, Darwin left out the risky—and at this stage unnecessary—issues of God the designer and the origin of man. In Hooker, Darwin had found a confidant and a wise critic who became a lifelong friend.

In that same year, 1844, Lincoln also gained the closest thing to a protégé that he ever had, although his relationship with Herndon was never as close as Darwin's with Hooker. Billy Herndon, born in 1818 (a year after Hooker), had met Lincoln when he first came to Sangamon County. Herndon's father was in the legislature with Lincoln, and from about 1838 Herndon worked and boarded at Speed's store, where Lincoln also then lived. Herndon was a bright young man but had left Illinois College without a degree. He married in 1840, decided to study law, and became a clerk in the office of Logan and Lincoln. Sometime late in 1844, Lincoln, who was amicably ending his partnership with Stephen T. Logan, bounded up the stairs to the office and asked Billy if he wanted to become his legal partner. An amazed Herndon said yes, and the papers were drawn up.

Scholars have speculated about why Lincoln chose Herndon, and there must have been speculation at the time, to which Herndon gave his own answer: "I don't know and no one else does."[45] To add a new suggestion to all the others: although Lincoln did not need technical legal information from Herndon and was not in the habit of speculating out loud with anyone, Herndon could be useful to Lincoln in one particular way. One of Herndon's peculiarities was that, even more than Lincoln, he was mad about reading, especially scientific works. At college, Herndon "acquired an unmanageable appetite for books." An exuberant Springfield bookseller reportedly said that in the 1850s, "Mr. Herndon read every year more new books in history, pedagogy, medicine, theology, and general literature, than all the teachers, doctors, and ministers in Springfield put together."[46] In 1866, an eastern journalist deemed Herndon's one of the best private libraries in the west. Although a portion of it—a thousand books, many of which may have been owned by Lincoln—was put up for auction by an impoverished Herndon in 1873, he still possessed (or, less likely, reacquired) enough books to fill the walls of a sixteen-feet-by-sixteen-feet room in 1879.[47] Many of whatever books Herndon and Lincoln separately owned were, after 1844, adorning the shelves and tables of the office of Lincoln and Herndon, and many more were added over the next seventeen years until Lincoln's final departure for Washington. "I had an excellent private library," Herndon later recalled, "probably the best in the city for admired books. To this library Mr. Lincoln had, as a matter of course, full and free access at all times." Herndon then gave the following sample: "Locke, Kant, Fichte, Lewes; Sir William Hamilton's *Discussions on Philosophy*; Spencer's *First Principles*, Social Statics, etc.; Buckle's *History of Civilization*, and Lecky's *History of Rationalism*; . . . the works of Paine, Parker, Emerson and Strauss; Gregg's Creed of Christendom, *McNaught on Inspiration*, Volney's *Ruins*, Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*, and other works on Infidelity." Herndon offered this particular sample to demonstrate Lincoln's access to progressive and infidel literature, adding, "Mr. Lincoln read some of these works."[48]

Neither this list nor Herndon's 1873 Auction List specify which works Lincoln actually read.[49] Separate evidence suggests Lincoln had read Paine and Volney in his youth, and a reliable source indicates that Lincoln admired and was possibly influenced by some writings of the transcendentalist, liberal theologian, and antislavery activist Theodore Parker. (Herndon idolized Parker and corresponded with him for six years until Parker's death in 1860.)[50] There is no independent evidence that Lincoln ever read any of the other works listed above. However, a contemporary wrote that at the end of an office day, Lincoln would remark, "Billy, what book have you worth while to take home tonight?" and another source related that Lincoln "would stretch himself on the office cot, aweary of his toil, and say, 'Now, Billy, tell me about the books;' and Herndon would discourse by the hour, ranging over history, literature, philosophy, and science."[51]

Whether Lincoln experienced these works directly or only vicariously, records show that Darwin had read most of these authors and knew several personally. In 1850, Lyell brought back from a trip to America some of Parker's writings—probably antislavery pamphlets—for which Darwin thanked him.[52] The other writers listed above either wrote for or were reviewed in the *Westminster Review*, and through his brother, Darwin was familiar with the "Westminster circle." The *Review* itself is one of several English periodicals to which Herndon apparently subscribed.[53] It is unknown whether Herndon purchased Darwin's *Voyage of the Beagle,* but the auction list shows that he possessed a copy of *The Origin of Species*.

In his later biography of Lincoln, Herndon was contradictory and haughty about Lincoln's reading habits, writing that Lincoln "read less and thought more than any man in his sphere in America. No man can put his finger on any great book written in the last or present century that he read thoroughly"; and that Lincoln "often quoted" the Bible and Shakespeare but "never read either one through." Herndon expressed frustration that Lincoln's interests differed from his own, and although Lincoln probably enjoyed Herndon's efforts to act as a mentor on some subjects, Herndon never felt he had much effect. After mentioning a few works on slavery that both he and Lincoln read, Herndon added, "After reading them we would discuss the questions they touched upon and the idea they suggested, from our different points of view. I was never conscious of having made much of an impression on Mr. Lincoln, nor do I believe I ever changed his views."[54]

One book Herndon owned and Lincoln certainly read also had a significant impact on Darwin. *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* was first published anonymously in London in 1844 by the Edinburgh writer and publisher Robert Chambers. Obviously influenced by Lyell and many other scientific writers, Chambers rejected special creations and instead argued for a progressive "development" that involved not only plants and animals but also geology (cutting across Lyell's view) and, indeed, the entire cosmos. No area escaped Chambers's analysis, from astronomy to zoology, and he included man as developing according to "natural laws" originally laid down by the Creator. Chambers was a good writer whose cheerful and elegant explanations of the latest arcane research made *Vestiges* a publishing phenomenon. Herndon seems to have owned an 1853 edition.[55]

According to Herndon's two slightly differing accounts, James W. Keyes, a tailor in Springfield, either gave or loaned Lincoln the book "which interested him so much that he read it through." The book's "doctrine of development or evolution . . . interested him greatly, and he was deeply impressed with the notion of the so-called 'universal law'—evolution." (The term "evolution" was probably not yet in common usage whenever Herndon and Lincoln discussed "development.") According to Herndon, after reading the book Lincoln "did not extend greatly his researches," although Lincoln "subsequently read the sixth edition of this work, which I loaned him." Herndon believed that "by continued thinking in a single channel [Lincoln] seemed to grow into a warm advocate of the new doctrine." In Herndon's view, this was Lincoln's only "investigation into the realm of philosophy. . . . 'There are no accidents,' he said one day, 'in my philosophy.'"[56]

When collecting materials for a biography of Lincoln, Herndon obtained from Keyes a statement that, while never mentioning *Vestiges*, discussed only one topic, Lincoln's religious beliefs: "Mr Lincoln . . . believed in a Creator of all things, who had neither beginning nor end, who possessing all power and wisdom, established a principal, in Obedience to which, Worlds move and are upheld, and animal and vegetable life came into existence. A reason he gave for his belief was, that in view of the Order and harmony of all nature which all beheld, it would have been More miraculous to have Come about by chance, than to have been created and arranged by some great thinking power." All this accorded with what Lincoln had read in *Vestiges* and before that in Paley's work on natural theology. However, Keyes continued, regarding "Christian theory," Lincoln "said that it had better be taken for granted—for by the test of reason all might become Infidels on that subject, for evidence of Christ's divinity came to us in a somewhat doubtful shape." Lincoln did not "express any preference" for one denomination over another and allowed that Christianity was "ingenious . . . and perhaps was calculated to do good."[57] Regarding *Vestiges*'s possible influence on Lincoln, Herndon later wrote:

> Mr. Lincoln had always denied special creation, but from his want of education he did not know just what to believe. He adopted the progressive and development theory as taught more or less directly in that work. He despised speculation, especially in the metaphysical world. He was purely a practical man. . . . He held that reason drew her references as to law, etc., from observations, experience and reflection on the facts and phenomena of Nature. . . . He was a materialist in his philosophy.[58]

Lincoln may have "despised speculation" partly because it kept getting him in trouble politically. As noted earlier, suspicions in the "religious community" helped deny him a nomination in 1842, and in 1846, when Lincoln did gain the nomination, he discovered that his Democratic opponent—his old rival Reverend Cartwright—was willing to use rumors about "infidelity" against him. However, the sixty-two-year-old Methodist preacher found himself repeatedly outfoxed on the stump by the thirty-seven-year-old Lincoln, who at one point boldly attended one of Cartwright's revival meetings. The preacher shouted from the platform, "If you are not going to repent and go to Heaven, Mr. Lincoln, where are you going?" Lincoln replied that he was, in fact, going to Congress.[59] But shortly before election day, Lincoln heard that Cartwright was "whispering the charge of infidelity against me."[60] Lincoln felt it necessary to respond with a handbill "To the Voters of the Seventh Congressional District."[61] This handbill, first discovered and published in 1942, was so ambiguously worded that it has been cited by scholars arguing for and against the view that Lincoln had grown more religious by 1846.[62] Neither a straightforward confession of faith nor a comprehensive denial of the charge of infidelity, this text demonstrates Lincoln's "damage limitation" technique of stating carefully worded truths from which incorrect inferences could easily be drawn. In the text below, some of those potentially false inferences or disguised facts are inserted within brackets.

> FELLOW CITIZENS:
>
> A charge having got into circulation in some of the neighborhoods of this District, in substance that I am an open scoffer at Christianity, I have by the advice of some friends concluded to notice the subject in this form. That I am not a member of any Christian Church, is true; but I have never denied

> the truth of the Scriptures [although denying whatever seemed false]; and I have never spoken with intentional disrespect of religion in general, or of any denomination of Christians in particular [although questioning Christianity in general]. It is true that in early life [although "no longer"] I was inclined to believe in what I understand is called the "Doctrine of Necessity"—that is, that the human mind is impelled to action, or held in rest by some power, over which the mind itself has no control; and I have sometimes (with one, two or three, but never publicly) tried to maintain this opinion in argument [as if merely a debating point]. The habit of arguing thus however, I have, entirely left off for more than five years [as if no longer believing it]. And I add here, I have always understood this same opinion to be held by several of the Christian denominations [as if, despite previous denials, it was not a problem, anyway]. The foregoing is the whole truth, briefly stated, in relation to myself, upon this subject.
>
> I do not think I could myself, be brought to support a man for office, whom I knew to be an open enemy of, and scoffer at, religion [his own "scoffing" having been in private]. Leaving the higher matter of eternal consequences, between him and his Maker [as if he believed in some future punishment], I still do not think any man has the right thus to insult the feelings, and injure the morals, of the community in which he may live. If, then, I was guilty of such conduct, I should blame no man who should condemn me for it; but I do blame those, whoever they may be [i.e., Cartwright], who falsely put such a charge in circulation against me.
>
> July 31, 1846. A. Lincoln.

In a letter written to an editor a fortnight later, Lincoln not only named Cartwright but also counterintuitively defined "false accusation" as making "an assertion without knowing whether it is true or false, the accidental truth of the assertion" being no justification. Standing on this thin ice, Lincoln could "aver, that he, Cartwright, never heard me utter a word in any way indicating my opinions on religious matters, in his life."[63]

At this point, only two facts were important: Lincoln had not committed to paper any statement about his religious views that could be proven untrue; and between writing the handbill and the letter, Lincoln had defeated Cartwright by an unprecedented majority in the district and a two-to-one margin in Springfield. Whatever his Maker might decide about Lincoln's "eternal consequences," the voters were indeed sending him to Washington, D.C.

Whether Lincoln read *Vestiges* before or (more likely) after the 1846 election, it had no direct effect on his contretemps with Cartwright, except that the "determinism" found in Chambers's work meshed with the "doctrine of necessity" that Lincoln to some degree accepted. For Charles Darwin, deeply engaged in his own investigation of "development," *Vestiges* had much more impact.

When *Vestiges* first appeared in London in October 1844, Darwin had only recently written the longer sketch of his theory, showing it to no one, not even Hooker, while nevertheless making arrangements for its publication "in the event of my sudden death."[64] Emma was eventually allowed to read it and even made some corrections in style—writing "a great assumption" in the margin beside Darwin's effort to explain the evolution of the eye.[65] The next time Darwin was in London, he found that the popular *Vestiges* was unobtainable, so he skimmed a copy in the British Museum.[66] "The writing & arrangement are certainly admirable," Darwin wrote to Hooker, "but his geology strikes me as bad, & his zoology far worse."[67] While joining the intelligentsia in trying to guess the author, Darwin was "much flattered and unflattered" when this "strange unphilosophical, but capitally-written book" was even attributed to him.[68] Chambers would not admit authorship, but Darwin and Hooker suspected him, especially after Darwin received a presentation copy from the publisher shortly after he and Chambers first met at a British Association meeting in 1847. Chambers had delivered a paper on marine terraces, citing some of Darwin's work, and while the audience responded negatively, Darwin offered support.[69]

On his own copy of *Vestiges*, Darwin made extensive notes, mainly about problems to avoid. The circular system of classification was all wrong, and Chambers's use of terms like "higher" and "lower" would be spurned in favor of phrases like "more complicated."[70] Darwin saw that *Vestiges*'s effort to appease religious sensibilities (by taking "it for granted . . . that God created animated beings, as well as the terraqueous theatre of their being") did not prevent pious venom being added to the legitimate criticisms of the book's scientific flaws.[71] When Darwin's former professor Adam Sedgwick wrote a withering review, Darwin "read it with fear & trembling," as he reported to Lyell, "but was well pleased to find, that I had not overlooked any of the arguments, though I had put them to myself feebly as milk & water."[72] He later scribbled on his copy of Sedgwick's review, "The publication of the *Vestiges* brought out all that could be said against the theory excellently if not too vehemently."[73]

Vestiges's reception reenforced Darwin's instinct to make sure his facts were plentiful and accurate, to stick to biology and zoology, and to avoid theological issues, which meant postponing the subject of man because natural selection could be supported just as well with evidence from other species. Before springing his theory on fellow scientists—however much popular opinion was softened by *Vestiges*—Darwin must endeavor to bring more naturalists of stature onto his side. And also he decided he must develop his skills as a specialist, something he had never really done, relying on other naturalists—and now Hooker—for detailed work. In a recent letter, Hooker had criticized a French naturalist who endlessly theorized when he did "not know what it is to be a specific naturalist," and Darwin felt stung: "How painfully (to me) true is your remark that no one has hardly a right to examine the question of species who has not minutely examined many."[74]

In 1846, while Lincoln was making arrangements before departing for Congress, Darwin finished various publishing chores, including a new edition of the *Voyage of the Beagle,* so he could settle down to the serious and *specialist* study of a particular family of creatures, barnacles. Darwin thought this research would require only a year or two. Lincoln was hoping that in that amount of time he might be able to launch a long-term career in Washington, climbing the greasy pole of national politics. Both men's expectations proved wrong.

5

Career Preparations and Rivals, 1845–49

Before embarking on his study of barnacles, Darwin decided to revise his part of FitzRoy's *Beagle* publications, issuing it separately as *The Voyage of the Beagle*. This new edition would reach a wider public for whom Darwin served up a few small hors d'oeuvres of natural selection. For example, regarding the Galapagos material, he added, "Seeing this gradation and diversity of structure in one small, intimately related group of birds, one might really fancy that from an original paucity of birds in this archipelago, one species had been taken and modified for different ends."[1]

Something else crept into the last chapter, completed in August 1845, just after Darwin read Charles Lyell's new book about his recent travels in the United States. Annoyed by Lyell's suggestions that slaves were treated benignly by their masters, Darwin wrote to Lyell, praising his book generously but adding tersely, "Your slave discussion disturbed me much; but as you would care no more for my opinion on this head than for the ashes of this letter, I will say nothing except that it gave me some sleepless, most uncomfortable hours."[2] To Lyell's accommodating reply, Darwin responded that he wished "the same feelings had been apparent in your published discussion."

> But I will not write on this subject, I should perhaps annoy you, and most certainly myself. I have exhaled myself with a paragraph or two in my Journal on the sin of Brazilian slavery; you perhaps will think that it is in answer to you; but such is not the case. I have remarked on nothing which I did not hear on the coast of South America. My few sentences, however, are merely an explosion of feeling. How could you relate so placidly that atrocious sentiment [of a planter quoted by Lyell] about separating children from their parents; and in the next page speak of being distressed at the whites not having prospered; I assure you the contrast made me exclaim out. But I have broken my intention, and so no more on this odious deadly subject.[3]

That Darwin could use this harsh tone when addressing Lyell—to whom he had actually dedicated his new volume—demonstrates the depth of his feeling, as do the book's "few sentences" that begin "I thank God, I shall never again visit a slave-country" and continued for over a page with descriptions of several horrors he had witnessed in Latin America: the sound of moaning coming from a house where he suspected a slave was being tortured, an old lady who kept thumbscrews for that purpose, staying in a house where a "young mulatto" was beaten "and persecuted enough to break the spirit of the lowest animal," a six- or seven-year-old boy struck with a horsewhip while his father trembled, a negro afraid to ward off a blow. Darwin also reviled those who thought any cheerfulness in a slave proved that slavery is "a tolerable evil" or who believed slaves can speak truthfully about their condition in front of their masters. He was infuriated that slave owners "profess to love their neighbours as themselves, . . . believe in God, and pray that his Will be done on earth!" He acknowledged the guilt of the British "and our American descendants, with their boastful cry of liberty" but was consoled that Britons "at least have made a greater sacrifice, than ever made by any nation, to expiate our sin."[4] The presentation copy of *The Voyage* reached Lyell just before he departed for a second tour of the United States, where he found that Americans' feelings on the issue of slavery had moved closer to an explosion than three years before.

Darwin apparently chose barnacles for his specialist study partly because of Louis Agassiz, one of the few contemporaries of whom it can be said that his influence was felt both by Darwin, whom he met in 1840, and by Lincoln, who must have known Agassiz's work long before the naturalist visited the White House for a significant conversation in 1865. Born in Switzerland in 1807 and initially trained as a doctor, Agassiz moved into natural history, studying under such great pioneers as Alexander von Humboldt and Georges Cuvier. While mastering geology and zoology, Agassiz became most renowned as an ichthyologist, yet Darwin first noticed him because of his startling theory that glaciers and moving ice sheets could better account for the transportation of "erratic boulders" than the action of giant icebergs drifting in ancient seas, the Lyellian view adopted by Darwin. Agassiz also asserted that the "parallel roads" at Glen Roy in Scotland were not, as Darwin had argued in 1839, "marine beaches" but the result of glacial action creating lakes. In 1840, Darwin sent him a copy of his *Journal and Remarks* in which he had criticized some of Agassiz's work on glaciers, although the accompanying letter said diplomatically that "your work on Glaciers . . . has filled me with admiration. As I have briefly treated of the boulders of S. America in the accompanying volume I thought you possibly might like to possess a copy; and sending it you, is the only means I have of expressing the regret I feel at the manner in which I have alluded to (although probably the fact is unknown and quite indifferent to you) your most valuable labours on the action of Glaciers."[5]

While the opinions of other geologists wavered on the topic, Darwin had difficulty accepting that Agassiz might be right. In 1843, Darwin wrote about his Glen Roy theory being "for a time knocked on the head by Agassiz's ice-work—but it is now reviving again."[6] In the following year, Darwin mentioned to Joseph Dalton Hooker—who had only recently read Darwin's view that species could change—that "Agassiz has lately brought the strongest arguments in favour of immutability."[7] As late as 1846, after exclaiming to a colleague that "Agassiz or Buckland . . . will sneer" at his efforts to obtain fresh data about Glen Roy, Darwin himself sneered that "there never was a more futile theory" than Agassiz's glacier lake.[8] A few days later at a conference in Southampton, Darwin heard a presentation by Agassiz in which he suggested that "a monograph on the Cirripedia [barnacles] was a pressing desideratum in Zoology." That at least is how Darwin later recounted Agassiz's words in two letters, one to Agassiz himself: "your sentence . . . much helped to decide me."[9] Darwin had a long-standing interest in marine invertebrates, and some specimens from the *Beagle* voyage had never been written up properly.[10] A year had passed since Hooker's remark made Darwin consider studying in depth a particular species, and now Agassiz's statement provided a peculiar stimulus.[11]

Agassiz's fame was ascending rapidly. Already an honorary member of scientific societies in France and America, in Britain he received further memberships and the Geological Society's Wollaston Medal. His brilliance and charm won many supporters, including Lyell, who helped arrange for Agassiz to deliver lectures at the Lowell Institute in Boston. There Agassiz achieved stunning success, accepted a Harvard professorship, married into a Boston Brahmin family, and eventually became not only a citizen but also America's most famous scientist in the mid-nineteenth century.[12]

Still smarting over Glen Roy, Darwin now labored to gain his own reputation as an expert on a particular species—one that Agassiz had already admitted was outside his own expertise.

The America that Agassiz entered in 1846 was increasingly convulsed by the issue of slavery, and Lincoln had seen one painful result—when his hero Henry Clay lost the presidential election in 1844. Lincoln had labored in the previous presidential election in 1840 and was elated when William Henry Harrison, the Whig candidate, won and equally deflated when Harrison died of pneumonia after a single month in office. John Tyler, the first vice president to fill a suddenly vacated office, was actually a Democrat, and the Whigs floundered. Lincoln was then delighted when the Whigs nominated Clay in 1844 and crushed when Clay was narrowly defeated by the Democrat James Polk. Clay might have won if some Whigs had not abandoned the party because, like the Democratic Party, it had avoided the issue of slavery. As first happened in 1840, those wishing to protest against slavery voted for the new Liberty Party, which won few votes outside of New York but enough in 1844 to prevent Clay from winning that state's crucial electoral votes.

Lincoln complained about those who thus helped the Democrats regain control of the presidency, but blaming abolitionists was pointless: the Whigs needed to achieve something that would help them retain the growing antislavery vote.[13] Lincoln himself would work on this before the end of his term in Washington, D.C. However, Lincoln's initial effort upon first arriving in December 1847 was an attempt to surpass the reputation of his main political rival. Just as Darwin had begun and would long continue a scientific duel with Louis Agassiz, so Lincoln had, a dozen years earlier, found his great political opponent in Stephen A. Douglas.

Douglas was four years younger than Lincoln and a foot shorter. "The Little Giant" had origins in Vermont almost as humble as Lincoln's, and he settled in Illinois only a year or two after Lincoln. At twenty-one, Douglas passed the bar and was practicing law in 1834 when Lincoln first met him. Douglas was bright, ambitious, and belonged to Illinois' dominant Democratic Party, which steadily raised him to the office of public prosecutor, then to the state legislature as its youngest member, then to the Land Office as Registrar, and eventually to the House of Representatives in Washington—four years before Lincoln got there. Occasionally, in court cases and in the state legislature, the two men were on the same side, but usually they were opponents. Lincoln pulled out all the stops to ensure that his law partner, John T. Stuart, defeated Douglas in a congressional race, during which Lincoln wrote to a fellow Whig: "We have adopted it as part of our policy here, to never speak of Douglass at all. Isn't that the best mode of treating so small a matter?"[14]

In January 1838, Lincoln made a high-flown speech in Springfield in which he never mentioned Douglas by name yet alluded to him as possessing extraordinary and dangerous ambition, like "an Alexander, a Caesar, or a Napoleon . . . a man possessed of the loftiest genius, coupled with ambition sufficient to push it to its utmost stretch."[15] Suspiciously similar attacks on Douglas appeared around this time in letters probably written by Lincoln to the *Sangamo Journal*.[16] "Lincoln despised Douglas," said one contemporary, while another declared that Lincoln "always admitted that Douglass was a wonderfully great political leader and with a good cause to advocate he thought he would be invincible."[17] Lincoln rarely thought Douglas advocated for a good cause, but he could see in Douglas many of his own virtues and ambitions. It grated that Douglas did less to hide his ambition yet seemed to fulfill it more easily. After performing poorly in a debate with Douglas around this time, Lincoln was "conscious of his failure," said a witness who "never saw any man so much distressed."[18] The Christmas season of goodwill found little expression in Lincoln's descriptions of Douglas: "not now worth talking about," he wrote on 23 December 1839, and in a speech three days later, he declared that Douglas was "deserving of the world's contempt."[19]

When Douglas went to Congress in 1843, he quickly established a reputation for excellent speaking and clever compromise that brought him swift reelection. Douglas supported Polk's expansionist line, helped bring about the long-delayed annexation of Texas, and leapt to defend Polk against attacks by the likes of John Quincy Adams, who suggested (correctly) that the president had deliberately inflamed a border dispute in order to cause the Mexican-American War, by which Polk intended to add to the United States what later became New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, and California.

When Lincoln finally made it to Washington, he showed none of the reserve expected from a freshman congressman. Trying to make a name for himself quickly, Lincoln attacked the legality of the war's origin with better arguments than those already made by Adams and refuted by Douglas. In well-researched speeches, Lincoln analyzed Polk's prewar maneuvers and asked Polk to name the "spot" (in relation to the disputed boundary line) where in April 1846, as Polk had claimed, innocent Americans had been viciously attacked by Mexican troops. But a year and a half had passed, and because Douglas had recently been elected to the Senate, he was not present in the House in December 1847 to rise to Lincoln's bait, and everyone else simply ignored him. The only name he made for himself was coined by opponents: "Spotty Lincoln."

During his second year in Washington, Lincoln tried to achieve something worthwhile by drafting an ambitious measure regarding the highly politicized topic of slavery in Washington, D.C. Like many representatives in Washington, Lincoln was pained that the country's largest slave traders had their warehouse—which Lincoln termed "a sort of Negro livery-stable"—within sight of the Capitol. Also, he may have been present on the evening when three hired slave-catchers invaded his boardinghouse to arrest a black waiter who had been allowed to work to save up the money his master demanded for the purchase of his freedom—until the master changed his mind.[20] Since Washington, D.C., was not a state, and slavery was not protected by "states' rights," it had long been the point of conflict between abolitionists and their opponents. Lincoln sought a *rational* compromise consistent with the principles he had expressed on this very issue in his first "protest" against slavery in 1837.

Lincoln's plan involved freeing all children born to slave mothers after 1850; allowing federal officials to retain slaves as personal servants; allowing owners to remove their slaves from D.C. or receive federal payments for the full value of slaves they freed; once the District was "free," putting in place "active and efficient means" for arresting and returning any fugitive slaves who came into the District; and allowing a majority of free white male citizens in D.C. to accept or reject the plan in a referendum.[21]

Lincoln worked quietly to rally support from all sides, but when the proposal became public, the support vanished. Abolitionists, with their moral rather than practical viewpoint, objected to compensation for slave owners—though that had helped British emancipation to succeed sixteen years earlier. Also, many abolitionists were actively engaged in helping fugitives, so they considered Lincoln's move to establish in Washington (where none existed) a system for returning fugitives a retrograde step. Southerners, meanwhile, had for years fought any move by Congress to interfere with slavery where it existed, especially in Washington, and failed to appreciate that Lincoln's plan bent over backwards to appease them. John C. Calhoun himself dismissed the plan as misguided and dangerous to southern rights.

"Abandoned by my former backers and having little personal influence," Lincoln later said, "I dropped the matter knowing that it was useless to prosecute the business at that time."[22] Lincoln was doubly disappointed by his colleagues' lack of compromise and his own failure to achieve something of lasting value. Lincoln's plan would have emancipated few if any slaves, yet it could have marked an important turning point, restarting the momentum of emancipation and countering the expansion of slavery. It could have established, at initial low cost, the principle of compensation, which might have reduced "north versus south" antagonism by having everyone share the cost of eliminating an evil from which the whole country had economically profited. It could have shown the federal government using the power it did possess but with due regard for local opinion—exactly what Lincoln had advocated in 1837.

In view of Lincoln's later attacks on Douglas's policies, Lincoln's regard for "local opinion" is somewhat ironic. In the recent presidential election, the Democrats had advocated a policy of local consent called "popular sovereignty": allowing the citizens of a territory to decide whether a state seeking admission to the Union should prohibit slavery. However, the principle had actually been proposed even earlier during the final debate on the admission of Texas—by then congressman Stephen A. Douglas.[23] A year after Lincoln left Washington and during the storm of controversy that resulted in the Compromise of 1850, it was Douglas who played the key role in applying "pop. sov." to the territories recently taken from Mexico. While both Lincoln and Douglas preferred to let local people rather than the federal government choose whether slavery should be prohibited, the crucial difference between them is that Lincoln had proposed using "local consent" to end slavery in a place already possessing it, while Douglas applied "pop. sov." to allow slavery into territories where it did not yet exist under law. Since August 1846, Congress had been deadlocked over the Wilmot Proviso, which sought a federal prohibition against slavery in any new territory that might be gained from Mexico; Lincoln supported the proviso, while Douglas pushed "pop. sov." as an alternative, one much preferred by the southern states.

Lincoln finally left Washington in March 1849, having failed to achieve enough to escape the system he himself had helped to create whereby the prominent Whigs in his district took turns seeking a two-year term. Lincoln now tried and failed to obtain the position of General Land Office Commissioner, which would have trumped Douglas's former state-level position and would politically counterbalance Douglas's current chairmanship of the Senate Committee on Territories. When news arrived that he had not obtained the position, Lincoln laid down in depression for an hour or so and later said, "I hardly ever felt so bad at any failure in my life."[24] He turned down a dead-end governorship of Oregon territory and considered a return to the state legislature too retrograde. So, without political office, Lincoln was back to practicing law and hoping for some unforeseeable opportunity.

By March 1849, Lincoln's career in national politics had apparently come to an end after only two years. Meanwhile, Darwin was realizing that his study of barnacles, supposedly requiring only a year or two, would take considerably longer. An early discovery made the whole project seem more useful to his theory of natural selection than expected, so Darwin decided he must compare the *Beagle*'s barnacle specimens with those that colleagues all over the world might dredge up for him (sometimes literally). Then he added fossil specimens. A less thrilling discovery was that the numerous body parts for each barnacle needed to be individually classified, a job done under a microscope with needles and minute tweezers. Preparing separate slides for further examination proved unimaginably slow work, delayed further by grave health problems.[25]

Darwin revealed his early exultation to Hooker, the only naturalist who had yet seen Darwin's 231-page sketch on natural selection. Without utterly rejecting Darwin's theory, Hooker still doubted that new species could be derived from previous ones, pointing out numerous problems and offering intelligent criticisms, all greatly appreciated by Darwin. Briefly but hyperbolically, Darwin explained the importance of his current discoveries:

> I should never have made this out, had not my species theory convinced me, that an hermaphrodite species must pass into a bisexual species by insensibly small stages, & here we have it, for the male organs in the hermaphrodite are already beginning to fail, & independent males ready formed. But I can hardly explain what I mean, & you will perhaps wish my Barnacles & Species theory al Diabolo together. But I don't care what you say, my species theory is all gospel.[26]

But in mid-March 1849, Darwin had to leave his barnacles behind temporarily and travel to Malvern to undergo three months of cold showers in an effort to restore his collapsing health.

There has been growing interest in the way the illnesses of famous people might have influenced their behavior and possibly history. Although Lincoln has not escaped the attention of armchair diagnosticians, they have been speculatively poking at a patient who was essentially so healthy that he could tolerate surprisingly well the stresses of a presidency that would have broken most men. On the other hand, "Darwin's medical history," as medical historians Roy Porter and G. S. Rousseau write, "has been, and remains, one of the 'source of the Nile' mysteries of nineteenth-century scholarship."[27] Entire books have been shaped by, or even devoted to, Darwin's malaise.[28] Although his mysterious malady undoubtedly affected both the pace and direction of his research, a discussion of Darwin's personal health—or that of Lincoln—is tangential to this work. Rather than survey how the present world has applied science to their biographies, the more relevant task is to probe how they applied science to their world, especially to the subjects of man and God.

6

Mortality, Invention, and Geology

Like many contemporaries, Darwin and Lincoln suffered tragic losses of family members to the ravages of disease; however, they had less capacity than many contemporaries to find solace in religion, and the deaths may indeed have contributed to their loss of faith. Before reaching their teens, Darwin and Lincoln had lost their mothers, and a few years later, Lincoln's only full sister, Sarah, also died. Darwin was in his late thirties and Lincoln in his early forties when their fathers passed away. Far more painful was the tragic loss of children. Darwin's third child, Mary, died less than a month after her birth in 1842. Emma Darwin wrote, "Our pain is nothing to what it would have been if she had lived longer and suffered more."[1] That proved all too true for both families a few years later. Lincoln's second son, Edward, was sickly from an early age and died in February 1850 of pulmonary tuberculosis at the age of three.[2] A little over a year later, Darwin's second child, ten-year-old Annie, also died, probably of tuberculosis, after a long illness.[3]

Eddie's death affected Mary Lincoln deeply, contributing to her decision to move from the Episcopal church favored by her Edwards in-laws to the Presbyterian church, where she had many friends. But three years after Eddie's death, Mary wrote to a friend, "I grieve to say that even at this day I do not feel sufficiently submissive to our loss."[4] Emma used similar words in a letter written the day after Annie's death: "I hope I shall be able to attain some feeling of submission to the will of Heaven."[5] The following day, Charles wrote to his brother, "Poor Emma is well bodily & firm, but feels bitterly & God knows we can neither see on any side a gleam of comfort."[6] There is no evidence that Emma's religious beliefs or practice were altered, though she may have come closer to understanding the harsh view Darwin expressed a few years later about "the clumsy, wasteful, blundering low & horridly cruel works of nature!"[7]

Lincoln's reaction to Eddie's death was muted. "We miss him very much," he wrote to his stepbrother. Mary later asserted that Eddie's death directed her husband's heart "toward religion."[8] The Presbyterian minister who performed

Eddie's funeral service, Reverend James Smith, soon became a family friend, and within two years, Mary underwent formal examination to join his church. Lincoln now rented a pew and when not on the circuit or campaigning often accompanied Mary to Sunday services. Lincoln could find much to admire in Reverend Smith, a former deist converted at a camp meeting in Indiana, who in 1843 published a massive tome entitled *The Christian's Defense, Containing a Fair Statement, and Impartial Examination of the Leading Objections Urged by Infidels against the Antiquity, Genuineness, Credibility, and Inspiration of the Holy Scripture.* Lincoln saw the book before 1850 and later possessed a copy. Smith delivered sensible sermons, took an interest in education and temperance, and was a member of the Illinois State Colonization Society, which Lincoln also supported.[9]

Smith's influence on Lincoln is much disputed, but there is no evidence that Lincoln changed his mind about the main doctrines of Christianity.[10] Unlike his wife, Lincoln avoided formal membership of any church, although liberally supporting his wife's and other Springfield churches. Although "one could argue logically that an ambitious politician or statesman might utter religious platitudes in public to sway voters," this was not, according to historian Wayne C. Temple, the case with Lincoln, who "professed his belief in God" on many occasions both public and private.[11] Nevertheless, Lincoln did not mind if more frequent church attendance not only pleased his society-conscious wife (who joined the First Presbyterian simultaneously with three of her best friends) but also helped submerge old rumors about his own deism.

If Lincoln attended church more after Eddie died, Darwin's attendance apparently decreased after Annie's death. He continued to support the village church and was on friendly terms with its vicar, but on Sundays, after accompanying his family to the lych-gate, Darwin reportedly became accustomed to remaining outside or going for a walk.[12] Yet, this decline in Darwin's church attendance, like the increase in Lincoln's, may have resulted from such mundane concerns as Lincoln's desire to promote a more conventional image and Darwin's fear of being embarrassed by his turbulent digestive system.

Darwin's ill health drove him to try out the latest medical technology (Dr. Gully's Water Cure) in 1849, the same year in which Lincoln made a serious effort to contribute something of his own to the history of technology—though he did not refer to it in his lecture on "Discoveries and Inventions" a decade later.

Most Lincoln biographies mention the oddity that he is the only president ever to obtain a U.S. patent and perhaps briefly link this to his wider interest in technology.[13] But far more significant than the fact that Lincoln obtained a patent is his very idea of becoming an inventor.

In September 1848, as Lincoln and Mary were returning to Springfield after his first session in Washington, they watched from aboard a river steamboat as the crew of another steamboat that had run aground labored to get free of the sandbar by lightening the vessel and shoving loose planks and empty barrels under the hull.[14] Lincoln knew from his flatboating days the complications of shifting sandbars and variable drafts. He had begun his political career campaigning for improvements in river navigation and knew that New Salem had expired partly because the Sangamo River was too difficult for steamboats. Now Lincoln reasoned laterally: when it is not possible to dredge or widen rivers or to provide alternatives such as canals or railroads (the latter having barely reached Illinois by then), perhaps steamboats themselves could be fitted with a device to create additional buoyancy as needed.

The problem of turning a clever idea into a practical reality intrigued Lincoln. Before returning to Washington for the second session, Lincoln constructed a model of his invention, hardly difficult for a carpenter's son who had formerly built an entire flatboat. Lincoln used a neighbor's carpentry shop and, according to Herndon's acerbic account, spent a good deal of time in the law office whittling on the model and explaining "its merits and the revolution it was destined to work in steamboat navigation."[15]

Lincoln carried his model back to Washington and engaged a patent agent to phrase the patent application properly and a draughtsman to prepare the necessary drawings of his "new and improved manner of combining adjustable buoyant air chambers with a steam boat or other vessel for the purpose of enabling their draught of water to be readily lessened to enable them to pass over bars, or through shallow water, without discharging their cargoes." On 22 May 1849, Lincoln was issued Patent Number 6,469.[16]

To bring the invention to life would have required commercial and manufacturing contacts, capital, and some entrepreneurial spirit, but Lincoln was busy trying to recoup his finances and support his family from the fees he split with Herndon. Perhaps Lincoln dreamed that some entrepreneur would take up his idea, manufacturing the product under a license giving Lincoln a percentage of worldwide sales: the "fuel of interest" Lincoln later mentioned in his lecture "Inventions." However, the dream remained a dream. At some point, Lincoln gave friends in Springfield a demonstration of how his invention worked, using a large horse trough for the trial.[17] After that, nothing more was heard of the invention until *Scientific American* mentioned it as a curiosity shortly after Lincoln became president-elect.[18]

Herndon later quipped that Lincoln was as bad at making inventions as he was at lecturing about them, yet his invention was not absurd: later, certain dredging machines and modern submarines employed something similar.[19] But his timing was poor, for he addressed a problem already being solved by better dredging, improved port facilities, and expanding canal and railroad systems. Twenty years earlier, when steamships were still new and railroads practically nonexistent, Lincoln's "adjustable buoyant air chambers" might have improved river transportation and even saved New Salem. Yet the facts that Lincoln's invention failed to meet expectations but succeeded in making him unique among presidents are less significant than Lincoln's ability to imagine himself achieving success through the same superior intelligence that raised him from a field hand to riverboatman, clerk, militia captain, surveyor, lay theologian, lawyer, propagandist, and legislator. In his fortieth year, Lincoln added "inventor" at the very time when, unfortunately, he had to subtract "legislator." He would not, it seemed, feed his family by making inventions or laws but by being a successful lawyer.

The very railroad system that made Lincoln's invention obsolete created legal problems and litigation that provided a major source of Lincoln's income.[20] Railroads also improved Lincoln's home life as he could now return home from the circuit on weekends. Railway development also greatly affected Darwin's work. His troublesome internal organs made travel unappealing, except to some spa, but the railways helped information to flow in a way not matched again until the invention of the Internet. Railways and steamships caused a huge expansion in national and international postal systems, and Darwin was able during his barnacle research to collect information and specimens from other naturalists in a manner inconceivable a generation earlier.

Because Darwin immersed himself for eight years in barnacle studies, an observer might have considered that to be his major contribution to science: the complete classification of a major infraclass (Cirripedia) of crustaceans. One of Darwin's children growing up during these years remarked while visiting a neighbor's house, "Then where does *he* do his barnacles?"[21] But "doing" his barnacles was secondary to Darwin's life's work. The crustaceans posed classification problems that Darwin now realized he could solve through his still-secret theory of species "modification through descent." Also, Darwin was earning a respectable reputation as a precise observer, dissecting, describing, and publishing. Louis Agassiz, famed for his vast knowledge of natural science while also a world authority on fish, had never thoroughly mastered a class as vast as the barnacles. He had beaten Darwin in geology, but now Darwin challenged Agassiz on his own ground (or water).

The financial success of the law practice allowed Herndon to expand his intellectual horizons with further book purchases and journal subscriptions, resources Lincoln could exploit as well. A noted "book-worm" in the Library of Congress, after returning from his brief stint in Washington, Lincoln thirsted for knowledge with new zeal. Herndon commented, "Lincoln from 1849 to 1855 became a hard student and read much, studied Euclid and some mathematical books, read much in the political world."[22] The scattered evidence of Lincoln's research during this period suggests little of it was literary, most was political but a great deal was scientific.

When Herndon later asked one of Lincoln's closest acquaintances "whether Mr. Lincoln was given to abstract speculation," Joseph Gillespie replied, "He wanted something solid to rest upon, hence his bias for mathematics and physical sciences." Gillespie recounted Lincoln's theorizing—"even before he had read the philosophical explanation"—that a musket ball fired horizontally and one dropped vertically would hit the ground at the same time. "He was fond of astronomy but I can't call to mind any reference of his to geology. He doubtless had read and thought of the subject but it did not engage his attention to the degree that astronomy and mechanical science did."[23] In contrast, Lincoln's former law partner John T. Stuart told an inquirer in 1860, "I consider [him] a man of very general and varied Knowledge—Has made Geology and other Sciences especial Study."[24] Another Lincoln associate, David Davis, according to Herndon's notes, believed that Lincoln read "no histories, novels, biographies &c," but that "his mind struggled to arrive at moral & physical-mathematical demonstration . . . had a good mechanical mind and knowledge . . . studied Euclid . . . the exact sciences."[25]

Herndon himself was interested in natural science, taking his children for carriage rides into the countryside "to teach them botany, geology, and ornithology." One nephew never "saw a botany book that knew more about plants"; and in 1867, Herndon knowledgably described regional geology to a journalist, adding, "We had no need of Agassiz out here to tell us what things meant."[26] Although Herndon at times despaired of his student, he approved of Lincoln's fascination with *Vestiges* and illustrated Lincoln's interest in science with this recollection:

> Sometime about 1855 I went into a bookshop in this city and saw a book, a small one, entitled, called, I think, *The Annual of Science*. I looked over it casually and liked it and bought it. I took the book to Lincoln and H.'s Office. Lincoln was in, reading a newspaper of value; he said me: "Well, Billy, you have got a new book, which is good, I suppose. What is it? Let me see it." He took the book in his hand, looked over the pages, read the title, introductions, and probably the first chapter, and saw at a glance the purpose and object of the book, which were as follows: to record, teach, and fully explain the *failures* and *successes* of experiments of all philosophies and scientists, everywhere, including chemistry, mechanics, etc. He instantly rose up and said that he must buy the whole set, started out and got them. On returning to the office he said: "I have wanted such a book for years because I sometimes make experiments and have thoughts about the physical world that I do not know to be true or false. I may, by this book, correct my errors and save time and expense."[27]

The Annual of Scientific Discovery: or, Year Book of Facts in Science and Art, Exhibiting the Most Important Discoveries and Improvements in Mechanics, Astronomy, Geology, Zoology was edited from 1850 to 1866 by David Ames Wells, a former student of Agassiz who was later appointed chairman of the National Revenue Commission by Lincoln.[28]

Herndon's later auction list included a wide range of scientific works, most presumably purchased by Herndon. "When I heard of a good work, I ordered it, English, French or German, if the two latter were translated," he related. He imported books from London including works by "English scientists, all of which I devoured with relish. . . . I kept abreast of the spirit of the age. . . . I was of a progressive turn of mind and tried to get Lincoln in the same channel of thought." No doubt some of Herndon's purchases were too speculative for Lincoln's liking, for he "would snatch one up and peruse it for a while, but he soon threw it down with the suggestion that it was entirely too heavy for an ordinary mind to digest."[29] Yet, many of the books that Herndon later auctioned must have appealed to an inventor and may have been Lincoln's own purchases, such as the Reverend J. Blakely's *Theology of Inventions* (1856) and John Beckman's two-volume *History of Inventions, Discoveries and Origins* (1846), a *History of Wonderful Inventions* (1849), and *Patent Office Reports* (ten nonconsecutive volumes beginning in 1847 and none dating from after Lincoln's departure from Springfield in 1861). Among the many natural history books are several major works on geology, and those published before 1861 include: W. R. Johnson, *On the Use of Anthracite in the Manufacture of Iron* (1841), Charles Lyell, *Manual of Elementary Geology* (probably sixth edition, New York, 1857), Hugh Miller, *Footprints of the Creator* (1849) and *Popular Geology* (1859), Robert Dale Owen, *Key to the Geology of the Globe* (1857), David Page, *Introductory Textbook of Geology* (perhaps the 1854 edition), and Edward Hitchcock, *Religion of Geology and Its Connected Sciences* (1851) and *Religious Truth Illustrated from Science* (1857).[30] Several of these authors were British and their works well known to Darwin.

Lincoln's interest in geology, begun before 1837, was nourished not only by *Vestiges* and Wells's *Annual* but also by Lincoln's service in the early 1850s on the state Board of Canal Commissioners.[31] Canal building and search for iron and coal had spurred the development of state-funded geological surveys early in the nineteenth century, and by the 1840s, over twenty states had established them.[32] Illinois tardily established its own geological survey in 1851 and appointed a medical doctor, J. G. Norwood, as the first state geologist. By the end of 1853, Norwood and two assistants had collected vast numbers of minerals and fossils, and the collection resided temporarily in various locations in Springfield.[33] There was tension between legislators and geologists over whether the latter should be seeking fossils to aid the classification of strata rather than simply reporting on mineral resources and also over politics. One of Norwood's assistants, Amos H. Worthen, ran unsuccessfully as a Whig for the state legislature in 1854, after which the legislature's Democrat majority drove him from his assistant's position. Worthen then worked for the nation's foremost geologist, James Hall of the New York Geological Survey, who was so pleased with Worthen's fossil collecting that he named ten newly discovered species after him. When the Republicans gained control of Illinois in 1858, they replaced Norwood with the politically correct Worthen.[34] Hall had written a recommendation for Worthen and had encouraged scientists Agassiz, James Dwight Dana, and Edward Hitchcock to do the same. Yet Hall hedged his bet by also supporting another candidate, Joseph Henry McChesney. About thirty years old and an early graduate of the progressive (and strongly antislavery) Oberlin College in Ohio, McChesney had become "the owner of another large and unstudied collection of fossils" that Hall was eager to obtain. Hall wrote to McChesney that whenever McChesney became state geologist in Illinois, Hall would be pleased to have the chance to describe his fossils.[35] But McChesney had to settle for a position under Worthen.

Three months after Worthen's appointment, Lincoln received a letter from geologist Richard P. Stevens in New York City, apparently an old Republican acquaintance from Danville, Illinois. "I see our friend McChesney has taken the Northern part of your state as his appropriate field. It is sincerely to be wished that the new head of your survey will give the State a good report and contribute to popularize the Science of Geology among the people."[36] Stevens, like McChesney, eventually published a string of new fossil discoveries, and McChesney apparently worked with Hall in Albany for a while. During the 1860 presidential election, McChesney campaigned for Lincoln, and later McChesney benefited from his friendship with the president, who in 1862 effectively gave the geologist a grand opportunity to study in Europe by appointing him U.S. consul in Newcastle upon Tyne.[37]

The only documents connecting Worthen with Lincoln relate to a debt-collection suit in which Lincoln represented the geologist when Worthen was still running a dry-goods business in Warsaw, Illinois, in 1841. However, after November 1859, Worthen owned a house five lots north of Lincoln's, and his geological collection was for a while in a building just around the corner from the law office.[38] Lincoln probably would not have been surprised that Worthen once complained about meager appropriations from the legislature, blaming "fossilized members of the Senate who are members of orthodox churches, and are afraid of the infidel tendencies of Geology."[39]

Lincoln once demonstrated his interest in geology in an undated fragment stimulated by a visit to Niagara Falls, New York, in 1857.[40] The meditative piece, though ending mid-sentence, demonstrates Lincoln's scientific cast of mind and deserves to be read in full:

> Niagara-Falls! By what mysterious power is it that millions and millions, are drawn from all parts of the world, to gaze upon Niagara Falls? There is no mystery about the thing itself. Every effect is just such as any intelligent man knowing the causes, would anticipate, without [seeing] it. If the water moving onward in a great river, reaches a point where there is a perpendicular jog, of a hundred feet in descent, in the bottom of the river,—it is plain the water will have a violent and continuous plunge at that point. It is also plain the water, thus plunging, will foam, and roar, and send up a mist, continuously, in which last, during sunshine, there will be perpetual rain-bows. The mere physical

> of Niagara Falls is only this. Yet this is really a very small part of that world's wonder. It's power to excite reflection, and emotion, is it's great charm. The geologist will demonstrate that the plunge, or fall, was once at Lake Ontario, and has worn it's way back to it's present position; he will ascertain how *fast* it is wearing now, and so get a basis for determining how *long* it has been wearing back from Lake Ontario, and finally demonstrate by it that this world is at least fourteen thousand years old. A philosopher of a slightly different turn will say Niagara Falls is only the lip of the basin out of which pours all the surplus water which rains down on two or three hundred thousand square miles of the earth's surface. He will estim[ate with] approximate accuracy, that five hundred thousand [to]ns of water, falls with it's full weight, a distance of a hundred feet each minute—thus exerting a force equal to the lifting of the same weight, through the same space, in the same time. And then the further reflection comes that this vast amount of water, constantly pouring *down*, is supplied by an equal amount constantly *lifted up*, by the sun; and still he says, "If this much is lifted up, for *this one* space of two or three hundred thousand square miles, an equal amount must be lifted for every other equal space, and he is overwhelmed in the contemplation of the vast power the sun is constantly exerting in quiet, noiseless operation of lifting water *up* to be rained *down* again.
>
> But still there is more. It calls up the indefinite past. When Columbus first sought this continent—when Christ suffered on the cross—when Moses led Israel through the Red-Sea—nay, even, when Adam first came from the hand of his Maker—then as now, Niagara was roaring here. The eyes of that species of extinct giants, whose bones fill the mounds of America, have gazed on Niagara, as ours do now. Contemporary with the whole race of men, and older than the first man, Niagara is strong, and fresh to-day as ten thousand years ago. The Mammoth and Mastadon—now so long dead, that fragments of their monstrous bones, alone testify, that they ever lived, have gazed on Niagara. In that long—long time, never still for a single moment. Never dried, never froze, never slept, never rested, [*sic*].[41]

Later, in his lecture on "Inventions," Lincoln mentioned the traditional dating for creation of about six thousand years ago, but in this earlier piece, "the world is at least fourteen thousand years old" and Niagara "older than the first man." Lincoln connected this revised geological chronology with both scripture and paleontology, but what was Lincoln's source for that date?

For decades geologists had hoped the falls' rate of erosion might somehow serve as a giant clock to give the age of the Earth. One calculation in 1790 suggested the falls had been receding for 55,440 years.[42] In 1830, Lyell cited a recent article asserting that the falls had been excavating the ravine for "nearly 10,000 years," but he cautiously added that "the retrograde movement" probably varied greatly at different times.[43] Lyell visited the falls in 1841 accompanied by Hall, and their findings were separately published by Hall in 1843 and Lyell in 1845.[44] In 1842, “Mr. Hall, by Governor Seward’s direction, caused a trigonometric survey to be made of the fall,” though a few years would have to pass before any data would be able “to throw some true light upon this subject.”[45] Hall wrote in 1843 that the estimates of the age of the falls have “alarmed those who would consider [the Earth] still youthful in years,” yet added that “we may regard the problem as undecided with respect to time . . . [and] impossible to calculate accurately.”[46] Both Hall and Lyell noted the discovery near the falls of mastodon bones, mentioned in Lincoln’s fragment.[47] Lyell later abandoned (without explanation) his earlier estimate of the recession rate and suggested that “35,000 years would have been required for the retreat,” though he still stressed that there was no reason to “assume that the [rate of] retrograde movement had been uniform” over time.[48]

An 1851 souvenir guidebook to the falls avoids any reference to dating but includes a pious outburst: “What a scene for an atheist to look upon, and then deny the existence of an all powerful Creator! . . . Dwell on it, stranger . . . and acknowledge yourself an atom, a mere atom in nature, for that you are, and no more.”[49] That alone might have been enough to elicit Lincoln’s rationalist meditation. In 1857, the year Lincoln probably visited the falls, a new guidebook cited Lyell’s recession rate of “a foot every year” but avoided doing the sums.[50]

Even without guidebooks, Lincoln could have gained relevant information from his neighbor the state geologist Worthen, or from his friend McChesney, both of whom had previously worked for Hall or perhaps from his other geological friend Stevens, by then resident in New York. Lincoln might even have learned about Niagara from a Republican colleague with whom he had campaigned in the past, William H. Seward, Hall’s employer when governor of New York, later Lincoln’s main rival within the Republican Party, and, later still, his trusted Secretary of State.

The trigonometric points that Hall installed (at Seward’s behest) in 1842 have indeed demonstrated that the erosion rate is highly variable (which, ironically, has made Niagara Falls a favorite source of “evidence” for modern-day “creationists”!). Geologists have since worked out from other evidence that the Niagara River could not have begun flowing until the recession of the last ice age, about twelve thousand years ago. So, whatever source Lincoln found for his dating, it was a surprisingly good one.

Herndon enjoyed describing his conversation with Lincoln in 1858, just after Herndon’s first visit to Niagara Falls:

> The recollection of the gigantic and awe-inspiring scene stimulated my exuberant powers to the highest pitch. After well-nigh exhausting myself in the effort I turned to Lincoln for his opinion. “What,” I inquired, “made the deepest impression on you when you stood in the presence of the great natural

> wonder?" I shall never forget his answer, because it in a very characteristic way illustrated how he looked at everything. "The thing that struck me most forcibly when I saw the Falls," he responded, "was, where in the world did all that water come from?"[51]

Occasionally deflating Herndon was one of Lincoln's simple pleasures, but Herndon might have been more impressed if he had known that Lincoln had already composed that fragment that mingled his rationalism (and serious consideration of where all that water came from) with a conventionally poetic awe. Herndon would have approved Lincoln's opinion that the falls were "Contemporary with the whole race of men" because it asserted mankind's unity as well as its antiquity. However, that inclusive view was increasingly coming under assault by science, and Lincoln, in addition to his own interest, was probably up-to-date with the scientific debate about race for the simple reason that Herndon was certain to be.

7

Scientific Racism

In 1845, after Darwin had included in the new edition of *The Voyage of the Beagle* a heart-felt cry against slavery, he set out on a month-long jaunt northward during which he read Alexander von Humboldt's latest work, volume 1 of *Cosmos*, which included this agreeable sentiment.

> While we maintain the unity of the human species, we at the same time repel the depressing assumption of superior and inferior races of men. There are nations more susceptible of cultivation, more highly civilized, more ennobled by mental cultivation than others, but none in themselves nobler than others. All are in like degree designed for freedom.[1]

"He is indeed a wonderful man," Darwin wrote of Humboldt in a letter to Charles Lyell, then on his second tour of America. Darwin also mentioned a recent visit to the Dean of Manchester, William Herbert, a considerable expert who "gave me much curious information" about hybrids. Darwin further entertained Lyell with a description of a visit with Charles Waterton, an eccentric Roman Catholic aristocrat but brilliant naturalist: "an amusing strange fellow; at our early dinner, our party consisted of two Catholic priests & two Mulattresses! He is past 60 years old & the day before run down & caught, a Leveret in a turnip field."[2]

Waterton had authored *Wanderings in South America, the North-west of the United States, and the Antilles*, rarely out of print since first published in 1825. This had an obvious appeal to Darwin, who also had another connection with Waterton. While in British Guyana, Waterton trained former slave John Edmonston in taxidermy, which Edmonston in turn taught Darwin when he was a medical student in Edinburgh.[3] Edmonston's former master had three daughters with his mulatto wife, and Waterton married one in 1829 when she was seventeen. Tragically, she died in childbirth the following year, but her infant boy survived to be raised by Waterton with the help of his sister and his wife's sisters—the "two Mulattresses" mentioned by Darwin.

Darwin no doubt remembered well Waterton's assertion published a few years earlier that "the man under Afric's burning zone, and he from the frozen regions of the North, have both come from the same stem. Their difference in colour and in feature may be traced to this: viz., that the first has had too much, and the second too little sun."[4] Waterton's family offered living evidence about "hybridity." In the same letter mentioning Waterton, Darwin told Lyell about an author who maintained he had never known two mulattoes to have offspring. "Can you obtain any comparative information on the crosses between Indian & Europæans & Negros & Europæans?" Darwin asked.[5] Based on Lyell's inquiries among American friends, Darwin later reported that mulatto families that intermarried for several generations "continued on an average as fertile as either pure whites or pure blacks."[6]

At that time, a belief in the unity of the human species was shared not only by Darwin, Waterton, and Humboldt but also by Humboldt's protégé Louis Agassiz, who wrote in 1845: "Here is revealed anew the superiority of the human genre and its greater independence in nature. Whereas the animals are distinct species in the different zoological provinces to which they appertain, man, despite the diversity of his races, constitutes one and the same species over all the surface of the globe." However, Agassiz soon abandoned this view.[7] Logically, it was inconsistent to suggest that God created different species of animals in all those "different zoological provinces" but *not* (according to traditional monogenist teaching) different species of man. Yet, logic probably had less to do with Agassiz's reversal than the fact that shortly after arriving in America to make a lecture tour, Agassiz underwent a bizarre conversion, not on the road to Damascus but in "the city of brotherly love," Philadelphia.

In December 1846, Agassiz wrote a long letter to his mother recounting his first two months' experiences in America. A portion of this letter was excluded when later published by Agassiz's widow but was restored in 1981 by Stephen Jay Gould, the brilliant Harvard paleontologist whose office was in a museum built by Agassiz:

> It was in Philadelphia that I first found myself in prolonged contact with Negroes; all the domestics in my hotel were men of color. I can scarcely express to you the painful impression that I received, especially since the feeling that they inspired in me is contrary to all our ideas about the confraternity of the human type (genre) and the unique origin of our species. But truth before all. Nevertheless, I experienced pity at the sight of this degraded and degenerate race, and their lot inspired compassion in me in thinking that they were really men. Nonetheless, it is impossible for me to repress the feeling that they are not of the same blood as us. In seeing their black faces with their thick lips and grimacing teeth, the wool on their head, their bent knees, their elongated hands, I could not take my eyes off their face in order to tell them to stay far away. And when they advanced that hideous hand towards my plate in order

> to serve me, I wished I were able to depart in order to eat a piece of bread elsewhere, rather than dine with such service. What unhappiness for the white race—to have tied their existence so closely with that of Negroes in certain countries! God preserve us from such a contact.[8]

This experience helped Agassiz to resolve the earlier paradox—that all creatures seem to have been created in distinct and differing zones except (according to Genesis) humans—and it also suited his taxonomic approach, that of an extreme "splitter" continually "discovering" new species. According to Gould, Agassiz "once named three genera of fossil fishes from isolated teeth that a later paleontologist found in the variable dentition of a single individual."[9] But this change in his view of the species of man from "unity" to "plurality" (or from monogenism to polygenism) was immediately reinforced when Agassiz met Dr. Samuel G. Morton in Philadelphia and saw his "unique collection of human skulls," as Agassiz informed his mother. "Imagine a series of six hundred skulls, mostly Indian, of all the tribes who now inhabit or formerly inhabited America. Nothing like it exists elsewhere. This collection alone is worth a journey to America."[10]

Agassiz was delighted when Morton gave him "a copy of his great illustrated work" (presumably *Crania Americana*) in which measurements of cranial capacity were used to rank different races, with Caucasians having greatest capacity, Negroes the least, and Mongolians, Malays, and American Indians in between in descending order. Morton's measuring system has since been entirely discredited, but his data then suited Agassiz's new convictions. Because Agassiz's trip to America soon turned into permanent residence, and because, as Gould expresses it, "No man did more to establish and enhance the prestige of American biology during the nineteenth century," the fact that this scholar from Switzerland embraced polygenism partly explains why the latter came to be viewed as an "American" theory. The other reason is that many more American naturalists also adopted this view, especially southerners.[11]

Prior to his arrival in America, Agassiz had apparently never seen blacks or slavery. Darwin, in contrast, virtually inherited an abhorrence of slavery, enjoyed a positive relationship with the first black he encountered, John Edmonston, and was intrigued rather than disturbed by his contacts with other races during the *Beagle* voyage. Darwin's research was partly driven by his desire to demonstrate that blacks and whites belonged to the same human species.

Lincoln did not initially approach race from a scientific standpoint, but his experience of blacks and slavery went far more deeply. As a child in a slave state, a young man traveling by flatboat or steamboat, a lawyer handling cases involving slavery, and a guest on two slaveholding plantations in Kentucky (Joshua Speed's and Lincoln's in-laws'), Lincoln encountered the institution frequently. The 1840 census listed 115 African Americans living in Springfield, 4.5 percent of the town's population. Although Illinois outlawed slavery, six of those blacks were listed as "slaves," three of them owned by friends of Lincoln, including his later brother-in-law Ninian Edwards. Most of Springfield's blacks were free, although the census listed many as "indentured." Most free blacks worked in menial jobs, but some were self-employed, and Lincoln used one of Springfield's two black barbers. Before Lincoln left Springfield in 1861, at least twenty-one blacks were living within three blocks of Lincoln's home. "By twentieth century standards," one scholar writes, "the Lincolns lived in an integrated neighborhood."[12]

Lincoln later learned about scientific thinking on the subject of race, but his main interest in blacks was political, while men like Darwin and Agassiz endeavored, however unsuccessfully, to keep scientific objectivity above any personal interest. Agassiz had no desire to defend slavery or attack biblical authority, but his views made him see human species and races differently from the Genesis view of unity. Combining the patterns he saw in the geographical distribution of vast numbers of species with his notions of the massively destructive power of glaciers, Agassiz concluded that God's creation was more complex than the Hebrews who wrote the Bible could understand. An omnipotent God could cause more than one creation, and an inscrutable God had no need to explain why. Separate creations fit the evidence better than the Eden story, and Agassiz always said that science provided better testimony than scripture of "the plan of the Creator."[13]

Agassiz also concluded that a species moving outside the zone for which it was created (and that was created for it) might not prosper, and if it tried to breed with another species that, however similar, had been created separately in a different zone, the offspring might be weakened or even infertile. Abandoning Le Comte de Buffon's classic concept of "specific infertility" as the defining criteria for species, Agassiz decided that some interbreeding could occur without proving that two creatures are truly of the same species but that such interbreeding was essentially unnatural, against God's plan, and resulting in offspring so degraded that their survival as a hybrid would be short lived. These conclusions, Agassiz believed, reenforced the immutability of "real" species, now defined by their "primordial origins" in different locations. In short, by adopting multiple creations and a limited kind of interbreeding between species, Agassiz felt he had strengthened the arguments against transmutation.

Darwin was moving in the opposite direction. Creation, whether occurring in one place and time or several, was replaced with natural selection, a multitude of small, unplanned adaptations in millions of species over great swathes of time. This, of course, jettisoned the immutability of species, yet Buffon's specific infertility was as awkward for Darwin as it was for Agassiz, for opposite reasons. Agassiz had to depict hybridization as possible but ultimately impermanent. For Darwin, hybridization was not only possible but necessary to preserve and spread modifications (or variations) throughout a species. Darwin upheld specific infertility because his theory insisted that different races of men could all interbreed successfully since they were all actually of the same human species, but they were also variants, splitting from the same tree, identifiable but also potentially liable to further change. Whatever caused earlier "splittings" could cause later ones, and some variants might prove for social rather than biological reasons more successful in the struggle for survival than others. While Agassiz and others praised Morton's cranial research, Darwin found Morton's work "too credulous" when citing other researchers' evidence on hybridity. Darwin noted "a want of exactness in the manner Morton gives the facts." Morton was not "a safe man to quote from."[14]

As his barnacle project expanded, Darwin sought barnacles from Dr. Augustus A. Gould, a Boston physician, author of a major work on *Mollusca* in 1841, and recently coauthor of *The Principles of Zoology* with Louis Agassiz. Darwin had not applied to Agassiz, but Gould communicated some information to Agassiz that caused him to send additional barnacles for Darwin's study. About seven weeks after writing to Gould, Darwin sent to Agassiz a reply to a letter that has not survived. After first thanking Agassiz for the barnacles he and Gould were sending, Darwin said, "In your letter . . . you say you should like to hear what results I have arrived at; as far as the limits of a letter go, it will give me *real* pleasure to do so."[15]

After telling how Agassiz himself had inspired this barnacle research, Darwin summarized his findings but politely requested that Agassiz "not mention my present results" partly because they were tentative and "partly because I should like to have the satisfaction of publishing myself." Along with the suggestion that Agassiz might in some sense steal his material, a slight barb is also in Darwin's remark that he had made out the homologies of the barnacles "with certainty from dissection & not from analogies." After describing a plethora of variations in barnacle reproductive systems, Darwin suggested, "You will laugh at this account, but I assure you I would not presume to tell you anything, of which I was not *sure*, from repeated examinations of specimens taken at different periods & from different countries." Darwin subtly indicated that he had found far more variation among barnacles than any theory based on separate creations or limited geographical distribution could account for. Darwin postscripted: "I do not suppose I shall finish my Monograph for two or three years—my health allows me to work very little." This prediction—slightly more realistic than earlier ones—signaled Agassiz to await Darwin's publication before using his material in any public lectures.[16]

Nearly two years passed before Darwin wrote to Agassiz again, in June 1850, to thank him for the gift of his book *Lake Superior*, an account of Agassiz's first natural science "expedition" in the tradition of Waterton, Humboldt, and, indeed, Darwin. The book was filled with data that interested Darwin and theories he disliked about "the direct intervention of a Supreme Intelligence in the plan of Creation." Agassiz believed that except when otherwise transported by men, "animals must have originated where they live, and have remained precisely within the same limits since they were created. . . . [T]he order which prevails through creation is intentional."[17]

Darwin wrote a gracious note of thanks for "your most kind present of *Lake Superior*: I had heard of it, & had much wished to read it, but I confess that it was the very great honour of having in my possession a work with your autograph, as a presentation copy, that has given me such lively & sincere pleasure. I cordially thank you for it. I have begun to read it with uncommon interest, which I see will increase as I go on."[18] Although a biographer of Agassiz has quoted these lines to indicate Darwin's admiration, "uncommon interest" is not critical acclaim, and this letter must be set against one Darwin sent a week earlier to Lyell: "Agassiz has sent me his Lake Superior Book,—is not that an immense Honour!"[19] That this was meant to be ironic becomes evident from later statements by Darwin and his closest associates.

Darwin waited two months to read *Lake Superior* and then scored and annotated the text, pasting four pages of notes in the back of the volume.[20] Darwin's letter had also thanked Agassiz again for the barnacles "you & Dr. Gould were so good as to send me" but then commented that while one species appeared to be exclusive to America and another exclusive to Europe, the other three were found in both—contradicting Agassiz's thinking on geographical distribution. Darwin provided brief descriptions, "though I do not know whether you will care to hear about them." Darwin also said he had not yet examined the two specimens that "you sent me from Charlestown."[21] Darwin meant Charleston, South Carolina, where Agassiz had four months earlier addressed the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Darwin had undoubtedly heard from Lyell about Agassiz's success as a popular lecturer in Boston and New York and during his first visit to South Carolina in 1847. These earlier lectures, reported in newspapers and later issued as a pamphlet, continued to develop the polygenist view of the races of man that Agassiz had adopted after his experiences in Philadelphia.[22] Although many northerners were reluctant to accept a view clashing with Genesis's account of a single creation and single family of man, many southerners welcomed the change. As Darwin suggested in a letter, "I wonder whether the queries [in recent publications] . . . about the specific distinctions of the races of man are a reflexion from Agassiz's Lectures in the U.S. in which he has been maintaining the doctrine of several species,—much, I daresay, to the comfort of the slave-holding Southerns."[23]

At the 1850 AAAS meeting in slaveholding Charleston, Agassiz for the first time presented to a scientific assembly his developed opinion that "viewed zoologically, the several races of men were well marked and distinct." Their geographical distribution indicated that "these races did not originate from a common centre, nor from a single pair," so the differences were both primordial and permanent.[24] Most of Agassiz's audience were familiar with Morton's work since Dr. Josiah Nott of Mobile, Alabama, who delivered a paper immediately before Agassiz, had been promoting Morton's polygenist view even before Agassiz adopted it. A scion of a prominent South Carolina family, Nott had earned his medical degree in Philadelphia, where he became familiar with Morton's work, and by 1843, Nott was publishing in books and learned journals his polygenist views on the demonstrable inferiority of negroes.[25] Nott was thrilled to have this European-trained Harvard professor on their side and told Morton, "With Agassiz in the war the battle is ours. This was an immense accession for we shall not only have his name, but the timid will come out from their hiding places."[26]

Because polygenists like Nott rejected the Genesis story of a single creation, many saw themselves as modern Galileos suffering persecution. These included George Robins Gliddon, a bumptious and unscholarly Egyptologist, and E. G. Squier, a more serious student of the antiquity of American Indians.[27] Both rejected the traditional dating of creation to 4004 B.C. as far too recent, and both supplied Morton with skulls that, based on Morton's dubious measurements, allowed them to agree that from the dawn of human history, the different races of men had remained unchanged and unchangeable. Although Agassiz had adopted similar views, by Nott's standard Agassiz was "timid" because he not only maintained that his observations of nature simply revealed "the plan of the Creator" but had also bothered to publish an article in the *Christian Examiner*, Boston's widely read Unitarian organ, to demonstrate that multiple creation did not contradict but merely supplemented the Genesis account.[28] This article was part of a publishing phenomenon, as this one scientific issue about the unity or plurality of man spilled out of the learned journals and received wider coverage exactly because of its religious and political implications.

While Morton and Nott had been publishing scholarly tomes or in serious journals (which even brought Nott to the attention of the visiting Lyell), Nott began spreading the polygenist gospel more widely through popular southern journals such as *De Bow's Review*.[29] Also, Nott's books were widely reviewed in both Whig and Democratic journals.[30] In one such journal, Squier published a long article, "American Ethnology," which includes a reference to Morton's view that "Negroes were numerous in Egypt, but their social position in ancient times was the same that it now is, that of servants and slaves."[31]

However, a major advocate of the "unity of man," Dr. John Bachman, opposed Nott and Agassiz. A native of New York who had moved to South Carolina for his health thirty-five years earlier, Bachman became a devoted southerner (and later a fervent secessionist), but he was also a Lutheran minister and an outstanding naturalist who considered polygenism both heretical and scientifically unsound. Darwin had met him in London twelve years earlier, when Darwin admiringly copied into his notebooks various ideas gained from the American. Bachman now published his views in the most respected scientific publication in the south, the *Charleston Medical Journal and Review*. Bachman attacked Morton's assertions on grounds partly religious but mainly based on his own expertise regarding geographical distribution of animals and issues of hybridity. Bachman and Morton began a lively exchange in the pages of the journal that lasted for months.[32]

Bachman's book *The Doctrine of the Unity of the Human Race Examined on the Principles of Science* appeared shortly after the Charleston meeting. It received a brief notice in the *American Journal of Science* and a long and negative review by Nott in *De Bow's Review.*[33] Various reviews in 1850 mentioned Charles Pickering's *Races of Man; and Their Geographical Distribution*, first printed in 1848 as one of a projected twenty-four volumes of reports of the U.S. Exploring Expedition that had sailed the Pacific Ocean in 1838–42 under the command of Charles Wilkes, USN. This American version of the *Beagle* voyage was funded by Congress, which, unfortunately, also supervised the publication of its specialist reports, five of which were never completed (including two volumes on ichthyology farmed out to Agassiz). The congressional committee controlling the project authorized print-runs of a mere one hundred or two hundred copies, and the committee chairman, Senator Benjamin Tappan of Ohio—brother of two of America's staunchest antislavery activists, Arthur Tappan and Lewis Tappan—particularly disapproved of an early draft of Pickering's anthropological report.[34] Wilkes had to arrange that "the parts of his paper on the races of man that you criticized and objected to" were altered so that "you could have no possible objection to its publication, now."[35]

During the voyage, Pickering wrote to his close associate Dr. Morton that although formerly believing there were only five races of men, he had now seen eight and expected to see more. If others wished to believe all the races belonged to one species, he was "content to let them have their way," but Pickering believed that the various races had "different origins, or, were originally placed in different countries," which was also Morton's view. Now, to gain Tappan's imprimatur, Pickering watered down his language, creating what one reader called "the oddest collection of fragments that was ever seen . . . amorphous as a fog, unstratified as a pudding, and heterogeneous as a low priced sausage."[36] The first commercial edition of Pickering's *Races of Man* was produced in 1850 in London by an editor who actually thought Pickering was arguing *for* the unity of the human species![37] A better-informed reviewer who compared Pickering's *Races of Man* not only with Bachman's recent *Doctrine of Unity of the Human Race* but also with a second journal article that Agassiz had published in the *Christian Examiner* regretted Pickering's "guarded style of expression," praised Bachman's "thoroughness of investigation . . . and triumphant establishment of [his] conclusions," and criticized "both the nature of . . . and the manner in which Prof. Agassiz has presented [his views] to the public. . . . We do not perceive that any new law has been established, or any new principle developed."[38]

Agassiz's first article in the *Christian Examiner* had sought to counter charges of irreligion, and the second denied subsequent charges of serving the interests of slave owners. But after disclaiming "any question involving political matters," he later asserted that it was "mock-philanthropy" to assume all races have the same abilities and that "human affairs with reference to the colored races" would be better if we understood "the real difference" rather than "treating them on terms of equality."[39] A third article in the *Christian Examiner* reduced all the issues to a single stark choice: either one accepts the evidence of geographical distribution and the "primordial" differences between human races as reflecting a divine plan or one accepts a single "Garden of Eden" creation but must then account for subsequent distributions and well-known variations by appealing to some natural law that allows for "development" (or transmutation) of species. He commented, "Recognition in the animal creation of specific [divine] thoughts excludes . . . the idea of a natural development from law, and acknowledges a personal, intelligent God."[40]

Agassiz's rejection of all "development" theories espoused by Lamarck, Erasmus Darwin, and "Mr. Vestiges" (and lurking in Charles Darwin's private sketches and notebooks) crystallized the issue. "I must confess," Lyell later wrote, "that Agassiz . . . drove me far over into Darwin's camp . . . for when he attributed the original of every race of man to an independent starting point . . . the miracles really became to me so much in the way of S. Antonio of Padua."[41]

Yet, the market for polygenism was strong. Nott had earlier assured Squier, "All the . . . articles I have written on niggerology have been eagerly sought for at the South, and in the present excited state of the political world, I think the thing will go well."[42] The excitement in the "political world," which had been building up before Lincoln left Washington in 1849, nearly broke up the United States in 1850. The territories acquired through the Mexican-American war raised the question of whether slavery might expand into these regions. The Wilmot Proviso, which Lincoln supported, had sought to prevent this extension of slavery but was stopped by southern opposition in the Senate. However, after the Gold Rush made it imperative to admit California into the union, the issue boiled over as Californians expressed their desire to enter as a free state. Southerners would not accept this without concessions on several other slavery-related issues, and during the protracted negotiations, there were serious calls in the south for secession if denied the right to extend slavery. Henry Clay came out of retirement, returned to the Senate, and in January 1850 proposed a series of compromises. Congress debated furiously but could not pass the "omnibus bill," and it was only in September that the compromise bills were finally steered one by one through Congress by the chairman of the committee on territories, Stephen A. Douglas.

Lincoln played down Douglas's role in the passage of the Compromise of 1850 and had already advised the Whig who was supposed to take his place in Congress to oppose any extension of slavery but not if secession proved a genuine threat, for "of all political objects the preservation of the Union stands number one."[43] There was much for Lincoln to dislike in the compromise's appeasement of the south. The problem of slavery in Washington, D.C., itself, on which Lincoln had labored in vain, was lamely "settled" by abolishing the slave trade there but not slavery itself. The new Fugitive Slave Act was a travesty, and, worst of all, the territories of New Mexico and Utah were opened to the possibility of slavery on the basis of popular sovereignty, whereby the citizens of a given territory rather than Congress could decide for or against slavery. The greatest champion of this policy was now Douglas. Lincoln, from his law office in Springfield, uttered no protest, but when eighty-three prominent Illinois Whigs and Democrats signed a call for a meeting of citizens to endorse the proposed compromise, Lincoln's and Herndon's names were not among them.[44]

Although numerous other countries far less democratic than the United States had recently abolished slavery, it might now continue indefinitely in America, nourished simultaneously by the compromise and the southern slave owners' newfound justification provided by the theory of separate creations. Despite raising some orthodox hackles, Louis Agassiz himself had cobbled together a compromise between the religious and scientific worldview. Slave owners had always found divine support in scripture, and now they could read "the plan of the Creator" in nature. As polygenism spread through the popular press, millions of Americans who were not slave owners also felt inclined to accept a scientific view that so conveniently reconciled their religious notions and racial prejudices. Darwin felt he had a better explanation for racial diversity that did not involve God; and Lincoln, in a later lecture, blamed man, not God, for "the invention of negroes."

Having read widely and also drawing on Herndon's even wider reading, Lincoln was more aware of these scientific debates than most Americans. In the 1850s, the strongly antislavery Herndon expanded his library with publications about slavery and quite a few on race.

> I was in correspondence with Sumner, Greeley, Phillips, and Garrison, and was thus thoroughly imbued with all the rancor drawn from such strong anti-slavery sources. . . . Every time a good speech on the great issue was made I sent for it. . . . Lincoln and I took such papers as the *Chicago Tribune*, *New York Tribune*, *Anti-Slavery Standard*, *Emancipator* and *National Era*. On the other side of the question we took the *Charleston Mercury* and the *Richmond Enquirer*. . . . I purchased all the leading histories of the slavery movement, and other works which treated on that subject.[45]

Herndon owned at least two books by Agassiz, both collections of popular lectures dating to the period after Lincoln had moved to the White House. But "Herndon's Auction List" also included Hugh Miller's *Footprints of the Creator*, first published in Britain in 1849 and strongly attacking the "development" theory as popularized in *The Vestiges*. Herndon probably owned the 1850 American edition that included a twenty-six-page "memoir" of Miller written by Agassiz, who proudly took credit for bringing this "successful combination of Christian doctrines with pure scientific truths" to the American public.[46]

The scientific debate waned somewhat after the Compromise of 1850 dampened political flames, and Morton's death in May 1851 ended his joust with Bachman in the *Charleston Medical Journal*. A hiatus occurred as the rumor that Agassiz was writing a book about special creation proved false, and Nott, assisted by George Gliddon, was for three years busy producing a book-length treatment of polygenism based on Morton's notes.

Herndon bought a book published late in 1854 by George Fitzhugh and entitled *Sociology for the South; or, the Failure of Free Society*. According to Herndon, the book "defended and justified slavery in every conceivable way" and also "aroused the ire of Lincoln more than most pro-slavery books."[47] Fitzhugh, a Virginian lawyer and social theorist, demonstrated a perverse shift in slave-owning culture that no longer saw "the peculiar institution" as an embarrassment, or expected it gradually to extinguish itself, or sought merely to protect slave states from outside interference but instead hoped to expand a system that it proudly defended. According to Fitzhugh, the negro "is but a grown up child, and must be governed as a child, not as a lunatic or criminal. The master occupies towards him the place of parent or guardian." He based his conclusions on "the course of nature, the lessons of history, [and] the voice of experience."[48]

Although Fitzhugh later converted to "scientific racism," in *Sociology for the South* he rejected the polygenism that enthralled so many fellow southerners, "first, because it is at war with scripture, which teaches us that the whole human race is descended from a common parentage; and, second, because it encourages and incites brutal masters to treat negroes, not as weak, ignorant and dependent brethren, but as wicked beasts, without the pale of humanity." In 1854, Fitzhugh was still content to defend slavery as being part of the "higher law" of God, who did not make blacks as "brutes" but as "weak" men and "instituted slavery from the first, as he instituted marriage."[49] He specifically disparaged "the doctrine of the 'Types of Mankind,'" which was actually the title of an influential 738-page polygenist volume that had appeared earlier in 1854. Nearly a thousand people subscribed to the first edition, and nine more editions appeared before 1871.[50] Darwin, who disliked it even more than Fitzhugh did, though for different reasons, owned and cited the work, usually with distrust.[51] It does not appear in "Herndon's Auction List," and whether Lincoln ever read the work or merely read about it, he would have shared Darwin's distaste. *The Types of Mankind* was the work Nott and Gliddon had been preparing for the last three years, using notes of the late Dr. Morton, to whom they dedicated the volume. They also enhanced their work by including a prefatory essay written by Harvard professor Louis Agassiz.[52]

8

The Types of Mankind *and the Kansas-Nebraska Act, 1854–55*

In the autumn of 1850, Charles Darwin, who earlier had thanked heaven he would never have to visit another slave country, wrote to his cousin that he sometimes speculated about emigrating, perhaps to Australia, "or what I fancy most, the middle States of N. America."[1] Darwin never left the British Isles again, but while he fantasized about moving to the American midwest, it appears that a resident of that area, Billy Herndon, was intellectually escaping in the opposite direction. Beginning in the early 1850s, Herndon expanded the law office's library with not only works on slavery but also a surprising number of British publications: collections of essays from the London *Times* and from the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and Edinburgh and odd volumes of *Blackwood's*, *North British Review*, *Edinburgh Review*, *Chambers' Journal of Popular Literature, Arts and Sciences, Chambers' Papers for the People,* and *Chambers' Repository* (the last three coedited by Robert Chambers, anonymous author of *Vestiges*).[2]

Herndon also obtained forty-nine issues of the *Westminster Review*, from 1851 to 1868, which was edited during some of these years by the brilliant Marian Evans, later known as George Eliot. Before taking control of the *Westminster Review*, Eliot had translated David Friedrich Strauss's *Life of Christ* and Ludwig Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*, both possessed by Herndon. According to Eliot's 1851 prospectus, the *Westminster Review* stood for the "law of progress," maintaining "that the institutions of man, no less than the products of nature, are strong and durable in proportion as they are the results of gradual development."[3] Thomas Huxley became the journal's science reviewer in the early 1850s, though not at that time sharing Eliot's devotion to "development": he upset her by writing (in another journal) a scathing review of *Vestiges*'s latest edition.[4]

Darwin met Huxley in 1851, finding the young man as brilliant as he was acerbic. Although later becoming the greatest champion of Darwin's natural selection, Huxley's admiration for Darwin was already clear in 1854, when he wrote a brief notice (which Herndon might have read in Springfield): "Mr. Darwin's present work shows him to be as able an observer of nature on the small as on the large scale. It deals with the anatomy and metamorphoses of certain crustaceans, those well-known barnacles, in all their varieties."[5] After eight years' labor, Darwin had finally completed his study. Darwin considered using the material as a vehicle for introducing his theory of natural selection but decided the barnacles deserved their own place among specialist studies while his theory required broader comparative data.

The eight years of struggling to classify these amazingly variable barnacles had not only reenforced Darwin's conviction that natural selection was correct but also gained Darwin valuable contacts with naturalists worldwide, many struggling with classification problems in their own fields. As Huxley had noted, Darwin had proved his ability to specialize as well as theorize and was thrilled that the Royal Society cited his recent work when awarding him the Royal Medal for Natural Science in 1853. Darwin's closest colleague, Joseph Dalton Hooker, who was on the award committee, indicated the magnitude of the victory by pointing out, "I neither proposed you, nor seconded you, nor voted for you."[6]

Darwin was now better positioned to bring his theory before a world better prepared to receive it. The thousands of new specimens discovered by recent British and American expeditions kept an increasingly professional body of naturalists busily "lumping" or "splitting" each other's particular varieties and species. And in the background, surviving continued insult and slowly gaining ground, was the development concept. The Lamarckian view simply would not die, and *Vestiges*, still selling widely ten years and ten editions since its first appearance, continued to spread the gospel, as did Herbert Spencer's work and the whole tone of the "Westminster set." Darwin knew it would take time to pull together his notes and work out the scheme for presenting the evidence as convincingly as possible: building half a bridge would not get him to his destination.

As Darwin finished up his barnacle work, Louis Agassiz was not far from his thoughts. When Charles Lyell passed on a copy of Agassiz's *Lake Superior*, Darwin reminded Lyell (with a dose of irony) that "the great man honoured me with a copy" earlier.[7] Darwin's view of Agassiz was probably echoed in what Hooker, Britain's greatest botanist, wrote to his American counterpart Asa Gray of Harvard at the beginning of 1854: "I have long been aware of Agassiz's heresies. His opinions are too extreme for respect and hence are mere prejudices. They are further contradicted by facts. Lyell and I have talked him over by the hour."[8]

Lyell, Hooker, and Darwin often shared their correspondence, and Hooker began showing Darwin some of his letters from Gray, starting with Gray's response to Hooker's condemnation of Agassiz. Darwin had once met the American when he was touring England in 1839, and now he thanked Hooker for passing along Gray's letter, adding, "how very pleasantly he writes."[9] One thing Gray so pleasantly describes is his decreasing respect for Agassiz. "It often does more harm than good" to combat Agassiz's views in public. "I confine myself to trying to show him that his own data do not at all necessitate the conclusions he sometimes draws from them."[10] Darwin, tongue firmly in cheek, commented to Hooker:

> I cannot quite understand why you & [Gray] think so strongly that it "does more harm than good to combat [Agassiz's] views." It is delightful to hear all that he says on Agassiz: How very singular it is that so *eminently* clever a man, with such *immense* knowledge on many branches of Natural History, should write such wonderful stuff & bosh as he does. Lyell told me that he was so delighted with one of his [Agassiz's] lectures on [i.e. against] progressive development &c &c, that he went to him afterwards & told him "it was so delightful, that he could not help all the time wishing it was true." I seldom see a Zoological paper from N. America, without observing the impress of Agassiz's doctrines,—another proof, by the way, of how great a man he is.

Huxley, in his recent review savaging *Vestiges*, called Agassiz "the great investigator . . . whose lively fancy has done at least as much harm to natural science as his genius has assisted its progress." Darwin praised the review but thought Huxley had been "rather hard on the poor author" of *Vestiges*: "But I am perhaps no fair judge for I am almost as unorthodox about species as *Vestiges* itself, though I hope not *quite* so unphilosophical." On Agassiz, Darwin added, "I am rather sorry you do not think more of Agassiz's embryological stages, for though I saw how excessively weak the evidence was, I was led to hope in its truth."[11] Agassiz's notion that the fossil sequence of the paleontological record somehow reflected the stages in the embryological development of the four main branches of the animal kingdom appealed to Darwin and had no direct relation to multiple creations.

After telling Hooker how Huxley had made "mincemeat with Agassiz's embryonic fish," Darwin mentioned that he would "begin to look over my old notes on species" as soon as he had finished sending "ten-thousand Barnacles" back to their donors. When Darwin returned specimens to Augustus Gould in Boston with effusive thanks, he asked Gould to forgive him for "sending in the same box the specimens which Prof. Agassiz was so kind as to send me, & a copy of my work for him.—When you next see Prof. Agassiz, will you be so good as to give him my cordial thanks & my kind & respectful remembrances."[12] So, only indirect thanks from the normally punctilious Darwin: there is no evidence of further communication between the two until 1858.

Darwin had been a collector, explorer, observer, describer, and dissectionist, and, at all times, a theorist, but now he became a serious experimenter and continued so for the rest of his life. His first experiments, begun in April 1855, concerned whether seeds might have been transported long distances without losing their ability to germinate.[13] The question—whether identical species could have arisen in separate continents *without* separate creation or transportation by humans—had interested Darwin since at least 1837.[14] Although Hooker dismissed Darwin's notion in both letters and published work, Darwin never yielded to Hooker's authority. In April 1855, Darwin informed Hooker, "I have begun my seed-salting experiments," which involved Darwin's entire family looking after dozens of jars filled with artificial seawater and various seeds.[15]

Darwin gloated over the successful results. "You are a good man," he told Hooker, "to confess that you expected the crop would be killed in a week, for this gives me a nice little triumph. The children at first were tremendously eager & asked me often 'whether I should beat Dr Hooker?'!!" Darwin removed the sting by adding: "If you knew some of the experiments (if they may be so called) which I am trying, you would have a good right to sneer for they are so *absurd* even in *my* opinion that I dare not tell you."[16] Hooker himself obtained some seeds washed up on the Azores Islands, planted them at Kew, and had the "unutterable mortification" of seeing them germinate. Darwin enjoyed Hooker's mock humiliation but stressed the real point: "It is the funniest thing in the world that you do not rejoice; for you have (& I never have) put in print that you do not believe in multiple creation, & therefore you surely should rejoice at every conceivable means of dispersal."[17]

The connection between these experiments and Agassiz's multiple creations is evident in a report Darwin submitted to the *Gardeners Chronicle*: "As such experiments might naturally appear childish to many, I may be permitted to premise that they have a direct bearing on a very interesting problem, which has lately, *especially in America*, attracted much attention, namely, whether the same organic being has been created at one point or on several on the face of our globe" (emphasis added).[18] Darwin posted a copy of that report to his new correspondent Asa Gray, whose response was the first letter in the Darwin-Gray correspondence to mention Agassiz. "I am most glad to be in conference with Hooker & yourself, on these matters, and I think we may, or rather *you* may, in a few years settle the question as to whether Agassiz's—or Hooker's views are correct: they are certainly widely different." Thanking Darwin for the paper on "your experiments on seeds exposed to sea-water," Gray said he would have it reprinted in the *American Journal of Science* "as a *nut* for Agassiz to crack."[19] Along with occasional references to Agassiz, the correspondence was for the moment filled with Darwin's questions about geographical distribution of plants, suggestions of future lines of research, and Gray's generous offers of further assistance.

When writing about Agassiz and nuts, Gray had presumably already read Agassiz's prefatory sketch in Joseph C. Nott and George R. Gliddon's *Types of Mankind*, which had been published over a year earlier. Gray and Darwin had still not mentioned the book in their correspondence, and Darwin had yet to read it. Certainly, he could guess its contents after reading various reviews, including one in the *Westminster Review* in July 1854. "Grant that the Negro is a distinct species," Huxley summed up ironically, "or even a metamorphosed orang, if you will, and what difference does it make to the social effect of [slavery]? [It] is an evil to society—because it degrades the man who practices it and increases the proclivity to crimes injurious to society in himself and others. And we are bound to put down the slaveholders for precisely [this] reason. . . . Ethnology had better perish as a science than be swamped by the accession to her ranks of the Legrees of the South."[20] Huxley knew *Uncle Tom's Cabin* but did not adore it as Emma and Charles Darwin did. Darwin probably tolerated Huxley's flippancy about blacks because Huxley's antislavery position was as solid as his dislike of multiple creationists.

Despite or because of Huxley's review, seventeen months passed before Darwin read *Types of Mankind* in December 1855, but he could have read Agassiz's preface when it was reprinted in October 1854 in a journal Darwin often read.[21] That he did so is suggested by his comment in November 1855, after thanking Lyell for passing along two pamphlets by John Bachman, probably those based on Bachman's four separate reviews of *Types of Mankind*—two of which were scathing about Agassiz's preface. "It is *most* useful to see what is said on all sides," Darwin told Lyell, "though I am surprised, from what I remember of Bachman, that he did not do the thing better, & that he deals in assertions, which I do not believe he can substantiate by a single fact."[22] A month later, Darwin himself finally read the *Types of Mankind*. Whether he had previously seen Agassiz's "Sketch" or not, Darwin now reacted with an outburst of negative marginal notes: "How false," "What forced reasoning!" "Primordial begs the question," and "Look at same race [native Americans] in United States & S. America." On a sheet of notes pinned to the last page, Darwin expressed in a nutshell how his view of human racial groupings differed from that of Agassiz, Nott, and Gliddon: "As mere naturalist, *excepting* from blending of races to certain extent, independently of crossing, I sh[oul]d look at races of man as deserving to be called distinct species, yet I consider as descended from common stock, so come back at common belief." Darwin's original emphasis points out that two factors—variations (or gradations) within racial groups and cross-breeding between them—already weaken the authors' view that human races are distinct species; but Darwin's new theory of descent from "common stock" actually aligns him somewhat with the earlier "common belief" (descent from Adam and Eve). The note continues, "only difference is name whether to be called species or variations."[23] For Darwin, there are in a sense no species, only degrees of variation, and the variation between human races is small—*how* small is what he would continue to research and then discuss in his two later books on man. In *On the Origin of Species*, Darwin would say only that his theory of natural selection as applied to animals might someday "throw light" on the origin of human beings. Ironically, Agassiz felt *his* theory of multiple creations did the same thing, as he stated in his preface for *Types of Mankind*:

> [T]he geographical distribution of all the organized beings now existing upon the earth . . . cannot fail to throw light, at some future time, upon the very origin of the differences existing among men, since it shows that man's physical nature is modified by the same laws as that of animals, and that any general results obtained from the animal kingdom regarding the organic differences of its various types must also apply to man.[24]

Perhaps Darwin remembered Agassiz's supposed throwing of "light" when he used the same phrase four years later. But it was not a case of imitation being the highest form of flattery, for what Darwin felt was contempt. At the bottom of the last page of the preface, Darwin scribbled: "Oh proh pudor Agassiz!" (Oh for shame!)[25]

There is no evidence that Lincoln or Herndon ever read *Types of Mankind*, but they probably read Huxley's review in the law office's copy of the *Westminster Review* or other reviews such as those in *Putnam's Monthly Magazine*, a Whig organ (soon to become Republican). Notices in southern journals were often summarized in the *Charleston Mercury* and the *Richmond Enquirer*, which the two lawyers also received.[26] Although Lincoln would not disagree with *Types*'s antiscriptural position, these reviews showed that religious sentiment could help to limit the general acceptance of the polygenist view of human races. Lincoln could also see that when natural science veered into social science, problems arose. This was not Euclid, the proofs were not demonstrable, and the biology behind Dr. Samuel G. Morton's craniometry and Agassiz's multiple zones of creation, while impressing many, did not convince all serious reviewers. When even more controversial evidence was dragged in from philology, ethnology, and Egyptian archaeology, those eager to be convinced perceived concurrence, while others simply saw accumulations of logical flaws. Agassiz's contribution to *Types* raised some reviewers' estimation of multiple creation but tarnished others' opinions of Agassiz.

Convincing or not, the ideas promoted in *Types of Mankind* arose precisely when the debate about slavery in America was taking a new turn. In the past, whatever the difficulties in abolishing slavery where it existed, the actual *expansion* of slavery territorially was difficult for southerners to advocate because slavery was generally held to be "wrong"—morally, politically, or economically. But the ethical view usually relied on the notion that blacks were fellow human beings—a notion now under attack *intellectually* by those promoting separate creations and *politically* by those advocating separate decision making—that is, "pop. sov."

Lincoln could see that this new polygenist view was dangerous but also vulnerable to an attack—which Lincoln was about to launch for an entirely separate reason. However, Lincoln knew enough science to recognize his own limitations and, more important, those of his audience: rather than employing directly the terminology of geographical distribution or hybridity, one might better attack these new doctrines by appealing to religious sentiments and emphasizing the new doctrine's antitraditional and counterintuitive nature. This Lincoln would do by reminding his listeners of their trust in the Bible, in the Declaration of Independence, and in their own sense of rightness: not a very scientific approach yet ultimately grounded in the real world as a practical formula for political success.

The year 1854 was not so much a turning point for Lincoln or Darwin as simply the year each got back on track. Having finally completed his barnacle work, Darwin was perhaps partly spurred on by the rise of scientific racism, which may also have had some influence on Lincoln's thought and action.[27] But what energized Lincoln primarily was the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in May 1854.

Senator Stephen A. Douglas's prime intention in introducing this bill was to improve his chances of winning the Democratic Party's presidential nomination. His strategy was to please the railroad interests in Illinois by promoting the "northern route" for the projected transcontinental railroad between the Pacific Ocean and Chicago without displeasing the southern wing of the party who preferred New Orleans as the eastern terminus. Ostensibly, Douglas's more noble purpose, as chairman of the Senate committee on territories, was to facilitate the country's development through the swift admission to statehood of the remaining territories in the northern half of the Louisiana Purchase.

Because the Missouri Compromise had prohibited slavery in those territories, southerners were likely to delay future admissions. Douglas thought he could break the logjam by applying popular sovereignty so local citizens rather than Congress could wrangle about whether to permit slavery in their new state constitutions. But southerners would support Douglas only if the compromise's prohibition was formally repealed. Douglas predicted correctly that this more radical step would cause a "hell of a storm" but thought he could ride it out, earning southern support by doing so.[28] The bill was introduced on 4 January 1854 and after bitter debate became law on 30 May.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act altered Lincoln's life, but the question is whether it simply created a vital political opportunity or actually angered Lincoln so much that he felt compelled to speak out against slavery in a new way. When Lincoln said in October 1854 that Douglas "should remember that he took us by surprise. . . . We were thunderstruck and stunned; and we reeled and fell in utter confusion," he was making a rhetorical point about unprepared forces swiftly rallying to oppose the act.[29] His later campaign biographies depict him as a man unexpectedly drawn into the fight, not a politician exploiting an opportunity: "I was losing interest in politics, when the repeal of the Missouri Compromise aroused me again"; "In 1854, his [legal] profession had almost superseded the thought of politics in his mind, when the repeal of the Missouri compromise aroused him as he had never been before."[30]

Lincoln's law partner and biographer, Herndon, echoed these professions of unexpected transformation but also recognized the political opportunism.

> Now, however, a live issue was presented to him. No one realized this sooner than he. . . . That man who thinks Lincoln calmly sat down and gathered his robes about him, waiting for the people to call him, has a very erroneous knowledge of Lincoln. He was always calculating, and always planning ahead. His ambition was a little engine that knew no rest.[31]

Historian William Lee Miller's analysis of Lincoln's actions in 1854 allows for political opportunism but repeatedly emphasizes that Lincoln "rose to the occasion" morally by beginning—and for the next six years continuing—to make with exceptional clarity the case that slavery was evil.[32] Although Miller accepts that Lincoln had always opposed slavery, he stresses that in 1854, Lincoln "dropped all the old Whig topics" and "concentrated only on slavery" by "stepping forward by his own initiative to join the great argument about his country's future."[33]

There are two problems with Miller's analysis. First, Lincoln "dropped all the old Whig topics," including those (according to Miller) "on which the Democrats were vulnerable," exactly because Lincoln was encouraging some Democrats to oppose Douglas and therefore was not looking for vulnerable points in Democratic policies generally but in Douglas particularly. Second, Miller himself notes that *two years before* the Kansas-Nebraska Act was proposed, Lincoln was "making the transition, by way of condemning those who denied . . . the application [of the statement 'all men are created equal']"; and Miller merely creates an illusion of innovation by suggesting that in 1852, Lincoln was "treating the Declaration only in its historical context" and did not until 1854 begin "using it as a moral norm for today."[34]

Lincoln was capable of considering the Declaration in its "historical context" and as a "moral norm" simultaneously and did so in 1852 in his eulogy of his hero Henry Clay. Lincoln emphasized the universal (and not merely historical) concept behind the Declaration's phrase "all men are created equal" by noting that Clay "did not perceive, that on a question of human right, the negroes were to be excepted from the human race." Lincoln asserted that

> a few, but an increasing number of men, . . . for the sake of perpetuating slavery, are beginning to assail and to ridicule . . . the declaration that "all men are created free and equal [*sic*]." So far as I have learned, the first American, of any note, to do or attempt this, was the late John C. Calhoun; and if I mistake not, it soon after found its way into some of the messages of the Governors of South Carolina.[35]

Lincoln was probably unaware that Calhoun had been directly influenced by the work of Morton and that one former governor of South Carolina, James H. Hammond, who was outspoken about negro inferiority, was a friendly correspondent of Nott. However, Lincoln quoted a letter sent "only last year" to a St. Louis, Missouri, newspaper by an "influential clergyman of Virginia" who said that the phrase "All men are born free and created equal" was unbiblical, invented by Voltaire, "baptized by Thomas Jefferson," exploited by "professional abolitionists," and merely a "coin in the political currency of our generation. I am sorry to say that I have never seen two men of whom it is true." Lincoln responded, "This sounds strangely in republican America. The like was not heard in the fresher days of the Republic." He then contrasted this clergyman's notions with a Clay quotation about "the benevolent efforts among free men, in behalf of the unhappy portion of our race doomed to bondage."[36] What Lincoln so strongly reacted against in this 1852 eulogy was the view that received so much attention after Agassiz and Nott addressed the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) conference in Charleston in 1850. Lincoln never referred to polygenism by that or any other technical term, and yet he did note that the idea of "saying all men were *not* created equal" sounded "strangely" indeed.

In short, intellectually and morally Lincoln had already been "aroused" *before* 1854, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act essentially provided a political opportunity because Lincoln recognized that Douglas had blundered, and Lincoln could now use a moral argument (based on the antipolygenist view that "all men are created equal") in order to create the political force that might stop his old rival in his tracks.[37]

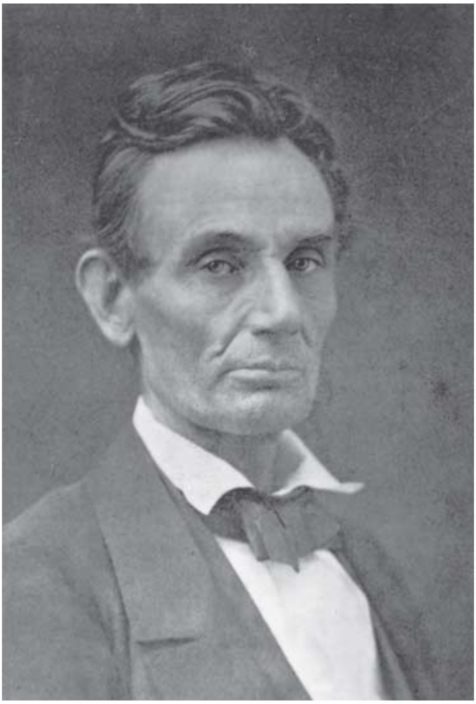
Slavery's opponents had hitherto developed an array of somewhat ineffective ways to attack the "peculiar institution." Lincoln realized that the real value in concentrating on the Kansas-Nebraska Act was that one was then fighting for so little: the reversal of a repeal of a prohibition against slavery's expansion. It was a fight around which a Whig in Illinois might, for one time only, hope to rally support not only from other members of the dissolving Whig party and from the clamoring Free-Soilers, abolitionists, and Know-Nothings but even from temporarily disaffected members of Douglas's Democratic Party. That party throughout Lincoln's residence in Illinois had held a controlling majority everywhere except Sangamon County. To Lincoln's amazed delight, many of Douglas's fellow Democrats had suddenly split off as "anti-Nebraska Democrats."

Although Lincoln might have attacked the Democrats on various other issues, his tactic was *not* to raise issues around which Democrats could be rallied (and thus heal their split). Lincoln needed to win over at least some Democrats if he was ever to have a chance of being elected by the state legislature to sit in the Senate in Washington. The old rail-splitter now saw that Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Act had handed him a wedge: he would now complete the split by promoting a policy to reverse not only the repeal of the Missouri Compromise but also the repeal of "the ancient faith," a phrase Lincoln used frequently over the next few years, which nicely rolled together the Declaration of Independence and traditional single creation of Genesis. It was the old-time religion and good enough for Lincoln. He stressed the moral argument not because it was so difficult but because, to him, it was so obvious, and he sensed that most people, despite their deep prejudices, shared at least the essence of his view. Douglas had blundered by adopting two new and primarily southern views: slavery's right to expand and the polygenist view that blacks were not fully men. Armed with "the ancient faith," Lincoln could stand as popular champion against both views.

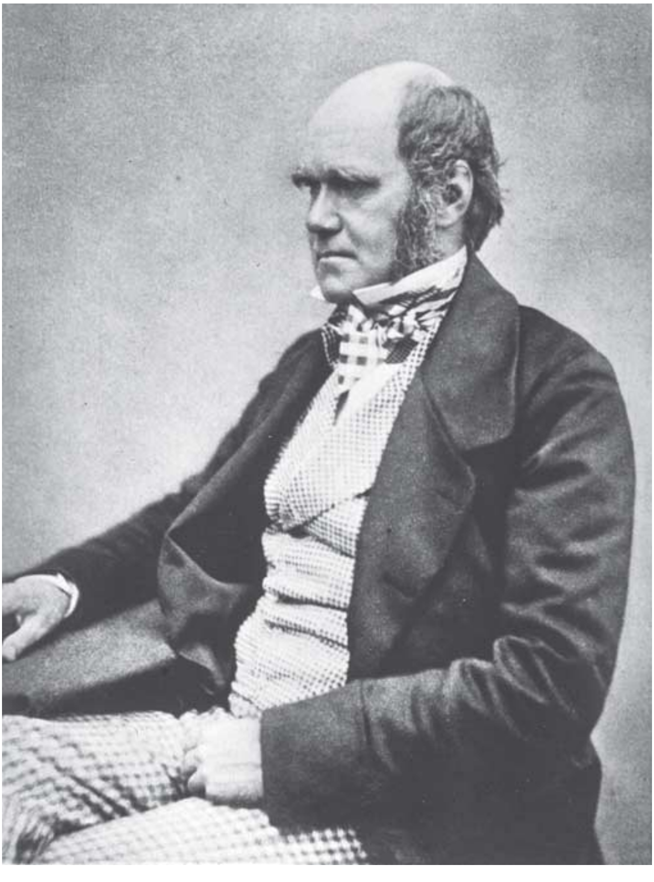
However, Lincoln's new weapon, sufficient for slaying such a doubleheaded monster, also cut on both edges. If, ultimately, the Kansas-Nebraska Act was evil because blacks were actually men and so on, then must we do more than merely halt slavery's expansion? Must we force other states to free their slaves? Must we grant those "fellow men," once freed, the right to settle in Illinois, to enjoy equal protection under law, to serve on juries, to vote? "In fact," Miller points out, "Douglas was going to beat him over the head with that."[38]

In 1854, both of Illinois' senators were Democrats. Douglas was not up for reelection until 1858, but in early 1855, a newly elected state legislature would decide whether to reelect James Shields, Douglas's colleague in the Senate, who also supported the act.[39] If the upcoming statewide election altered the state legislature from a Democratic majority to a working coalition of Whigs, Free-Soilers, Know-Nothings, and Anti-Nebraska Democrats willing to vote against Shields, then some Anti-Nebraska Democrat—or perhaps a Whig with broad support—might be elected. It seemed Lincoln's only opportunity to move up the political ladder.

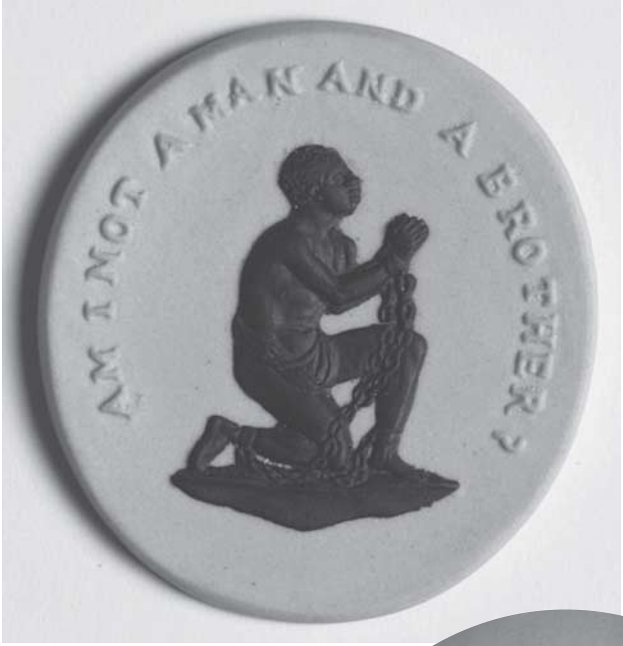
Lincoln did not sit back and await events but began systematic research into the historical background of the current issues, "nosing for weeks in the State Library, pumping his brain and his imagination for points and arguments," as one hostile newspaper put it.[40] Too often described by historians as a fatalist or a believer in divine providence, Lincoln took full control and worked tirelessly to influence the coming struggle.



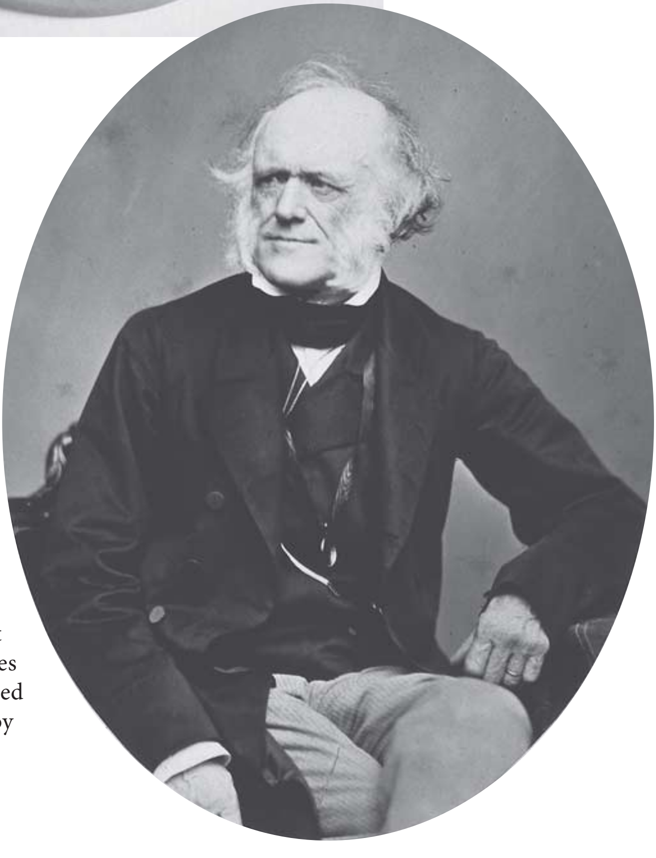
Abraham Lincoln at age fifty. Photograph taken 4 October 1859 in Chicago by Samuel M. Fassett. Library of Congress.



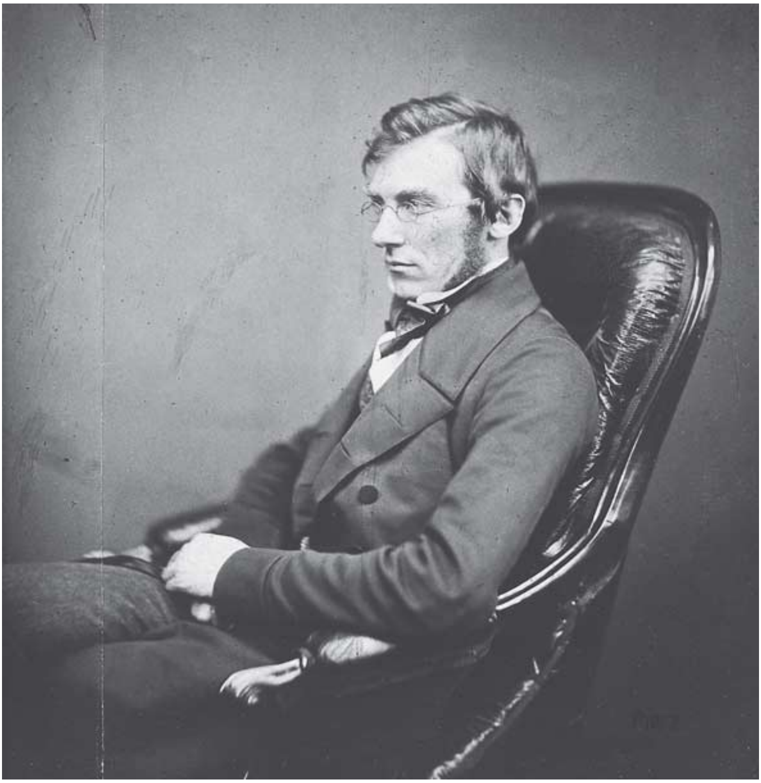
Charles Darwin at age fifty-one or fifty-five. Photographed in London by Maull and Polyblank, at “age fifty-one,” according to Karl Pearson; but Darwin’s son Francis guessed (but could never confirm) that the photograph showed Darwin about age fifty-five. Reprinted from Pearson, *The Life, Letters, and Labours of Francis Galton*, 1:56.



Antislavery medallion designed and produced in the potteries of Darwin's grandfather Josiah Wedgwood, 1787.
Image courtesy of the Wedgwood Museum Trust, Barlaston, Staffordshire, England.

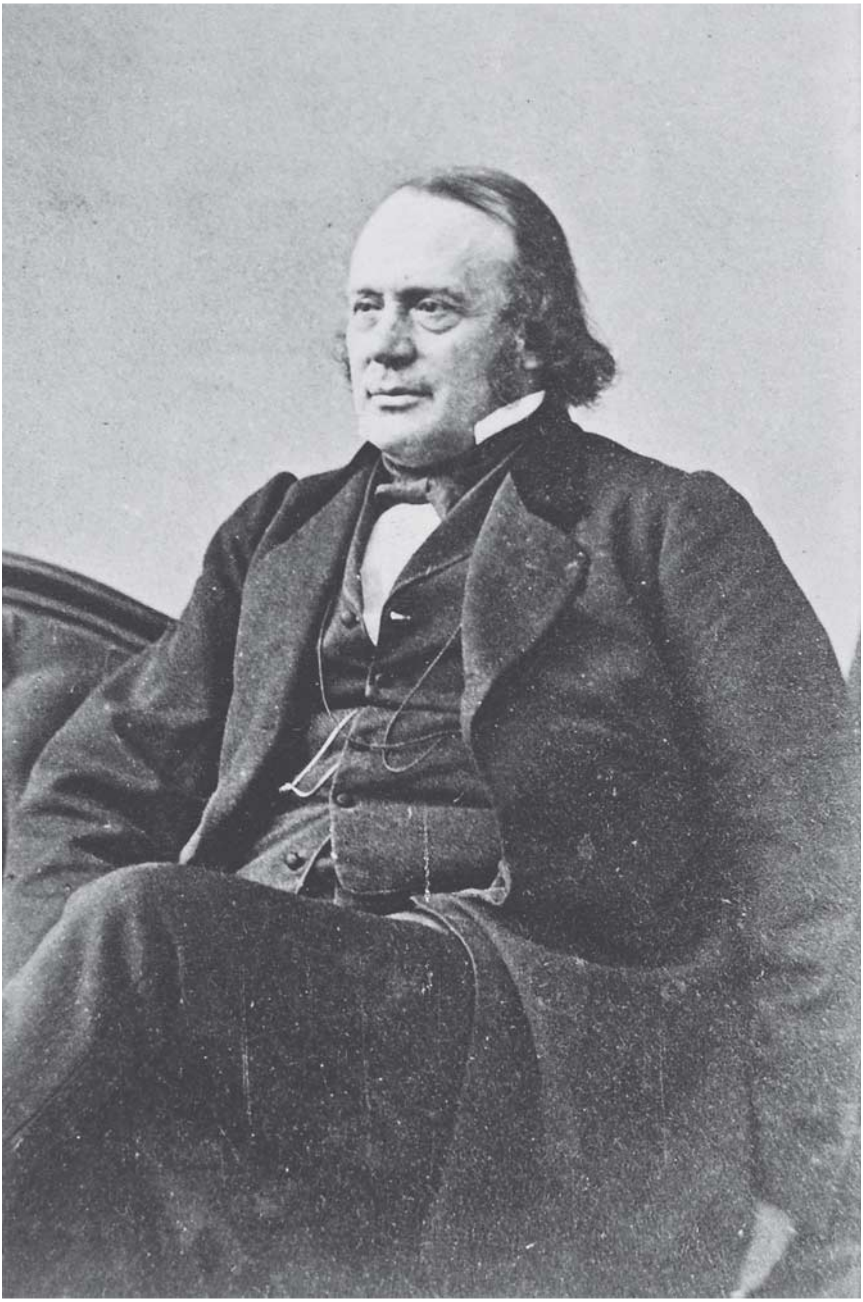


Sir Charles Lyell (1797–1875), geologist and mentor of Charles Darwin. Photographed in 1860s in London by John J. E. Mayall.
Wellcome Library, London.

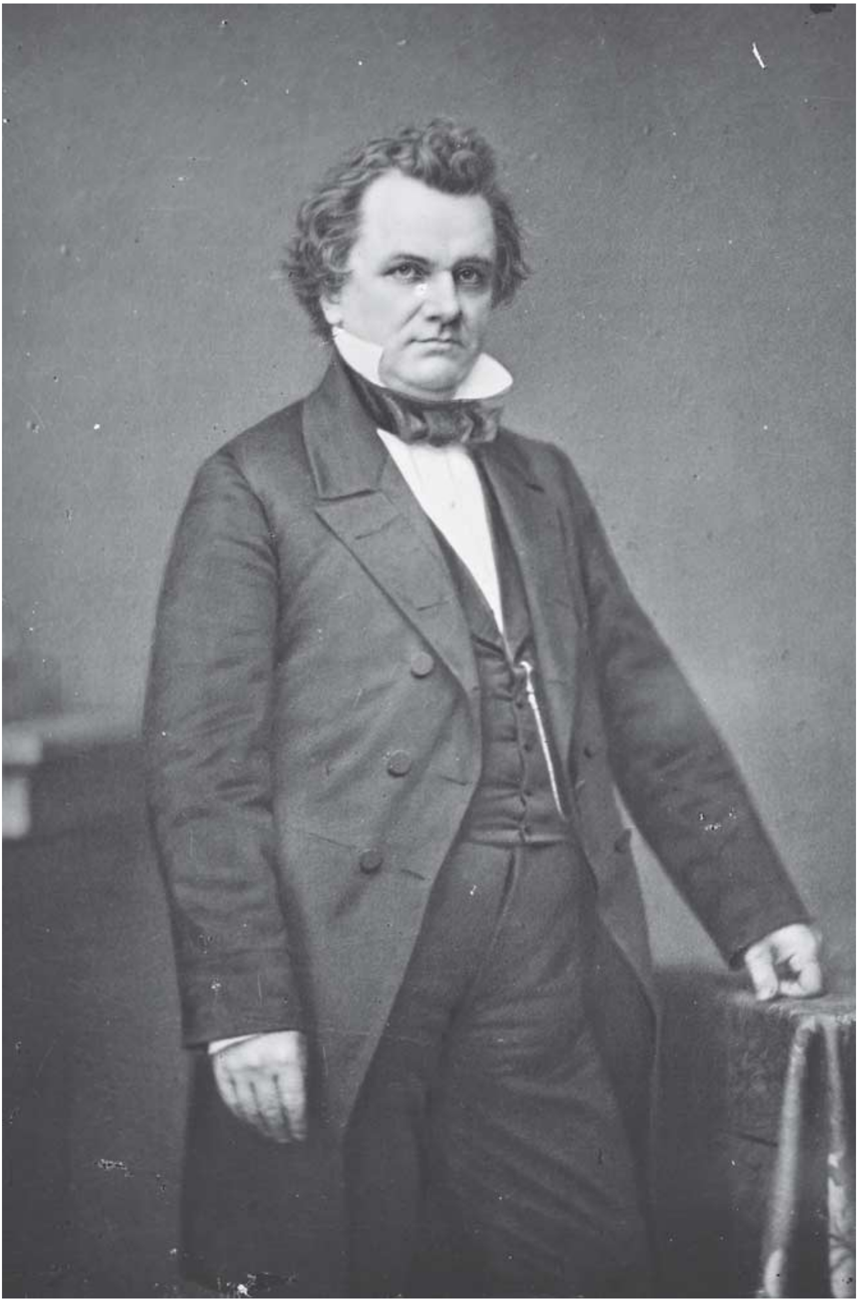


Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker (1817–1911), botanist and Darwin's closest scientific confidant. Photographed ca. 1855 in London by Maull and Polyblank. Wellcome Library, London.

William H. Herndon (1818–91), Lincoln's law partner and bibliophile. From a halftone reproduction, probably ca. 1870, by L. C. Handy Studios of a now-lost photograph. Reprinted from David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln's Herndon: A Biography* (New York: Knopf, 1948), facing p. 40.



Louis Agassiz (1807–73), America's leading scientist in the mid-nineteenth century and foremost opponent of Darwin's theories. Photograph taken ca. 1864 in Boston by Antoine Sonrel, who produced illustrations for many of Agassiz's publications. Wellcome Library, London.



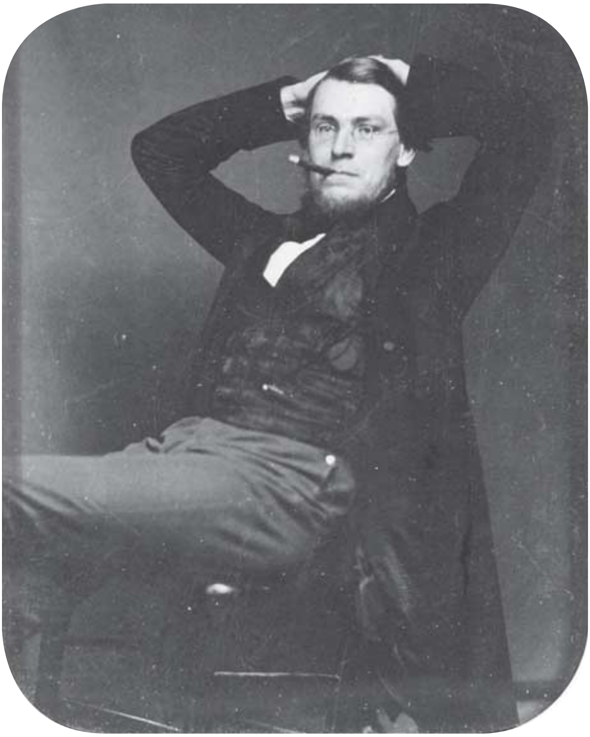
Stephen A. Douglas (1813–61), Lincoln's most prominent political opponent for over a quarter of a century. Photographed ca. 1858 in the Mathew Brady Studio. Library of Congress.

Thomas Huxley (1825–95) beside a blackboard on which he has drawn a gorilla's skull. "Darwin's bulldog," as Huxley was known, lacked Darwin's compassion for blacks. Photographed ca. 1858 by Cundall Downes and Company of London. Wellcome Library, London.

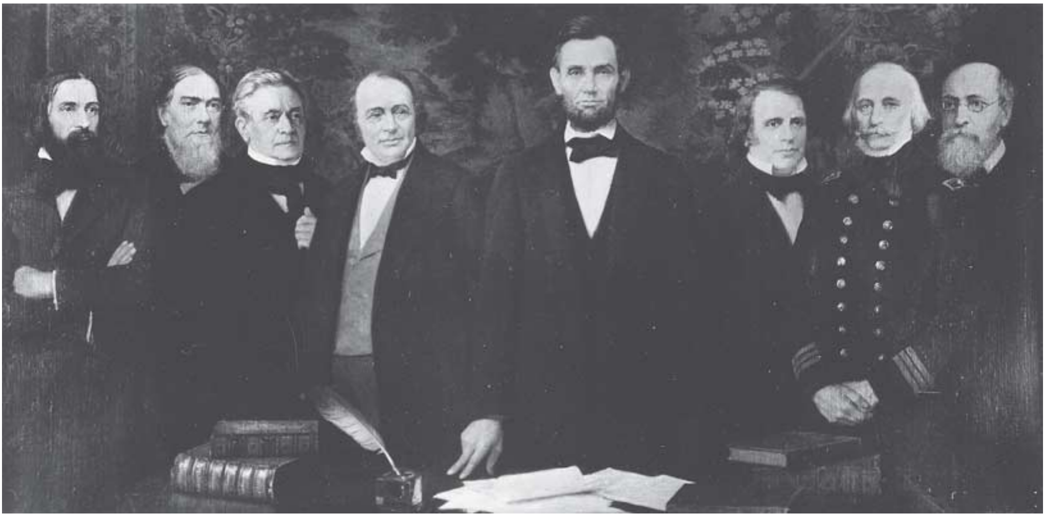
Asa Gray (1810–88), America's foremost botanist and collaborator with Darwin. Photographed ca. 1864 by John A. Whipple in Boston. Wisconsin Historical Society.

Alfred Russel Wallace (1823–1913), codiscoverer of natural selection, with whom Darwin maintained a warm relationship. Portrait taken in 1862 in Singapore, photographer unknown. Reprinted from James Marchant, ed., *Alfred Russel Wallace: Letters and Reminiscences* (London: Cassell, 1916), vol. 1, facing p. 36.

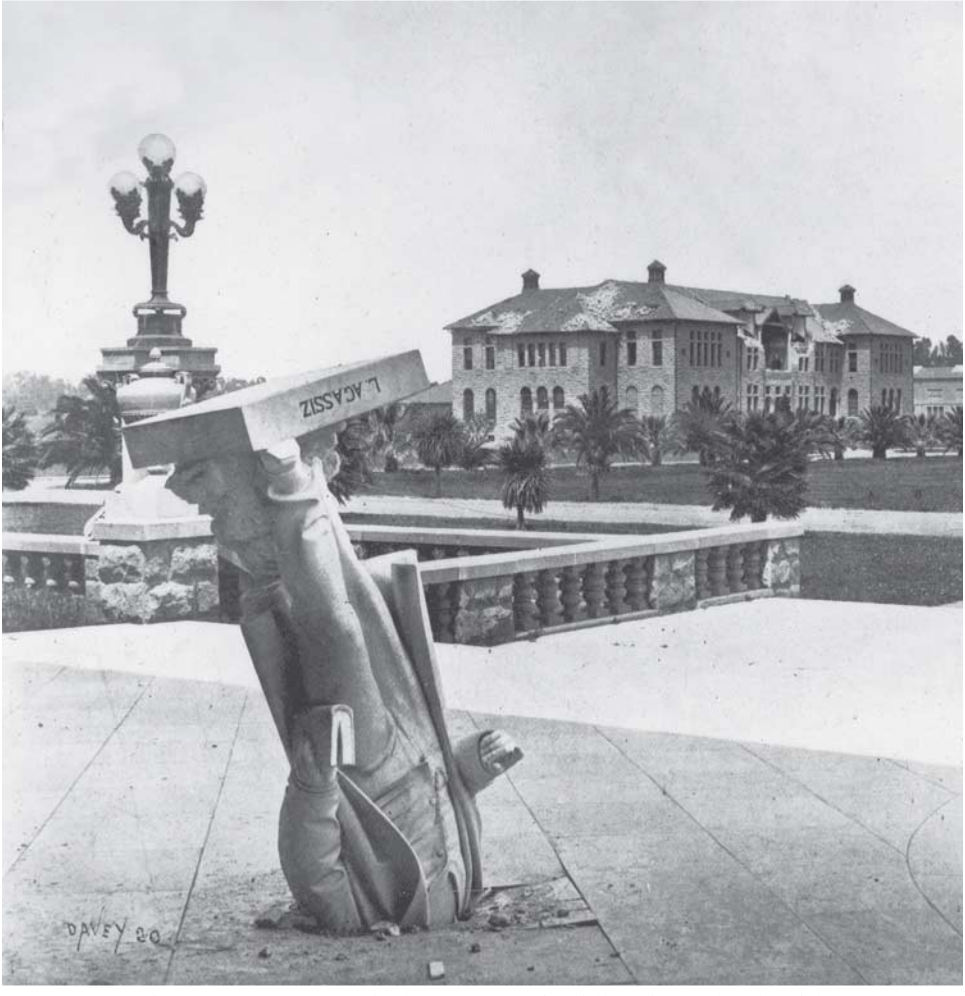
Rear Admiral John A. Dahlgren (1809–70), commander of the Washington Navy Yard and Lincoln’s friend and closest adviser on military technology. Photographed standing by a Dahlgren gun on deck of the USS *Pawnee*, June 1865, in Charleston Harbor, S.C., probably by Mathew Brady’s field staff. Library of Congress.



Lammot du Pont (1831–84) in 1856, five years before he carried out a secret mission in London at Lincoln's behest while pretending to be serving only the interests of his family's gunpowder-making company. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Delaware.



Albert Herter's imaginative 1924 depiction of the founding of the National Academy of Sciences in 1863. *Left to right*: Benjamin Peirce, Alexander Dallas Bache, Joseph Henry, Louis Agassiz, President Lincoln, Senator Henry Wilson, Admiral Charles Henry Davis, and Benjamin Apthorp Gould. Courtesy of the National Academy of Sciences.



Statue of Louis Agassiz at Stanford University, after falling from a height of thirty feet during San Francisco earthquake, 1906. Photographed by Frank Davey.

Courtesy of U.S. Geological Survey.

9

The Politics of Race

Despite holding no political office, Lincoln managed to spearhead the campaign in Illinois against the Kansas-Nebraska Act prior to the statewide elections at the end of 1854. He nearly won the U.S. Senate race but was compelled, in order to prevent James Shields or another pro-Douglas Democrat from winning, to ask his supporters to shift their votes to an Anti-Nebraska Democrat. Lincoln then joined the new Republican Party and gained its nomination to challenge Stephen A. Douglas in his reelection bid in 1858, which drew national attention through the Lincoln-Douglas debates. Despite losing to Douglas in that race, Lincoln became the Republicans' choice to oppose Douglas in the presidential election in 1860. For our purposes, the fascinating details of these maneuvers, coalitions, and debates must largely be set aside to concentrate on why and how, over those six years, both Lincoln and Douglas referred in their speeches and debates to the issue of whether or not blacks were fully equal humans.

In his eulogy for Henry Clay in 1852, Lincoln had already shown awareness of recently arisen polygenism by stressing that blacks were not "to be excepted from the human race." However, Douglas, like many of his political allies, may have felt encouraged to believe that their policies were bolstered by the new "science."

When John C. Calhoun declared on the floor of the Senate in 1837 that slavery was a "positive good," he offered no "scientific" evidence about race, but later he supported similar statements with evidence from the 1840 census indicating that free blacks in the north suffered more from mental disorders than slaves in the south. Although the census figures were soon shown to be entirely wrong, Calhoun ignored this and was later delighted to receive cranial information from Dr. Samuel Morton and archeological information from George Gliddon, all indicating that blacks had been created separately from whites as an inferior model of man.[1]

When Calhoun died in 1850, other politicians carried the polygenist torch. Not only was South Carolinian James H. Hammond linked to Josiah Nott but

Alexander H. Stephens, Robert Toombs, and Robert B. Rhett were three more "leading southern politicians who adopted the argument from science in their defense of the slave system."[2] Some version of the polygenist view was accepted by most Democrats and many Whigs, north and south.

Douglas was greatly interested in science but has never been shown to be directly linked closely to polygenist scientists. He was certainly as aware as Lincoln of the new anthropology, which may help to explain a shift in Douglas's approach to slavery. In 1848 (two years before the main launch of the polygenist debate), Douglas had reacted fairly negatively to Calhoun's views: "In the North it is not expected that we should take the position that slavery is a positive good—a positive blessing. . . . We say to you of the South, if slavery be a blessing, it is your blessing; if it be a curse, it is your curse; enjoy it, on you rest all the responsibility."[3] But according to historian Harry V. Jaffa, the reason why, after 1848, "Douglas never again spoke so openly of the vicious tendency of the Southern 'positive good' school" was that he came to believe that "practical measures directed toward the containment of slavery could succeed only if they did *not* involve the abstract question of the intrinsic good or evil of slavery."[4] Although Jaffa is correct, a further explanation for this change of view is that sometime after 1850, Douglas came to accept the polygenist view that blacks are inferior by nature and somehow had to be controlled by whites.

Biographers of Douglas have overlooked one direct connection between Douglas and one propagandist for polygenism. Dr. John H. Van Evrie, a New York physician, publisher, strong Democrat, and vehement racist, wrote in 1864 that "ten years ago," he had published a pamphlet that "first promulgated to the world the simple, obvious, every day, but momentous truth, that so called slavery was the normal condition of the Negro."[5] The pamphlet, entitled *Negroes and Negro "Slavery": The First an Inferior Race; the Latter Its Normal Condition*, was published in several editions in 1853 and 1854 and was later expanded into a book in 1861.[6] Van Evrie has been dismissed as a "perpetually indignant" figure on the fringe who "did not influence the tide of battle" within the scientific community's debate, and he himself admitted that his pamphlet's "profound impression" was not based on its "originality or profundity" but rather on its "novelty" in showing that a "truth so obvious" had been "so long thrust out of sight by the mental dictation of the enemies of American institutions." However, Van Evrie may well have achieved his stated desire to influence politicians rather than scientists.[7]

When Van Evrie wrote to Calhoun in 1846 to condemn the "sickly sentimentality" that made some New Yorkers advocate granting suffrage to blacks, he made no scientific argument. But by the time his pamphlet appeared in 1853, Van Evrie had clearly adopted polygenism: "[the negro] is not a black white man, or a man merely with a black skin, but a different and inferior species of man." He quoted the most extreme statistics from Morton's skewed cranial measurements, borrowed Nott's notion that "the Mulatto, or Hybrid of the fourth generation, is as sterile as the mule," and complained that Agassiz did not "rise above the prejudices of Boston" and more "boldly grapple" with the absolute diversity of different human species.[8]

The pamphlet's second edition carried endorsements from southern spokesmen including Secretary of War Jefferson Davis and publisher J. D. B. De Bow, and a decade later, Van Evrie described how he had tried to bring his ideas to the attention of other politicians, though "some of the most intellectual men then in Congress, hesitated to accept the doctrine announced." Specifically, Stephens of Georgia (a Whig colleague when Lincoln was in Congress) was mentioned as a reluctant convert. Van Evrie also recounted, "Some few Northern men, then in Congress, assented to the new doctrine in *private*, but declined the responsibility of standing by the truth in *public*, and the late Senator Douglas distributed a considerable number of copies among his constituents, under the *frank of* Mr. Slidell."[9]

If this self-serving account is true, it provides an important insight into Douglas's attitudes: reluctant to appear to be personally influenced by scientific speculation, yet basically agreeing with polygenists and using Van Evrie's pamphlet to influence constituents. Van Evrie admired Douglas so much that during the Civil War, when publishing a Copperhead newspaper, the *New York Day Book* (later *New York Caucasian)*, he printed immediately below the banner: "'I hold that this Government was made on the WHITE BASIS, by WHITE MEN, for the benefit of WHITE MEN and THEIR POSTERITY FOREVER' S. A. Douglas"—words from the first great Lincoln-Douglas debate in 1858.

During the seven months between the introduction of the Kansas-Nebraska bill early in 1854 and Douglas's return to Illinois to defend the act, there were heated discussions in Congress that Lincoln, reading about them in Springfield, noted for future reference. However, only occasionally did those congressional discussions raise the issue of black and white equality, in contrast with the prominence it received in exchanges between Lincoln and Douglas over the next six years. Various members of Congress opposed the bill's provision for extending slavery, and some condemned slavery as counter to God's creation of all men as descendants of Adam and to the Declaration of Independence's principle that "all men are created equal."[10] Douglas moved slightly closer to a scientific argument when he opened the formal debate by saying he disliked "the system of legislation on our part, by which a geographical line, in violation of the laws of nature, and climate, and soil, and of the laws of God, should be run to establish institutions for a people"—the language of Agassiz's "geographical zones."[11]

A clearer reference to scientific racism came in the speeches of Senator John Pettit of Indiana, who spoke of "the principle that two races distinct in their organization, in the volume and amount of intellect, of mind, of brain, different in the rapidity of the coursing of the blood through their veins, cannot live and enjoy equality together." By saying that these arrangements all resulted from "the stern decree of the Almighty himself," Pettit accepted Agassiz's reconciliation of religion and polygenism. And Pettit parroted Van Evrie's line when he added, "Look to any point in history, ancient or modern, and you will find the same truth developed. . . . Where one race is inferior to the other, it is necessarily subservient, and it is only a question of extent as to whether they shall be slaves fully or slaves partially." Turning to a point raised earlier by others—and mentioned many times later by Lincoln—Pettit said:

> It is alleged that all men are created equal, and the Declaration of Independence is referred to, to sustain that position. However unpopular, or however displeasing it may be to the mass of my fellow-citizens, I am constrained to dissent from any such position or dogma. It is not true in fact; it is not true in law; it is not true physically, mentally, or morally that all men are created equal. . . . I hold it to be a self-evident lie. . . . Tell me, sir, that the slave in the South . . . with but little over one half the volume of brain that attaches to the northern European race, is his equal, and you tell me what is physically a falsehood.

Having brought cranial measurement into the debate, Pettit also elaborated Douglas's argument that "the climate, the latitude, the soil, the heat, and cold—shall determine the line of demarkation where slavery may or may not go." Finally, Pettit quoted the sort of statistics that Nott had used to create a false impression about the decline of black population in the northern states and its increase in southern states: "Thus speak the statistics . . . so far as philanthropy, kindness, and humanity to the black himself is concerned, he would be better off in slavery than out of it."[12]

The following day Charles Sumner of Massachusetts responded forcefully that no one had the right to hold "in bondage their fellow-men, only 'guilty of a skin not colored like their own.'" When Pettit came under further attacks, he countered, "It is utterly false that men are, either mentally, morally, physically, or politically, created equal, whatever ought to have been their condition. But blame the Almighty, not me."[13]

Reading these congressional debates, Lincoln must have noted that while Douglas avoided discussions of race and concentrated on political principles, other politicians referred to the question of racial equality. When the opportunity arose, Lincoln would bring that issue to the fore.

Among Lincoln's writings from this period are important undated fragments probably intended to crystallize thoughts before speeches or debates. The beginning of one fragment is lost but obviously asserted that slavery is wrong,

> made so plain by our good Father in Heaven, that all *feel* and *understand* it, even down to brutes and creeping insects. . . . So plain, that the most dumb and stupid slave that ever toiled for a master, does constantly *know* that he

> is wronged. So plain that no one, high or low, ever does mistake it, except in a plainly *selfish* way; for although volume upon volume is written to prove slavery a very good thing, we never hear of the man who wishes to take the good of it, *by being a slave himself*. . . . *Most governments* have been based [on the idea that] . . . some men are too *ignorant*, and *vicious*, to share in government. Possibly so, said we; and, by your system, you would always keep them ignorant, and vicious. We proposed to give *all* a chance; and we expected the weak to grow stronger, the ignorant, wiser; and all better, and happier together [original emphasis].[14]

Lincoln referred not to separate creations of races but to God creating in all of humanity (and even in animals) an innate understanding that slavery is wrong. The issue of race was muted. The slave was not described as black; some slaves were "dumb and stupid" (meaning others were not); and that condition was not inherent since slaves might become "stronger" and "wiser"—exactly the possibility that *Types of Mankind* denied. Race provided no justification for slavery, and no one had ever chosen that "positive good" for himself.

Lincoln first spoke against the Kansas-Nebraska Act in August 1854 but the first speech for which we have a fairly complete summary took place in Bloomington, Illinois, on 26 September. Douglas had just returned to Illinois to try to heal the breach within his own party before Whigs could exploit it in the state elections. He encountered some angry audiences but was a masterful speaker, confident he could restore party unity. When Douglas was to speak in Bloomington, Lincoln asked to share the rostrum. Douglas understandably refused, but Lincoln simply announced that he would address the pressing issues later that evening.[15]

Like many of Lincoln's major speeches, this one contained ample evidence of research into the history of attempts to limit the expansion of slavery and the nature and intent of earlier compromises. Lincoln made only two rather subtle references to the racial issue: chiding Douglas (who was present) for calling "the new party *Black Republicans*" in order to "pander to prejudice," and mentioning "the famous Georgia Pen, in Washington, where negroes were bought and sold within sight of the National Capitol," which was "offensive" to "all good men, Southerners as well as Northerners."[16]

On 4 October, following a Douglas oration in Springfield, Lincoln delivered, according to William Lee Miller, "the first great speech of his life."[17] Comparing the repeal of the Missouri Compromise to tearing down a fence that had kept cattle and hogs out of a field, Lincoln asked if anyone could think slave owners would stay out any more than the animals would: "*Even the hogs would know better*—Much more *men*, who are a higher order of the animal world." That humorous remark was echoed more seriously later: "It is said that the slaveholder has the same right to take his negroes to Kansas that a freeman has to take his hogs or his horses. This would be true if negroes were property in the same sense that hogs and horses are. But is this the case? It is notoriously not so." Lincoln offered evidence that even "southern men do not treat their negroes as they do their horses." Four hundred thousand negroes in the United States were "free": "Can you find *two million dollars worth* of any other kind of property running about without an owner?" The masters who freed these negroes clearly believed they had "mind, feeling, souls, family affections, hopes, joys, sorrows—something that made them more than *hogs or horses*." Lincoln pointed out that the overseas trade in slaves but not in any other commodity was "classed with piracy and murder" and that "the Southern people, the Slaveholders themselves, spurn the domestic slave dealer, refuse to associate with him, or let their families associate with his family."[18]

A few days later, Lincoln followed Douglas in giving a speech in Peoria, Illinois.[19] He improved several points made earlier at Springfield but also raised new points, partly in response to Douglas's efforts to depict Lincoln as an abolitionist wishing to free blacks in the south so they could flood into Illinois and demand absolute equality on all levels. Just as Lincoln's whole argument depended on "the ancient faith" in all men being created equal, Douglas's position depended on the belief in race superiority that allowed white men to enslave black men or to keep them out of their states. Laying out his views cautiously, Lincoln asked whether when slaves are freed, we should then

> make them politically and socially, our equals? My own feelings will not admit of this; and if mine would, we well know that those of the great mass of white people will not. Whether this feeling accords with justice and sound judgment, is not the sole question, if indeed, it is any part of it. A universal feeling, whether well or ill-founded, can not be safely disregarded. We cannot, then, make them equals.[20]

This passage is a favorite for those wishing to portray Lincoln as a straightforward nineteenth-century racist, though many scholars have emphasized how carefully Lincoln worded his statements, so that his listeners might hear rather more than he was saying.[21] First, equality is qualified as political or social, not biological or intellectual. Second, the issue is not whether slaves *are* "our equals" inherently, primordially or by divine will, but whether we can "*make*" them equals. Lincoln says his "*feelings* will not admit of this," not that his *reason* demands or forbids it. Indeed, he contrasts "feelings" on one side and "justice and sound judgment" on the other. And, having said his "feelings will not admit of this," he immediately allows the possibility: "if mine would." As a politician, he cannot *safely disregard* "a universal feeling," but he does not say that feeling is correct or that he agrees with it—rather, it might be "ill-founded."[22]

In another part of the speech, Lincoln dismissed as "a *palliation*—a *lullaby*" the notion that climate could prevent slavery from moving into Kansas, pointing out that five existing states as far north as Kansas already contained over eight hundred thousand slaves: “It is not climate, then, that will keep slavery out of these territories.” Lincoln further developed his view that most people, even southerners, found it difficult to treat blacks as animals. He reworked a point about “hogs” and ended up discussing what Darwin would later call a “social instinct” but Lincoln called “human sympathies”:

> [W]hile you thus require me to deny the humanity of the negro, I wish to ask whether you of the south yourselves, have ever been willing to do as much? . . . The great majority, south as well as north, have human sympathies, of which they can no more divest themselves than they can of their sensibility to physical pain. These sympathies in the bosoms of the southern people, manifest in many ways, their sense of the wrong of slavery, and their consciousness that, after all, there is humanity in the negro.

For evidence, Lincoln again noted that southerners and northerners together had legislated that participation in the Atlantic slave trade was a capital crime: “The practice was no more than bringing wild negroes from Africa. . . . But you never thought of hanging men for catching and selling wild horses, wild buffaloes or wild bears.” Also, Lincoln pointed out that “something” caused even slave owners to ostracize domestic slave dealers and to free a surprising amount of slave “property.” Asking “What is that SOMETHING?” Lincoln answered, “In all these cases it is your sense of justice, and human sympathy, continually telling you, that the poor negro has some natural right to himself—that those who deny it, and make mere merchandise of him, deserve kickings, contempt and death.”[23]

Lincoln then tied this issue of negro humanity to what others considered the central issue—the extension of popular sovereignty:

> The doctrine of self government is right . . . but it has no just application, as here attempted. Or perhaps I should rather say that whether it has such just application depends upon whether a negro is *not* or *is* a man. If he is *not* a man, why in that case, he who *is* a man may, as a matter of self-government, do just as he pleases with him. But if the negro *is* a man, is it not to that extent, a total destruction of self-government, to say that he too shall not govern *himself*? When the white man governs himself that is self-government; but when he governs himself, and also governs *another* man, that is *more* than self-government—that is despotism. If the negro is a *man*, why then my ancient faith teaches me that “all men are created equal”; and that there can be no moral right in connection with one man’s making a slave of another.[24]

Having returned to the Declaration of Independence, Lincoln pointed out, “When Pettit . . . called the Declaration of Independence ‘a self-evident lie’ he only did what consistency and candor require all other Nebraska men to do.” Lincoln said Douglas had stated “that he always considered this government was made for the white people and not for the negroes. Why, in point of mere fact, I think so too." With the phrase "mere fact," Lincoln distanced himself from Douglas's actual pleasure in the fact. Lincoln argued that Douglas's "great mistake" is that he "has no very vivid impression that the negro is a human; and consequently has no idea that there can be any moral question in legislating about him." Lincoln then contrasted Douglas's lack of human sympathy with the "totally different view" taken by "the great mass of people": "They consider slavery a great moral wrong; and their feeling against it, is not evanescent, but eternal. It lies at the very foundation of their sense of justice . . . and, I think, no statesman can safely disregard it." From the brief reports of Lincoln's next major speech at Chicago on 27 October, it appears that Pettit's "self-evident lie" came in for another drubbing as much as Douglas.[25]

When the state elections took place, Douglas's Democrats lost their majority in the state legislature to the mixed multitude of the Whigs, Free-Soilers, Know-Nothings and Anti-Nebraska Democrats. Lincoln worked feverishly to get this body to fuse in order to elect him rather than a Douglas supporter to the U.S. Senate. However, in the end, Lincoln could only keep Douglas's candidate out by telling the large minority of legislators who supported him to shift their votes to an Anti-Nebraska Democrat, Lyman Trumbull. It was a bitter disappointment but also "a great consolation," said Lincoln about Douglas's forces, "to see them worse whipped than I am."[26] Lincoln knew Douglas's own senate seat would be in contention in 1858, and as the anti-Douglas forces in Illinois gradually merged into the new party developing among antislavery forces in other northern states, Lincoln, though holding no office, managed to make himself leader of this Republican Party in Illinois.

More than his personal defeat, other recent developments caused Lincoln to abandon his former belief that there would someday be a "peaceful extinction of slavery." Citing the Kentucky legislature's failure in 1849 to initiate a gradual emancipation, "together with a thousand other signs," including that the Declaration's concept of equality was now called "a self-evident lie," Lincoln wrote in a letter, "The Autocrat of all the Russias will resign his crown, and proclaim his subjects free republicans sooner than will our American masters voluntarily give up their slaves." A few days later, Lincoln replied to a letter from his old confidant Joshua Speed.[27] Lincoln first pointed out that their views were not as different as Speed had apparently suggested: "You know I dislike slavery; and you fully admit the abstract wrong of it. . . . I do oppose the extension of slavery, . . . [and] if for this you and I must differ, differ we must." Lincoln reminded Speed of a steamboat journey they made in 1841: "You may remember, as I well do, that . . . there were, on board, ten or a dozen slaves, shackled together with irons. That sight was a continual torment to me; and I see something like it every time I touch the Ohio, or any other slave-border."[28] Lincoln stressed the "abstract wrong" by emphasizing that he could not think of slaves as simply another form of property and closed with a seething statement (quoted earlier in a different context):

> Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid. As a nation, we began by declaring that "*all men are created equal.*" We now practically read it "all men are created equal, *except negroes.*" When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read "all men are created equal, except negroes, *and foreigners, and catholics.*" When it comes to this I should prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretence of loving liberty—to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocracy [*sic*].

Mentioned in both letters was Russia, the mascot for autocracy as America was for democracy. Both nations had antiquated systems of unfree labor that rivaled each other for odiousness, though Russia lacked the "justification" of enslaving a different race. Lincoln had formerly assumed that the southern states would eventually follow the example not of Russia but of the northern states, Britain, and numerous other countries. However, that assumption, based on continued agreement that slavery was an evil since blacks were men, was being eroded by polygenism.

Having previously read and loathed George Fitzhugh's *Sociology for the South*, Lincoln may not have been aware that an editorial appearing in the *Richmond Enquirer* on 15 December 1855 was written by Fitzhugh. Although he had not yet adopted the polygenism of Nott, Gliddon, and Agassiz, Fitzhugh now defended slavery by declaring it had nothing to do with race but, as a labor system, was simply "good" per se: "While it is far more obvious that negroes should be slaves than whites . . . principle of slavery is itself right and does not depend on difference of complexion."

Lincoln decided this "rather rank doctrine," as he called it, might be turned to good use. He and Herndon hatched a plan to arrange for part of the editorial to be republished in a local newspaper that supposedly supported the Know-Nothing Party but was actually funded by Democrats hoping to split the anti-Democrat vote. The plan worked: the editorial was republished, the newspaper was "almost ruined," and Lincoln "joined in the popular denunciation, expressing great astonishment that such a sentiment could find lodgment in any paper in Illinois."[29] In at least two other speeches delivered in 1856, Lincoln referred to the new doctrine in the Richmond *Enquirer*, and some of Lincoln's undated notes for a speech show he planned to read out and ridicule a newspaper clipping (perhaps the same one) from the Richmond *Enquirer* and two more from the New York *Day-Book*—Van Evrie's racist newspaper.[30]

In May 1856, Lincoln gave what is known as the "Lost Speech," a supposedly impromptu but actually well-planned address delivered so stirringly that the journalists present all stopped taking notes as the emotion and cheering distracted them. A brief newspaper summary and a version made forty years later by one witness who said he had taken notes are the only records. Lincoln, though asked, never produced a written version for campaign purposes: he may have been quietly pleased that some of his more extreme remarks thus remained off the record. Yet, he had no way of knowing that no reporter would take down his words, which, in any case, were well received by an intelligent audience, and he made similar remarks in subsequent speeches.

The single newspaper summary suggested that Lincoln declared, “The sentiment in favor of white slavery now prevailed in all the slave state papers, except those of Kentucky, Tennessee and Missouri and Maryland.”[31] The line nearest to this in the reconstructed version is: “And if the safeguards to liberty are broken down, as is now attempted, when they have made things of all the free negroes, how long, think you, before they will begin to make things of poor white men?”[32]

If Lincoln was wrong to suggest that it was widely held in the south or by men like Stephen A. Douglas that slavery could be extended to white people, he nevertheless made the point that the slavocracy was morally bankrupt, that the Declaration’s “all men” was ironically being taken literally, and that the only racial distinction that applied was skin color. In a similar vein, in the same (reconstructed) speech Lincoln supposedly said, “The whole country will turn out to help hang the [horse]thief; but if a man but a shade or two darker than I am is himself stolen, the same crowd will hang one who aids in restoring him to liberty. Such are the inconsistencies of slavery, where a horse is more sacred than a man.”[33]

This issue of color was raised in another undated fragment of Lincoln’s writing:

> You say A. is white, and B. is black . . . the lighter, having the right to enslave the darker? . . . By this rule, you are to be slave to the first man you meet, with a fairer skin than your own. . . . You mean the whites are *intellectually* the superiors of the blacks, and, therefore have the right to enslave them? Take care again. By this rule, you are to be slave to the first man you meet, with an intellect superior to your own.[34]

William Lee Miller has suggested Lincoln may have been influenced by a similar argument in Francis Wayland’s *Elements of Moral Science*, but Wayland did not mention “color,” and Lincoln might as easily have been thinking of an 1849 letter written by Henry Clay, who also ridiculed the “principle of subjugation, founded upon intellectual superiority.”[35] Lincoln later quoted this letter in a speech in 1858, while campaigning not merely to promote the Republican Party but to take over personally Douglas’s seat in the U.S. Senate.[36]

10

Campaigning, 1856–58

In late summer of 1856, as Lincoln made speeches throughout Illinois supporting the new Republican Party, a zoologist at Yale University received a letter from an English colleague. "We are all here now much interested in American politics—You will think us very impertinent, when I say how fervently we wish you in the North to be free." James Dwight Dana, an expert on crustaceans who had assisted Darwin's studies, probably deciphered Darwin's allusion to a catchy campaign slogan of John C. Frémont, the antislavery Republican candidate in the 1856 presidential election: "Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Speech, Free Men, and Frémont." But when a slice of the northern vote went to the anti-immigrant Know-Nothing Party, the Democrats managed to elect James Buchanan, who would make no move against slavery. Thus, the north failed to elect a candidate "for freedom," no doubt upsetting Darwin and Dana and quite infuriating Lincoln.[1]

Everything else in the letter was science, including Darwin's reference to Louis Agassiz's unwillingness to learn from his errors: he "seems to me to retreat a step & take up a new position with a front so bold as to be admirable in a soldier." Darwin cautiously mentioned that he was "becoming, indeed I should say have become, sceptical on the permanent immutability of species: I groan when I make such a confession, for I shall have little sympathy from those, whose sympathy I alone value." The latter group apparently did not include Agassiz, who, "if he ever honours me by reading my work, will throw a boulder at me." Darwin let Dana know that his sympathy was valued and that he was in good company: "It may sound presumptuous, but I think I have to a certain extent staggered even Lyell."[2]

For several months, Charles Lyell had been urging Darwin to publish his theory, and as early as 1854, Lyell told a colleague about something "which will figure in C. Darwin's book on species."[3] But while Darwin was distracted by his experiments with seed dispersal and then pigeon breeding, Lyell grew impatient, having just read an article by Alfred Russel Wallace that seemed to have ideas similar to those about which Darwin was so coy.[4] Lyell himself began a new journal—on species, starting with notes about Wallace's article.[5]

Wallace's careful efforts to avoid offending religious sensibilities caused Darwin to fail to see the real significance in Wallace's early article, annotating it with comments such as "It seems all creation to him . . . put generation for creation & I quite agree." Lyell visited Darwin, saw the experiments, chatted about transmutation, probably discussed Wallace's article, and pressed Darwin to "publish some small fragment of your data, *pigeons* if you please & so out with the theory & let it take date—& be cited—& understood." Perhaps as encouragement, Lyell added, "The multiple creation of Agassiz will one day rank with spontaneous generation." Lyell had also heard that Darwin met with Joseph Dalton Hooker, Thomas Huxley, and Thomas Wollaston and "made light of all species & grew more & more unorthodox."[6] Darwin was intensifying his effort to build a consensus for transmutation, discovering how much interested colleagues would and would not accept. Lincoln was not the only one forging an alliance.

Darwin now began to write in earnest, and by July 1856 he had opted for a "big book . . . as complete as my present materials allow."[7] The first two chapters on variation under domestication were completed by autumn, but questions kept popping up, so Darwin continued consulting experts far and wide. He confessed to Hooker that each struggle to explain some odd distribution of plant species "drives me to despair . . . & not being able to do so gives in my eyes the multiple creationists an awful triumph." If a single case of multiple creation "could be proved, I should be smashed."[8] When one fellow naturalist, S. P. Woodward, who had provided useful information to Darwin for months, praised Agassiz for protecting "our ancestors" by doing "battle with the transmutationists," the correspondence ended after Darwin mentioned in his reply, "I do not see that I shall have to beg any further favours."[9] Likewise, some queries about fish that might have gone to Agassiz went instead to Dana, who (like zoologist John Gould before him) sometimes reported the replies he received after forwarding the questions to Agassiz.[10]

Meanwhile, Darwin let Dana know that he was "getting M.S. ready for press" but doubted he would publish "for a couple of years." As his "big book" grew bigger, Darwin constantly sought information from Asa Gray, who was forced by Darwin's questions to rethink his own ideas. Together, they developed a statistical approach to plant distribution, and in September 1857, Darwin paid Gray the compliment of sending him a four-page enclosure laying out his basic theory. "I think it can be shown," Darwin explained in the accompanying letter, "that there is such an unerring power at work, or *Natural Selection* (the title of my Book), which selects exclusively for the good of each organic being."[11]

Saying that anything selects "for the good" had religious implications, yet Darwin tried awkwardly to depersonify natural selection. Contrasting it with multiple creations, Darwin wrote, "What a jump it is from a well marked variety, produced by natural cause, to a species produced by the separate act of the Hand of God." Still, Darwin broke off the thought: "But I am running on foolishly." The two friends might disagree on whether the "unerring power at work" was caused by "the Hand of God," but both rejected Agassiz's multiple creations.[12] Their alliance was sealed with humor at Agassiz's expense, for a quotation from Agassiz (picked up from Lyell) became a joking catch-phrase between Darwin and Gray: "Nature never lies!"[13] With Huxley, Darwin was more frank: "I have always suspected Agassiz of superficiality & wretched reasoning powers; but I think such men do immense good in their way. See how he stirred up all Europe about Glaciers."[14]

Neither Darwin nor any of his correspondents immediately mentioned that in 1857, Agassiz contributed to another Nott and Gliddon publication even less scientific than *The Types* and entitled *Indigenous Races of the Earth*. In a three-page letter included in the preface, Agassiz concentrated on making two points about one species—man. First, citing recent work by Richard Owen identifying three distinct species of monkeys, Agassiz argued that if such similar anthropoids were nevertheless different species, the same was true of the different races of men. Agassiz then strayed even further beyond his expertise by arguing that those who suggested that mankind's common origin was demonstrated by the philological evidence of a common ancient language were simply wrong.[15] Gray sent Darwin an amusing account of how Agassiz ("foolish man") asserted that languages do not "derive from other languages any more than species derive from other species" and then failed to get the joke when Gray agreed that the statement was "perfectly logical."[16]

In 1858, Darwin wrote to Agassiz for the first time in eight years and for the same reason as last: to thank him for a presentation copy, in this case, of the first parts of his *Contributions to the Natural History of the United States of America*. The volumes were impressively lavish, as was Darwin's praise for Agassiz's generosity (though not for any of his particular findings): "I thank you most truly for this magnificent present; & feel much flattered & gratified by this mark of your esteem. I have eagerly turned over the pages & plainly see that there will be much of the highest interest to me." Part 1, entitled *Essay on Classification*, bore directly on the main issue underlying Darwin's own half-finished book, which would never accept that classifications had to be "grounded firmly on the concept of the immutability of species" and were merely "translations, in human language, of the thoughts of the Creator."[17]

Darwin asked Huxley's opinion of "Agassiz's *Contributions*—not that I have yet begun to read it," but within a few weeks, he did read it and eventually annotated it and wrote an abstract. Darwin told Gray, "I am disappointed: I cannot realise his rules on the value of the higher groups, & all his prophetic &c &c types." Nearly a year later, agreeing with Huxley's view, Darwin wrote that the *Essay on Classification* "is all utterly impracticable rubbish, about his grades

&c &c. But, alas, when you read, what I have written on this subject, you will be just as savage with me."[18]

By that time, Darwin was no longer working on the massive *Natural Selection*, which probably would have taken him at least until 1861 to finish. Suddenly, Darwin felt the need to produce an "abstract" of that larger, unfinished work, to go into print as *Origin of Species*.

It is a familiar if complex story how the arrival at Down House in June 1858 of another essay by Wallace, sent to Darwin with a request that he perhaps show it to Lyell, caused Darwin to abandon his plan for a multivolume work and instead publish a single volume—which would be the only work Darwin ever produced without full source references (750 having already accumulated in *Natural Selection*, now set aside). The story has four key points. First, Darwin now saw what he had missed in Wallace's earlier article: that Wallace had somehow reached the same conclusions about transmutation that he had. Second, Darwin faced an ethical dilemma not only about losing priority to Wallace but also about having their theory born prematurely, without the substantiation Darwin was halfway to producing. Third, Darwin had to deal with this dilemma just as severe illness was raging through his own household, and an infant son was dying. Finally, the entire episode demonstrated the strong personal and professional support that Darwin had won from Lyell and Hooker, who came magnificently to his rescue, while the final result did justice to Wallace, who also became a stalwart ally.

Wallace's essay, along with extracts from Darwin's "sketch" and a copy of the enclosure sent to Gray in 1857, was read before the Linnaean Society meeting on 1 July and published in the society's journal, establishing Darwin's priority and the fact that his theory had remained consistent. The reaction of the Linnaean Society members was relatively subdued because the men doing the reading, Lyell and Hooker, had the highest reputations yet could hardly be questioned on work that was not their own. Of the actual authors, one was still in the Malay Archipelago and the other was that day attending his infant son's funeral. Darwin tried for a while to proceed with *Natural Selection* but soon decided to postpone that work and get something into print that was more coherent than the pieces now published. By October, Darwin was certain the "abstract" of *Natural Selection* would have to be "a small volume . . . published separately."[19]

The announcement at the Linnaean Society had more impact in America, galvanizing Gray to launch a frontal assault on Agassiz, with whom Gray was losing patience. He complained to Hooker about the damage Agassiz caused "by associating himself with Gliddon and Nott, and by his views on human species . . . always writing and talking ad populum—fond of addressing himself to an incompetent tribunal."[20] Now that Darwin's (and Wallace's) theory was in the public domain, Gray felt he could employ Darwin's ideas without robbing him of any future credit. According to his biographer, "Gray's whole spirit quickened at the thought of bringing Agassiz to bay with Darwin's tools."[21]

In December 1858, Gray presented to a meeting of the Cambridge Scientific Club an informal outline of his new view about the distribution of plants in eastern North America and eastern Asia. Only two men in the room fully understood that Gray was undermining everything Agassiz had recently published, yet Gray reported that Agassiz "took it very well indeed." Agassiz was preoccupied by dealings with wealthy philanthropists, legislators, lawyers, bankers, and architects as he labored to realize his cherished dream, a Museum of Comparative Zoology, which probably seemed more important than quibbling about plant statistics.[22]

Before the next confrontation, Gray asked a colleague to come up from New York so he could watch Gray "knock out the underpinning of Agassiz's theories about species and [turn] . . . some of Agassiz's own guns against him." Gray's presentation depicted Agassiz's basic view as offering "no *scientific* explanation of the present distribution of species over the globe" and merely "affirming, that as things now are, so they were at the beginning." He then described "the idea of the descent of all similar or conspecific individuals from a common stock." Agassiz defended his own theories as being "founded on observation of the animal kingdom": multiple creations better explained the distribution of flora than extensive migrations or climatic changes. "What rubbish Agassiz talks," Darwin told Hooker after reading of these proceedings.[23]

While Gray promoted Darwin's views in America even before they were known to be Darwin's and American scientists began to take sides, Darwin was still writing the abstract he hoped would prove convincing. "Last chapter, but one," he told Wallace in January 1859, "hard enough with my poor health," which was about to force him to take a few days' hydrotherapeutic rest at Moor Park, where he spent his fiftieth birthday. Had it not been for the sudden appearance of Wallace's essay, Darwin acknowledged, "I almost think that Lyell would have proved right & I should never have completed my larger work." He added sincerely, "I owe indirectly much to you."[24] Lincoln could have written the same line to the man who had recently brought him nationwide fame, temporarily at least, in what are now the most famous debates in American history.

After failing to win a U.S. Senate seat in 1855, Lincoln campaigned for Frémont in the 1856 presidential race, only to see him lose. As dramatic developments—bloodshed in Kansas, the Supreme Court's intervention, and Douglas's break with President Buchanan—provided Democrats and Republicans with ammunition, Lincoln and Douglas essentially continued the debate begun in 1854, though it grew more heated when the confrontation became head-to-head in 1858.

Democratic newspapers in Illinois never ceased to connect Lincoln with radical abolitionists, declaring that Lincoln's "niggerism has as dark a hue as that of Garrison or Fred Douglass"; that a Lincoln speech was "prosy and dull in the extreme—all about 'freedom,' 'liberty' and 'niggers'"; and that Lincoln was "the depot master of the underground railroad."[25] Nevertheless, Lincoln's stature within the Republican Party steadily increased while Douglas's position within the Democratic Party grew awkward. The rivals' speeches, and later their formal debates, dealt with wide-ranging issues (as well as mutual misrepresentations), yet the actual discussion of race, while never overtly scientific, was at the heart of the matter.

Douglas's position was both helped and hurt by the Supreme Court's *Dred Scott* decision in March 1857. Most of the Court's members were southerners, who now chose to address issues relating to slavery, apparently hoping to settle some of them peacefully—in contrast to the growing violence in Kansas and even on the floor of Congress. The decision seemed to support Douglas by overturning the Missouri Compromise's prohibition of slavery north of the 36° 30′ line as unconstitutional. This was only the second time in its history that the federal Supreme Court had overturned a federal law—which Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Act had effectively nullified already by allowing popular sovereignty to determine whether slavery could be prohibited or not. While Douglas took comfort from the *Dred Scott* decision, Lincoln and others argued that the court's decision could be interpreted as *undermining* popular sovereignty: if *Congress* could not constitutionally prevent a citizen from taking his property (slaves) into a federal territory, how could a mere *territorial* government do so?

Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, writing the majority opinion, went beyond the call of duty—and, indeed, beyond the rational judicial arguments for which he was normally acclaimed—in order to express a view on negro racial inferiority. Taney argued that Dred Scott could not bring a suit because, despite being born in the United States, he was not a citizen: not because of his slave status (the issue of the suit) but because he was a descendant of Africans who "were not intended to be included, under the word 'citizens' in the Constitution . . . on the contrary, they were at that time considered as a subordinate and inferior class of beings who had been subjugated by the dominant race, and, whether emancipated or not, . . . had no rights or privileges but such as those who held the power and the Government might choose to grant them." Taney specified that if the phrase "all men are created equal" had been intended to "embrace" negroes, then the signers of the Declaration of Independence would have been "utterly and flagrantly inconsistent with the principles they asserted" and "would have deserved and received universal rebuke and reprobation."[26]

Forty years earlier as a young lawyer, Taney had defended a Baltimore minister accused of stirring up insurrection among slaves and had argued that his client's only sin was to quote the Declaration of Independence and insist "on the principles contained in that venerated instrument [by which] every friend of humanity will seek to lighten the galling chain of slavery."[27] Taney's change of heart was possibly a severe reaction against the threat of abolitionism, but his language in the *Dred Scott* decision also echoed the polygenist view of the "primordial" nature of Africans: "The unhappy black race were separated from the white by indelible marks, and laws long before established, and were never thought of or spoken of except as property."[28]

Douglas, in a speech in Springfield, Illinois, in June 1857, endorsed Taney's view, adding that the signers of the Declaration were only asserting that a "British subject, born on American soil was equal to a British subject born in England. . . . They did not mean the negroes and Indians—they did not say we white men and negroes were born equal." He also agreed that negroes belonged to an inferior race incapable of self-government but went much further by adding supposedly historical and scientific assertions about "the sad and melancholy results of the mixture of the races" in Spanish and French colonies. Although no term as esoteric as specific infertility passed Douglas's lips, he echoed the polygenist view that a "great natural law . . . declares that amalgamation between superior and inferior races brings their posterity down to the lower level of the inferior, but never elevates them to the high level of the superior race. . . . Amalgamation is degradation, demoralization, disease and death."[29]

Two weeks later, Lincoln, now the leading spokesman for Illinois Republicans, used the same location to reply to Douglas. He paraphrased Taney's assertion that "the public estimate of the black man is more favorable *now* than it was in the days of the Revolution," countering that "as a whole, in this country, the change between then and now is decidedly the other way; and their ultimate destiny has never appeared so hopeless as in the last three or four years." Citing new limitations on emancipation and prohibitions against the free black person, Lincoln declared, "All the powers of earth seem rapidly combining against him. Mammon is after him; ambition follows, and philosophy follows, and the Theology of the day is fast joining the cry." As "philosophy" was then the usual term for "science," Lincoln was referring to the rise of polygenism.[30]

Regarding Douglas's assertion that amalgamation caused dire physical and moral degradation, Lincoln conceded only that there was a "natural disgust in the minds of nearly all white people, to the idea of an indiscriminate amalgamation of the white and black races." Lincoln did not say he shared this disgust but charged Douglas with wishing "to appropriate the benefit of this disgust to himself." Lincoln then mocked Douglas's argument that Republicans insisted "that the Declaration of Independence includes ALL men, black as well as white . . . only because they want to vote, and eat, and sleep, and marry with negroes!" He called it a "counterfeit logic which concludes that, because I do not want a black woman for a *slave* I must necessarily want her for a *wife*. I need not have her for either, I can just leave her alone." Lincoln added an important distinction he would repeat many times: "In some respects she certainly is not my equal; but in her natural right to eat the bread she earns with her own hands without asking leave of any one else, she is my equal, and the equal of all others." Lincoln argued that the Declaration's signers "intended to include *all* men, but they did not intend to declare all men equal *in all respects,* [such as] color, size, intellect, moral developments, or social capacity." Lincoln mocked Douglas's view, "The English, Irish and Scotch, along with white Americans, were included to be sure, but the French, Germans and other white people of the world are all gone to pot along with the Judge's inferior races."[31]

Using statistics from the 1850 census, Lincoln ridiculed Douglas's horror "at the thought of the mixing [of] blood by the white and black races." Of 405,751 mulattoes in the United States, "very few" were "the offspring of whites and *free* blacks."[32] While some mulattoes were born in or had fled to the north, the 348,874 mulattoes in the slave states were "all of home production." Lincoln's statistics appealed to reason rather than prejudice and suggested the mulatto population was growing despite Douglas's polygenist image of languishing hybrids. Lincoln did not use Douglas's pejorative term "mongrel," and while an abolitionist might have charged that mulattoes were frequently the result of rape, Lincoln mocked the slave owners' tendency to euphemism by saying mulattoes resulted from "home production." The statistics did not absolutely prove that treating blacks more like equals reduced "amalgamation," but the overall effect was a novel argument for treating blacks as fellow humans: "These statistics show that slavery is the greatest source of amalgamation; and next to it, not the elevation, but the degeneration of the free blacks. Yet Judge Douglas dreads the slightest restraints on the spread of slavery, and the slightest human recognition of the negro, as tending horribly to amalgamation."[33]

Douglas continually urged Democrats to endorse his and Taney's racist position. One Illinois county duly denounced any effort to place "negroes on an equality with white men," rejecting the "claim that the declaration of Independence asserts that white men and negroes were created equal by the Almighty," while a friendly newspaper reported Douglas saying that "Black Republicans . . . will allow the blacks to push us from our sidewalk and elbow us out of car seats *and stink us out of our places of worship*." Lincoln recorded both incidents for possible later use as some Republicans began to argue that Douglas was not so bad after all, since he had broken with President Buchanan over Kansas.[34] To keep the anti-Douglas forces unified, Lincoln emphasized that Douglas remained content to see slavery spread.

With his famous "House Divided" speech, Lincoln accepted the Republican nomination to challenge Douglas for his senate seat. Boldly laying out the most pressing issues around which to rally the party, Lincoln stressed that Douglas gave no sign of disapproving of slavery itself. However, Lincoln did not raise any purely racial issues and offered none of the usual arguments for the view that "all men are created equal" or against the propaganda about amalgamation. It was Douglas who resurrected these matters when replying to Lincoln's "House Divided" speech in Chicago on 9 July 1858.[35]

Ignoring Lincoln's political and constitutional arguments against the *Dred Scott* decision, Douglas declared that Lincoln "thinks it wrong because it deprives the negro of the privileges, immunities and rights of citizenship, which pertain, according to that decision, only to the white man. I am free to say to you that in my opinion this government of ours is founded on the white basis. It was made by the white man, for the benefit of the white man, to be administered by white men, in such manner as they should determine." While allowing that the "inferior" races "should be permitted to enjoy . . . all the rights, privileges and immunities which he is capable of exercising consistent with the safety of society," Douglas repeated that amalgamation only resulted in "degeneration, demoralization, and degradation below the capacity for self-government."[36]

The following evening Lincoln again made light of Douglas's fear of amalgamation. "The Judge regales us with the terrible enormities that take place by the mixture of races; that the inferior race bears the superior down," said Lincoln, before turning to Douglas. "Why, Judge, if we do not let them get together in the Territories they won't mix there." Near the end of his speech, Lincoln pressed his case with a reference—almost unique for Lincoln—to Jesus: "The Savior, I suppose, did not expect that any human creature could be perfect as the Father in Heaven; but He said, 'As your Father in Heaven is perfect, be ye also perfect.' He set that up as a standard, and he who did most towards reaching that standard, attained the highest degree of moral perfection. So I say in relation to the principle that all men are created equal, let it be as nearly reached as we can."[37]

In another undated fragment written around this time, Lincoln was contemptuous of religious figures, such as the Reverend Frederick A. Ross, author of *Slavery Ordained of God* (1857), who claim to find a clear answer in the Bible to a question such as "'Is it the Will of God that Sambo shall remain a slave, or be set free?' The Almighty gives no audible answer to the question, and his revelation—the Bible—gives none—or, at most, none but such as admits of a squabble, as to its meaning. No one thinks of asking Sambo's opinion on it. So, at last, it comes to this, that *Dr. Ross* is to decide the question."[38]

Lincoln had also suggested in his Chicago speech that the debate over race missed the real point. "Let us discard all this quibbling about this man and the other man—this race and that race and the other race being inferior, and therefore they must be placed in an inferior position . . . [and] once more stand up declaring that all men are created equal." But a week later in Springfield, Douglas plunged further, "I am not only opposed to negro equality, but I am opposed to Indian equality. I am opposed to putting the coolies, now importing into this country, on an equality with us, or putting the Chinese or any inferior race on an equality with us." He also caricatured Lincoln's scriptural argument, saying Lincoln thinks "that the Almighty made the negro equal to the white man" and "that the negro is his brother." Douglas denied "that the negro is any kin of mine at all. And here is the difference between us."[39]

On the same day, Lincoln replied that his views "may be misrepresented, but cannot be misunderstood. . . . [Blacks] are not our equal in color; but . . . they are equal in their right to 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.'" He again appealed to religious sentiment: "In pointing out that more has been given you, you can not be justified in taking away the little which has been given him. All I ask for the negro is that if you do not like him, let him alone. If God gave him but little, that little let him enjoy." Again, by saying "you" and "if" Lincoln avoided endorsing opinions he might not share while specifying no actual inferiority.[40]

Later, in Lewistown, Illinois, Lincoln again connected religion with the signers' description of the Creator's action: "Yes, gentlemen, to *all* His creatures, to the whole great family of man. In their enlightened belief, nothing stamped with the Divine image and likeness was sent into the world to be trodden on, and degraded, and imbruted by its fellows. They grasped not only the whole race of man then living, but they reached forward and seized upon the farthest posterity." Lincoln's "imbruted" expresses the same idea found in notes (probably written to prepare for the formal debates with Douglas that began on 21 August) accusing Douglas of "moulding public sentiment to a perfect accordance with his own [views] . . . that negroes are not men."[41]

As the first formal debate got under way in the town of Ottawa, Illinois, Douglas pulled out all the stops, linking Lincoln's name (as he had done before) to that of the well-known African American abolitionist Frederick Douglass, referring always to the "Black Republican" or "Abolition" Party, and working on his audience's prejudice by asking, "Do you desire to turn this beautiful State into a free negro colony, ('no, no,') in order that when Missouri abolishes slavery she can send one hundred thousand emancipated slaves into Illinois, to become citizens and voters, on an equality with yourselves? ('Never')." Douglas also combined religion with a natural-law argument—the first time he employed this so fully—that might have come straight from Nott, Gliddon, Fitzhugh, or Van Evrie: if "the Almighty ever intended the negro to be the equal of the white man, . . . he has been a long time demonstrating the fact. For thousands of years the negro has been a race upon the earth, and during all that time, in all latitudes and climates, wherever he has wandered or been taken, he has been inferior to the race which he has there met."[42]

Lincoln replied carefully, clarifying his position by quoting at length (as he did repeatedly over the next few weeks) from his own Peoria speech of 1854. He, too, stressed "nature" but in the form of "natural rights":

> I have no purpose to introduce political and social equality between the white and the black races. There is a physical difference between the two, which in my judgment will probably forever forbid their living together upon the footing of perfect equality, and inasmuch as it becomes a necessity that there must be a difference, I, as well as Judge Douglas, am in favor of the race to which I belong, having the superior position. I have never said anything to the contrary, but I hold that notwithstanding all this, there is no reason in the world why the

> negro is not entitled to all the natural rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence, the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Although acknowledging that there was "a physical difference" between the races that "will probably" prevent "perfect equality" on a practical basis and make inequality a social "necessity," Lincoln neither praised nor condemned that situation. So that his prejudiced audience need not view him as a hopeless idealist, he said he was "in favor" of having his race hold "the superior position." This might upset radical abolitionists, but Lincoln measured what his audience could accept and what he himself could live with. Crucially, he again made that statement conditional ("inasmuch as it becomes a necessity").[43]

In the second debate, in Freeport, Illinois, Douglas went further by associating Lincoln with Douglass through a dubious story of having recently seen in Freeport "a carriage, and a magnificent one it was, drive up and take a position on the outside of the crowd; a beautiful young lady was sitting on the box-seat, whilst Fred Douglass and her mother reclined inside, and the owner of the carriage acted as driver. I saw this in your own town." According to one account, someone in the crowd shouted, "What of it?" Douglas was pleased to expand:

> If you, Black Republicans, think that the negro ought to be on a social equality with your wives and daughters, and ride in a carriage with your wife, whilst you drive the team, you have perfect right to do so. I am told that one of Fred Douglass's kinsmen, another rich black negro, is now traveling in this part of the State making speeches for his friend Lincoln as the champion of black men.

Again someone shouted, "What have you to say against it?" Douglas replied, "All I have to say . . . is, that those of you who believe that the negro is your equal and ought to be on an equality with you socially, politically, and legally, have a right to entertain those opinions, and of course will vote for Mr. Lincoln." Lincoln ignored all this, perhaps to concentrate on more substantial issues or because he saw the crowd was already with him.[44]

Between the second and third debates, Lincoln made several other speeches and dealt with the race issue by simply quoting from his Peoria speech of 1854. At Carlinville, Illinois, however, he introduced some lateral thinking: that to deny blacks "natural rights" in America was somehow wrong since "no sane man will attempt to deny that the African upon his own soil has all the natural rights that [the Declaration] vouchsafes to all mankind." At Edwardsville, Illinois, Lincoln again referred to the Democrats' effort at "dehumanizing the negro."[45]

In the third debate in Jonesboro, Illinois, both men repeated their stock arguments, but Douglas's list of "inferior races" now included "the Fejee, the Malay, or any other inferior and degraded race," again suggesting familiarity with polygenist literature. Since Douglas continued to raise the amalgamation issue, Lincoln again resorted to ridicule in the fourth debate in Charleston, Illinois. After repeating the point that the white man holds “the superior position” (but not saying “is superior”), Lincoln jested, “I am now in my fiftieth year, and I certainly never have had a black woman for either a slave or a wife. So it seems to me quite possible for us to get along without making either slaves or wives of negroes.” He added that he had never seen “a man, woman or child who was in favor of producing a perfect equality, social and political, between negroes and white men” with one exception “and that is the case of Judge Douglas’s old friend Col. Richard M. Johnson. [Laughter.]” Johnson, who died in 1850, was a Kentuckian, former Democratic vice president, and bachelor known for having two daughters by a slave he treated as his wife. Having won that laughter, Lincoln turned his sights back to Douglas:

> I have never had the least apprehension that I or my friends would marry negroes if there was no law to keep them from it, but as Judge Douglas and his friends seem to be in great apprehension that they might, if there were no law to keep them from it, I give him the most solemn pledge that I will to the very last stand by the law of this State, which forbids the marrying of white people with negroes.

Lincoln added that since only the state legislature could change that law, “I propose as the best means to prevent it that the Judge be kept at home and placed in the State Legislature to fight the measure.” Douglas sought revenge by mentioning Douglass four times, describing him as “Lincoln’s ally,” no doubt because a few weeks earlier, “the negro” had made a widely reported speech ridiculing Douglas and praising Lincoln. Punning on the similarity of their surnames, Frederick Douglass had said, “Once I thought he was about to make the name respectable, but now I despair of him, and must do the best I can for it myself. I now leave him in the hands of Mr. Lincoln.” This was the first time the abolitionist mentioned Lincoln, quoting approvingly from Lincoln’s “House Divided” speech.[46]

In the fifth debate in Galesburg, Illinois, Douglas quoted Lincoln’s earlier appeal to “discard all this quibbling” about race and then asserted, “This Chicago doctrine of Lincoln’s—declaring that the negro and the white man are made equal by the Declaration of Independence and by Divine Providence—is a monstrous heresy.” Lincoln countered this vehemently (and somewhat incautiously) by arguing that Douglas was the “heretic”:

> I believe the entire records of the world, from the date of the Declaration of Independence up to within three years ago, may be searched in vain for one single affirmation, from one single man, that the negro was not included in the Declaration of Independence. I think I may defy Judge Douglas to show that he ever said so, that Washington ever said so, that any President ever said so, that any member of Congress ever said so, or that any living man upon the whole earth ever said so, until the necessities of the present policy of the Democratic party, in regard to slavery, had to invent that affirmation.

Repeating that Douglas saw no distinction between the ownership of blacks and "of horses and every other sort of property," Lincoln pointed out that Jefferson once said regarding slavery that "he trembled for his country when he remembered that God was just," and he offered to pay Douglas "the highest premium in my power . . . if he will show that he, in all his life, ever uttered a sentiment at all akin to that of Jefferson."[47]

The sixth debate at Quincy, Illinois, raised nothing new about race, although Douglas quoted various statements by Lincoln on "negro equality" to depict them as contradictory—which was easily done, given Lincoln's tendency to word his statements so the audience could read into them more than he actually said. But when Douglas suggested Lincoln was afraid to declare in the more proslavery south of Illinois the same views that he professed in the more antislavery north, Lincoln pointed out that all his views and Douglas's were in print all over the state.[48]

In the last debate in Alton, Illinois, all the set pieces were brought out for their final performance, although Lincoln labored to explain away a problem that arose from his assertion at Galesburg that until three years ago, no one had ever said, "The negro was not included in the Declaration of Independence." A letter to a newspaper asserted that Henry Clay had done just that, so Lincoln now quoted extensively from Clay's speeches, splitting some hairs unconvincingly. Lincoln argued that, formerly, some politicians had said that the statement "all men are created equal" was simply untrue (for even among whites inequalities existed), but now some politicians—perhaps espousing polygenism—were declaring that the statement *was* true for all members of the white race but not for negroes because they were not fully men and therefore lacked the capacity for self-government. Lincoln thus got himself out of a hole by continuing to characterize Douglas's view as a recent break with "the old faith."[49]

Despite his tremendous fight over a period of four months, Lincoln learned a few weeks later that the state legislature was still controlled by the Democrats, enough of whom were sufficiently loyal to reelect Douglas to his Senate seat in January 1859. Lincoln was disappointed, yet in letters to friends, he took consolation in a battle well fought, and this is consistent with another fragment of writing that must date roughly to this period. He admitted that "the honors of official station" were appealing, "yet I have never failed—do not now fail—to remember that in the republican cause there is a higher aim than that of mere office." And he reminded himself that it took "a hundred years" for British reformers to end their slave trade while arguing against the "stealthy 'don't care' opponents; the 'dollar and cent opponents'; the 'inferior race opponents'; and the 'religion and good order opponents.'" And "school-boys know that Wilberforce and Granville Sharp helped that cause forward; but who can now name a single man who labored to retard it?"[50]

Although defeated in a second Senate race, Lincoln did not give up the struggle. He was soon back in the thick of the fight against the Democrats, the slavocracy, and Stephen A. Douglas, while the Republican Party sought a candidate who could beat Douglas in the presidential election of 1860. Lincoln undoubtedly wanted to be that candidate but knew the likelihood of his nomination was minute.

For a brief spell, Lincoln gave the appearance of simply returning to his family and law practice and to a new activity, lecturing. But his only lecture did not go down particularly well, possibly because his message about man's ability to control his own destiny was somewhat lost amid the jokes, the playfulness with the Bible masked as orthodoxy, and the indirect references to Douglas. Only one important line about race slipped in: Lincoln's mocking reference to "the invention of negroes, or, of the present mode of using them, in 1434." Negroes had existed before the fifteenth century and so had slavery, but it was not until then that slavery was somehow justified by race. And what Lincoln had been mulling over even before 1854 was a more recently invented notion about "the negro": that civilized nineteenth-century men should continue this barbaric fifteenth-century practice of slavery because some authorities had recently decided that negroes were not only different or alien but also incapable of looking after themselves since they had been created separately from white men and as an inferior lot. It was a notion that tried to make slavery seem "good," when Lincoln had always known—and suspected everybody else knew, deep down—that slavery was always evil.

11

Publications and Crocodiles, 1859–60

By the time he turned fifty in February 1859, Charles Darwin had been working on his abstract for seven months and thought it nearly finished. Yet another eight months passed before Darwin signed off the corrected proofs. Immediately, on 2 October, the exhausted Darwin escaped to another water-cure establishment, this time in Yorkshire, to await the 22 November publication date for *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*.

Darwin had deliberately left man out of *The Origin* for reasons explained over a decade later, in the introduction to *The Descent of Man*:

> During many years I collected notes on the origin or descent of man, without any intention of publishing on the subject, but rather with the determination not to publish, as I thought that I should thus only add to the prejudices against my views. It seemed to me sufficient to indicate in the first edition of my "Origin of Species," that by this work "light would be thrown on the origin of man and his history," and this implies that man must be included with other organic beings in any general conclusion respecting his manner of appearance on this earth.[1]

Darwin's notebooks confirm how long and how intensely he had "collected notes" on man, only to set them aside so that the data employed to demonstrate natural selection would not include the shocking idea that man had not been directly created in God's image. However, the subject of mankind's origins simply refused to be postponed.

Charles Lyell had been keeping his own notebooks on species since 1855, but in 1859, just after reading the proof sheets for *The Origin*, he began writing Darwin long letters in which the topic of man kept recurring.[2] Lyell suggested it was "impossible that intellectual powers of a species should be much improved by the continued natural selection of the most intellectual individuals." Darwin countered that intellectual powers could be as important for the welfare of an individual as "corporeal structure," therefore "the most intellectual individuals of a species" could be "continually selected." He added that the "effects of inherited mental exercise" might also assist certain individuals—an example of Lamarckian "acquired characteristics" that Darwin never completely abandoned. Although Darwin needed to ponder this further, for the moment he was content to allow that the different human races might vary not only in skin color and hair texture but also, theoretically, in intellect, whether resulting from long-standing or recently acquired inheritance. However acquired, a differential in intellect might help explain the devastation he witnessed when the *Beagle* carried him to Brazil, Australia, and South Africa, where whites were destroying nonwhite populations: "I look at this process as now going on with the races of man; the less intellectual races being exterminated. But there is not space to discuss this point." In another response to Lyell, Darwin wrote, "The Races of Man offer great difficulty. . . . I do not think the doctrine . . . of Agassiz that there are several species of man, helps *us* in the least," but he again broke off: "Much too long a subject for letter."[3]

A few days later, he sent a letter to Agassiz to accompany a gift copy of *The Origin*. Darwin's publisher was sending presentation copies to nearly a hundred of Darwin's friends and colleagues, and early in November, Darwin began posting separate notes to announce the gift and, in some cases, to cushion its landing. The note written to Agassiz on 11 November was more terse than most:

> I have ventured to send you, a copy of my Book (as yet only an abstract) on the origin of species. As the conclusions at which I have arrived on several points differ so widely from yours, I have thought (should you at any time read my volume) that you might think that I had sent it to you out of a spirit of defiance or bravado; but I assure you that I act under a wholly different frame of mind. I hope that you will at least give me credit, however erroneous you may think my conclusion, for having earnestly endeavoured to arrive at the truth.[4]

No reply is recorded, and some time passed before Darwin heard—indirectly—of Agassiz's reaction to the book itself, but in the meantime, and even before the book was on general sale, Darwin began to receive comments from others, including reviewers, who had received gift copies. The *Athenaeum*'s reviewer, jumping feet first into the issue Darwin had avoided, asked, "If a monkey has become a man, what may not man become?"[5] Darwin disliked "the manner in which [the reviewer] drags in immortality, & sets the Priests at me & leaves me to their mercies. . . . He would on no account burn me; but he will get the wood ready & tell the black beasts how to catch me."[6] Equally unpleasant was a letter from Darwin's old mess mate Admiral Robert FitzRoy: "*I*, at least, *cannot* find anything 'ennobling' in the thought of being a descendant of even the *most* ancient *Ape*."[7] Likewise Darwin received a scathing letter from his old Cambridge professor Adam Sedgwick, who impishly referred to himself as a "son of a monkey."[8]

Fortunately, there were many more encouraging letters of support and admiration, such as those sent by a London-based naturalist Darwin had long respected, William B. Carpenter.[9] Darwin was even more pleased when Carpenter published two highly favorable reviews.[10] Carpenter, who was strongly antislavery, did not hesitate to note *The Origin*'s implications for the study of man: "Orthodoxy (on this side of the Atlantic at least) is decidedly in favour of the abolition of the two-and-twenty species into which man has been divided by some zoologists."[11]

Darwin frequently commented to close associates about the number of scientists who seemed to be accepting that natural selection resolved many questions while raising many more. Clergyman, author, and amateur naturalist Charles Kingsley sent Darwin such words of praise that Darwin asked permission to quote them in the next edition. This was soon underway as Darwin's publisher wrote that the first edition of 1,250 copies had sold out on the first day, and he wished to print 3,000 more.[12] Darwin insisted on a few changes, including this on page 481: "A celebrated author and divine [Kingsley] has written to me that 'he has gradually learnt to see that it is just as noble a conception of the Deity to believe that He created a few original forms capable of self-development into other and needful forms, as to believe that He required a fresh act of creation to supply the voids caused by the action of His laws.'" Darwin also inserted three words in the final sentence of the book: "There is a grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed *by the Creator* into a few forms or into one." Likewise, Darwin added at the front of the book an epigraph by eighteenth-century divine Joseph Butler, author of *Analogy of Religion, Natural, and Revealed* (1736), a highly rational and influential effort to show that morality and religion are essential components of nature and common life: "The only distinct meaning of the word 'natural' is *stated*, *fixed*, or *settled*; since what is natural as much requires and presupposes an intelligent agent to render it so, *i.e.*, to effect it continually or at stated times, as what is supernatural or miraculous does to effect it for once." Darwin was signaling that natural selection could be considered a secondary cause, the primary still being God. Interestingly, a journalist friend of Lincoln's listed "Butler's Analogy of Religion" as the first of three "philosophical books" that he knew Lincoln particularly liked.[13] Arguably, Lincoln could accept more of Butler's views than Darwin could.

While Darwin was seeing the first two editions of *The Origin* through publication, Abraham Lincoln was engaged in his only venture into the world of book publishing—although nearly half of his book was essentially produced by Stephen A. Douglas, for it was a collection of their speeches and debates, mostly during the 1858 Senate campaign. If one subtracted Douglas's half as well as the parts where both speakers repeated or quoted the same arguments in subsequent debates, the core of Lincoln's argumentation would fill about a fifth of the volume's length. While Darwin was boiling his work down to an "abstract," Lincoln was compiling a work that was hugely repetitious: yet, that was part of the message.

He wanted a larger public to know that, despite Douglas's allegations, both men had been consistent in their views from start to finish. If Douglas, as seemed likely, was soon to run for the presidency, Lincoln wanted it known that Douglas had not modified his views simply because he had got himself in trouble with the Buchanan administration and with the more radical of southern leaders. Lincoln made clear that Douglas remained the only politician in America who had not declared that slavery was either a good or a bad thing.

Although Lincoln lost the Senate election, he had weakened Douglas's position generally and repulsed his worst attacks on the Republican Party. Lincoln decided also that other Republican leaders—William H. Seward, Salmon P. Chase, and Edward Bates, for example—were putting forward the party's message in ways that were not always the most helpful to the *national* party. It took Lincoln over a year to get his book before the public, during which time Lincoln increasingly received invitations to speak in other states on behalf of Republican candidates and principles. The purpose of the book evolved from helping the party generally to improving his own growing chances of becoming his party's nominee for the 1860 presidential election—an unlikely prospect when he started the work. Even during the debates, Lincoln had compiled a "scrapbook" of newspaper accounts and later filled gaps with further newspaper reports, "being desirous," he told a friend, "of preserving in some permanent form the late joint discussions." A month later, the issue was no longer merely preservation: "There is some probability that my Scrap-book will be reprinted."[14]

Lincoln managed successfully to avoid the appearance of self-promotion, to create a text that did not falsify his own or Douglas's original statements, and to prevent anyone, especially Douglas, gaining a veto over any aspect of the book. Modern analysis indicates that Lincoln did indeed make only "small verbal corrections"—as he described them when predictably accused of being unfair to Douglas.[15] Fortunately, a group of Ohio Republicans decided Lincoln had the potential to lead the party rather better than Chase, Ohio's ambitious governor, and rather publicly arranged for the debates to be printed in Cincinnati. However, Lincoln actively ensured that neither the Ohioans nor Douglas gained any editorial control over the project.[16]

Various delays meant that *The Political Debates between Hon. Abraham Lincoln and Hon. Stephen A. Douglas in the Celebrated Campaign of 1858 in Illinois* did not go on sale until May 1860, but the publishers later claimed thirty thousand were sold—which, at that point, was several times more than *On the Origin of Species.*[17] Sales were helped by the fact that Lincoln had by then become the Republican Party's candidate for the 1860 presidential election, expecting to challenge the Democratic Party's presumed nominee, Stephen A. Douglas.

The Ohioans who backed the publication had been impressed not only by the 1858 debates but also by speeches Lincoln gave in Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, Wisconsin, and

Kansas prior to local elections in the fall of 1859. The speeches mostly covered familiar ground, but Lincoln raised new points in response to a speech Douglas delivered in November 1858, shortly after the Illinois campaign. Trying to shore up support in the south, Douglas said in Memphis:

> If old Joshua R. Giddings [a noted abolitionist] should raise a colony in Ohio and settle down in Louisiana, he would be the strongest advocate of slavery in the whole South; he would find when he got there his opinion would be very much modified; he would find on those sugar plantations it was not a question between the white man and the negro, but between the negro and the crocodile. He would say that between the negro and the crocodile, he took the side of the negro. But, between the negro and the white man, he would go for the white man.[18]

Douglas's point, amid the jesting, was that environment determined interests that determined values, slavery being "natural" in the southern climate and (less explicitly) the negro being "natural" for slavery. More than nine months passed before Lincoln found the suitable occasion to respond, when Ohio Republicans invited him in September 1859 to visit in order to counter the effect of Douglas's campaigning in their state. By the time Lincoln arrived in Columbus, Douglas had already spoken there a week earlier, using the crocodile story again: "In Ohio it is a question only between the white man and the negro. [laughter.] But if you go further South you will find that it is a question between the negro and the crocodile. [Renewed laughter.]"[19]

In a long speech, Lincoln mentioned Douglas's crocodile story three times in order to caricature the amorality of Douglas's position.

> [T]here is no wrong in slavery, and whoever wants it has a right to have it, is a matter of dollars and cents, a sort of question as to how they shall deal with brutes, that between us and the negro here there is no sort of question, but that at the South the question is between the negro and the crocodile. That is all. It is a mere matter of policy; there is a perfect right according to interest to do just as you please.

Lincoln again charged Douglas with undermining traditional views.

> [T]here has been a *change* . . . and a very significant change it is, being no less than changing the negro, in your estimation, from the rank of a man to that of a brute. They are taking him down, and placing him, when spoken of, among reptiles and crocodiles, as Judge Douglas himself expresses it. . . . [He is] blowing out the moral lights around us; teaching that the negro is no longer a man but a brute; that the Declaration has nothing to do with him; that he ranks with the crocodile and the reptile. . . . [T]here is now going on among you a steady process of debauching public opinion on this subject.[20]

Lincoln repeated this attack the following day in Cincinnati, adding that Douglas "did not make that declaration accidentally at Memphis. He made it a great many times in the canvass in Illinois last year, (though I don't know that it was reported in any of his speeches there,) but he frequently made it. . . . It is, then, a deliberate way of expressing himself upon that subject."[21] Lincoln's memory may be better than our records, but there is no evidence—and it is unlikely—that Douglas mentioned crocodiles during the Illinois campaigns. Lincoln also drew some doubtful inferences: "that if you do not enslave the negro you are wronging the white man in some way or other, and that whoever is opposed to the negro being enslaved is in some way or other against the white man. Is not that a falsehood?" Lincoln argued that there was no "necessary conflict between the white man and the negro," that "there is room enough for us all to be free," and that Douglas was actually making "a sort of proposition in proportion, which may be stated thus: As the negro is to the white man, so is the crocodile as a beast or reptile, so the white man may rightfully treat the negro as a beast or a reptile." Lincoln apparently repeated this point in speeches in Indiana and Wisconsin, adding: "These are Douglas' sentiments. The man who expresses such sentiments as these can see no moral wrong in slavery."[22]

Building on the political momentum of his successful tour in Ohio and Indiana, Lincoln was pleased to accept an invitation to speak in February 1860 at the Cooper Institute in New York City. In his address, Lincoln focused almost entirely on the issue of federal power relating to the extension of slavery into federal territories. Backed up by solid research, Lincoln proved that the views of the founding fathers differed from those of Senator Douglas and Chief Justice Roger B. Taney. But underlying this issue, Lincoln said, was the fact that Republicans considered slavery an evil while their opponents considered it a good. All else flowed from this. Significantly, Lincoln did not explain *why* slavery was evil, apparently seeing no need to tell this particular audience that blacks were human beings.[23] During a subsequent tour of New England, Lincoln returned to the usual themes. Only newspaper summaries exist for most of these speeches, but when Lincoln spoke in Hartford, he employed for the first and last time the phrase "natural theology" while playfully inverting William Paley's "design argument" to prove not God's existence but slavery's evil: "I think that if anything can be proved by natural theology, it is that slavery is morally wrong. God gave man a mouth to receive bread, hands to feed it, and his hand has a right to carry bread to his mouth without controversy." Lincoln thus acknowledged the question of whether God had or had not ordained that the different races of men were "equal," but he ridiculed those (such as Douglas) who thought "that the Almighty has drawn a line across the country, south of which the land is always to be cultivated by slave labor; when the question is between the white man and the nigger, they go in for the white man; when it is between the nigger and the crocodile, they take sides with the nigger." Lincoln's use of "nigger" further disparaged Douglas's attitude.[24]

Everyone understood the battle between Lincoln and Douglas to be about slavery, but it was actually about mankind. When Douglas first tried out his crocodile story on a Memphis audience in November 1858, he was stressing the negro's superiority to a reptile and inferiority to a white man. Lincoln argued in the September 1859 that there was no "necessary conflict between the white man and the negro," because both were men. Three months later, when *On the Origin of Species* arrived from England, racial conflict was not ostensibly the topic of the book, which instead described how conflict, or at least competition, might occur both between and within rather mutable but nonhuman species. And although the book did not even discuss mankind, everyone understood that it somehow had great bearing both on human origins and diversification.

12

More Debates and New Reviews

The first copies of *On the Origin of Species* sent to America went mostly to New England during the winter of 1859–60. Harvard's Asa Gray had already employed Darwin's theory in tense debates with Louis Agassiz and had reported to Joseph Dalton Hooker that Agassiz "was worried a great deal." Twenty years later, he remembered Agassiz exhorting him privately: "Gray, we must stop this."[1] Agassiz had escaped briefly to Europe in June 1859 to purchase materials for his new museum, pick up the Cross of the Legion of Honor in Paris, and dine in London with old friends such as Richard Owen and Sir Charles Lyell.[2] His visit left no trace in the correspondence of Darwin, then checking proofs of *The Origin*. Agassiz was back in Boston by the fall and probably received his copy just before Christmas 1859, as did Gray.

Agassiz's reading of *The Origin* was slowed as he heavily annotated his presentation copy, still preserved in Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology. Gray read Darwin's book between Christmas and New Year and praised it to Hooker with great emphasis before adding that Agassiz "says it is *poor—very poor*!! (entre nous). The fact is he growls over it, like a well cudgelled dog,—is very much annoyed by it—to our great delight." Expecting Agassiz to write a review, Gray began working on one himself: "And really it is no easy job. . . . I doubt if I shall please you altogether. I know I shall not please Agassiz at all."[3]

Darwin entered the new year in a fine mood and penned another ironic statement to Gray: "That great man Agassiz, when he comes to reason seems to me as great in taking a wrong view as he is great in observing & classifying."[4] The first edition of *The Origin* had already garnered some good reviews and converted a few fence-sitters, a second edition was about to appear, and Darwin was delighted that Lyell, whose authority with the public far exceeded his own, was now planning to include "a grand discussion" on the origins of man in the next edition of *Principles of Geology*.[5]

Soon Gray informed Darwin that Agassiz "has been helping the circulation of your book by denouncing it as *atheistical* in a public lecture! I suspect, also, he means to attack it in the *Atlantic Monthly*. The book annoys him; and I suppose the contrast I run between his theories and yours will annoy him still more." Gray discovered that Agassiz was also attacking Darwin and Gray in classroom lectures, remarking on the "laziness" of "those naturalists who adopt some pleasing but false theory like that of Darwin instead of investigating the difficult point of Science." An infuriated Gray wrote a few days later to Francis Boott (his and Darwin's mutual friend in London) that he wanted "to stop Agassiz's mouth with his own words, and to show up his loose way of putting things. He is a sort of demagogue, and always talks to the rabble." Darwin asked Hooker to preserve part of one of Gray's letter that was "rich about Agassiz" and informed his publisher that he was pleased by the "excitement my Book has made amongst Naturalists in U. States," repeating Gray's point that Agassiz's denunciations made "a fine advertisement!"[6]

Suddenly, Darwin was shocked to learn from Gray that in *The Origin* he had wrongly attributed to Agassiz a moderately embarrassing statement about having difficulty in distinguishing different types of embryos.[7] Agassiz denied he had ever said it, Gray hoped Darwin could provide a reference, and Darwin had to admit he had confused Agassiz with Karl Von Baer. Darwin's explanation to Gray unattractively combined remorse with self-defense: "I have shamefully blundered. . . . Please forward enclosed to Agassiz & read if you think worthwhile. I wrote all latter part of volume from memory, & it is a blessing more blunders have not yet been detected: but the state of my health left me no choice: I felt on the point of quite breaking down." The enclosure—presumably an apology—is not recorded or mentioned elsewhere in Darwin's or Agassiz's correspondence, unless there is some connection with Darwin's statement to Gray two months later that a Harvard chemistry professor visiting England "brought me direct from Agassiz all sorts of very civil speeches. What can this mean? I hope to God A. is a sincere man; I had always fancied that he was so." Darwin prefaced this, "I shall be very curious to see Agassiz's remarks" in the anticipated review.[8]

Darwin described Gray's review for the *American Journal of Science* as "*admirable*; by far the best which I have read." He added needlessly, "By the way if Agassiz writes anything on [the] subject, I hope you will tell me."[9] The strengthening alliance between Darwin and Gray was obvious to Boott, who perceptively commented to Darwin that Gray "does not grapple with your hypothesis, . . . nor do I see how he could, in the wish he had to oppose Agassiz."[10] The Gray-Darwin alliance could not be put at risk; differences between them were submerged. When Gray maintained in publications and in correspondence that there was some divine planning in the universe that Darwin's natural selection in no way undermined, Darwin did not wrangle, considering Gray's assertion useful against charges of atheism: "I have been interested by your theological remarks in the Review, but I must reconsider them." He wrote of "an uncomfortable puzzle . . . quite beyond the scope of the human intellect" and shielded himself with the fact that Gottfried Leibniz had attacked Sir Isaac Newton's law of gravity as "'subversive of all Natural Religion'!!" To Lyell, Darwin wrote, "How splendidly Asa Gray is fighting the battle," while to Hooker, he expressed amusement, "Agassiz pities me much at being so deluded."[11]

Although William H. Herndon probably purchased his copy of *The Origin* soon after it appeared at the end of 1859, Lincoln had little free time and probably less inclination to read such a work. Lincoln's secretary John Hay later wrote that Lincoln "made no attempt to keep pace with the ordinary literature of the day, [although] sometimes he read a scientific work with keen appreciation, but he pursued no systematic course."[12] It appears that Herndon believed Lincoln never read *The Origin*. Once, after mentioning works by various authors including Darwin, Herndon wrote, "Lincoln read some parts of these books and reviews. I admit he read none of them thoroughly at a sitting; he would read by snatches, a little here and there now and then." Lincoln was "a firm believer in the theory of development," said Herndon, but "as presented in *The Vestiges of Creation*."[13] On whether Lincoln changed his views about religion after becoming president, Herndon wrote, "There is no evidence of this, especially as to the extent of the change, nor which way. Did he go toward the force and matter theory of the universe, toward [Herbert] Spencer and Darwin?"[14] The very question shows Herndon had little idea what Lincoln might have thought of Spencer or Darwin. Herndon deeply admired Spencer, carefully annotating and indexing his 1855 London edition of *Principles of Psychology*, but if Herndon ever discussed Spencer or Darwin with his law partner, it was probably a fairly one-sided conversation.[15] Even if Lincoln never read *The Origin*, he could not have avoided the numerous reviews that appeared in several publications to which he had access. Indeed, no one with any interest in science could have been unaware of Darwin's general views—if only because they were so strongly opposed by America's best-known scientist, Louis Agassiz.

In the late spring of 1860, Darwin thanked Alfred Russel Wallace for his generous praise of *The Origin* and mentioned his delight that Lyell "this autumn will publish on Geological History of Man." "One thing I see most plainly," Darwin told Hooker, "that without Lyell, yours, Huxley & Carpenter's aid my book would have been a mere flash in the pan."[16] These expressions of modesty by Darwin, although sincere, also served to bind colleagues more closely to him. While Lincoln was busy garnering support as he launched his campaign for the Republican presidential nomination, Darwin was letting others campaign on his behalf through favorable reviews, arranging foreign editions and translations, and defending Darwin's views at scientific conferences. Gray performed most of those tasks in America, but Darwin was also ably defended when the British Association for the Advancement of Science met in Oxford in June 1860.[17] Darwin chose not to attend, partly because of his own and his eldest daughter's ill health and mainly because the discussions, like so many of the reviews, were bound to concentrate on man's descent from earlier forms, the topic Darwin hoped Lyell would soon be treating authoritatively. For Darwin, any indignity from being descended through an unplanned process from some hairy primate was vastly outweighed by the social value of demonstrating the equality among men logically implied by that common origin. However, Darwin knew that his critics were interested not only in whether man was "created" once or several times in different places but also in whether God had any hand in it at all—a subject even more carefully avoided in *The Origin*.

The main event at Oxford occurred at a session opened by a native of Liverpool but now professor of chemistry in New York, John William Draper.[18] Draper was known for his denunciations of organized religion, and the title announced for his address, "On the Intellectual Development of Europe, Considered with Reference to the Views of Mr. Darwin," caused rumors that either Bishop Samuel Wilberforce or Owen would use Draper's presentation as an excuse to launch an attack on Darwin's views. Wilberforce did exactly that, alluding at some point to earlier remarks by Thomas Huxley and asking whether "it was through his grandfather or grandmother that he claimed descent from a monkey." The actual wording of the question is as uncertain as the wording of Huxley's famous reply: "If I would rather have a miserable ape for a grandfather or a man highly endowed by nature and possessed of great means and influence, and yet who employs those faculties for the mere purpose of introducing ridicule into a grave scientific discussion—I unhesitatingly affirm my preference for the ape."[19]

Almost as startling as this exchange was the interjection at its end by an admiral who rose to his feet with a Bible in his hand. Robert FitzRoy, Darwin's old companion from the *Beagle*, attended the conference to make a report on meteorology but stayed to hear the discussion of Darwin's theories. He exclaimed to a departing audience paying little attention that he was sorry he had ever given Darwin the opportunity to collect evidence for his "shocking theory." J. S. Henslow, Darwin's old Cambridge mentor, who had chaired the session, mentioned this to Darwin, who replied, "I did not hear of poor FitzRoy with the Bible at the Geographical Section—I think his mind is often on Verge of insanity."[20]

"I really think his mind has deteriorated within a few years," Gray wrote to Hooker—not about FitzRoy but about Agassiz and as some explanation why by the end of March 1860 he still had not published his review of *The Origin*. "I do not wonder that he hesitates to commit himself to print."[21] When Agassiz's review finally appeared in the *American Journal of Science* in July, it was in the form of a ten-page "digression" from a two-page discussion of jellyfish that was to appear in the third volume of Agassiz's *Contributions to the Natural History of the United States*, then "in press." The tone and language were unscholarly verging on the ungentlemanly, declaring that "the arguments presented by Darwin in favor of a universal derivation from one primary form . . . have not made the slightest impression on my mind, nor modified in any way the views I have already propounded." Agassiz dismissed Darwin's work with phrases such as "unsupported by fact," "ingenious circumlocution," "illogical deductions and misrepresentations," "he overlooks," "he ought to know," "has failed to establish a connection," "he does not even seem correctly to understand," "futile," and "remote from the truth." Agassiz's conclusion was unsurprising apart from the moralizing point in the final clause: "I shall therefore consider the transmutation theory as a scientific mistake, untrue in its facts, unscientific in its methods, and mischievous in its tendency."[22]

Defending Darwin's theory in the July and August issues of *Atlantic Monthly*, Gray picked up on Agassiz's last remark by writing that "several features of [Darwin's] theory have an uncanny look. They may prove to be innocent: but their first aspect is suspicious, and high authorities pronounce the whole thing to be positively mischievous."[23] Gray was skilled at defending Darwin's views without appearing partisan—and, indeed, without mentioning his disagreement with Darwin about God's possible role. But it was exactly because Gray argued that natural selection was not incompatible with "design" that he was able to minimize the science versus religion dispute—in contrast to Darwin's "bull-dog" in England, Huxley, who reveled in baiting bishops. Rather boldly, Gray also raised the controversial topic of man. While Agassiz's review had avoided the issue (and any reminders of his own views about negroes), Gray was the first to suggest that natural selection actually resolved the debate between what he termed "uni-humanitarians" and "multi-humanitarians."

> Indeed, when we consider the endless disputes of naturalists and ethnologists over the human races, as to whether they belong to one species or to more, and if to more, whether to three, or five, or fifty, we can hardly help fancying that both may be right,—or rather, that the uni-humanitarians would have been right several thousand years ago, and the multi-humanitarians will be a few thousand years later; while at present the safe thing to say is, that, probably, there is some truth on both sides.[24]

Gray skirted around the problem that man's "common ancestor" was no longer Adam by first looking to the future and offering the appealing prospect that the present species of man might make further progress. Gray's discussion of human origins had less appeal.

> It is only the backward glance, the gaze up the long vista of the past, that reveals anything alarming. Here the lines converge as they recede into the geological ages, and point to conclusions which, upon the theory, are inevitable, but by no means welcome. The first step backwards makes the Negro and the Hottentot our blood-relations—not that reason or Scripture objects to that, though

> pride may. The next suggests a closer association of our ancestors of the olden time with "our poor relations" of the quadrumanous family than we like to acknowledge.[25]

Gray's *Atlantic Monthly* review is very likely the source that brought Lincoln closest to *The Origin*, assuming he probably never read the book himself. And just now, since political tradition prevented the Republican nominee from hitting the campaign trail personally, Lincoln perhaps had leisure to scan the *Atlantic Monthly*. Having once said we should "discard all this quibbling" about races while simultaneously parrying Douglas's pseudoscientific attacks on the inferiority of black people, Lincoln could appreciate Gray's use of ambiguous language that left it to the reader to work out how equal or unequal this made whites and blacks. After undermining Agassiz's notion of separate primordial creations, Gray went no further than to say, "It is practically very difficult, perhaps impossible, to draw a clear line between races and species. Witness the human races, for instance." We know from Lincoln's fragment about Niagara Falls that he accepted that the Earth's history was much longer than the traditional six thousand years, so he would have been interested by Gray's assertion that the Earth has, indeed, been around long enough for the slow processes of natural selection to have taken place. Assuming Lincoln was at least aware of Agassiz's opposition to Darwin's views, he could have admired Gray's clever defense of those views by using his opponent's own testimony: "Agassiz tells us that the same species of polyps which are now building coral walls around the present peninsula of Florida actually made that peninsula, and have been building there for centuries which must be reckoned by thousands."[26]

While preserving the religious concept of design, Gray admitted that natural selection jettisoned the traditional date and manner of the Biblical creation, a point expressed less elegantly by Josiah Nott to fellow polygenist E. G. Squier in August 1860: "I have been well enough to skim Darwin's book—the man is clearly crazy, but it is a capital dig into the parsons—it stirs up Creation & much good comes out [of] such thorough discussion."[27]

In his references to early man, Gray employed information beyond his own botanical expertise, such as the man-made flint tools found beside the bones of animals now extinct. Lyell was investigating exactly this evidence for inclusion in his study of early man—for which Darwin was waiting impatiently. "I expect your Book on Geological History of man will with a vengeance be a bomb-shell," he told Lyell at the end of July. "*I hope it will not be very long delayed.*"[28]

To Huxley, Darwin described Agassiz's review as a "weak metaphysical & theological attack on the *Origin*" and to Lyell as "not good at all. . . . Asa Gray tells me that a very clever friend has been almost converted to our side by this Review." Darwin told Gray he was "surprised that Agassiz did not succeed in writing something better. How absurd that logical quibble: 'if species do not exist how can they vary?' As if anyone doubted their temporary existence." The review seemed "hardly worth a detailed answer (even if I could do it, & I much doubt whether I possess your skill in picking out salient points & driving a nail into them)."[29]

Darwin arranged to have Gray's *Atlantic* articles republished in Boston and London as a pamphlet entitled *Natural Selection Not Inconsistent with Natural Theology. A Free Examination of Darwin's Treatise on the Origin of Species, and of Its American Reviewers.* Although doing this mainly to deflect religious criticism, Darwin was also promulgating Gray's discussion of the origins of man, the topic on which he himself was delaying any publication while hoping that Lyell would soon be publishing his work.

Darwin and Lyell exchanged ideas on man's origins during the summer and fall of 1860, with Darwin clarifying that the human races are "certainly descended from single parent" and "infinitely closer" to each other "than to any ape"; that it was "probable that the races of man were less numerous & less divergent formerly than now"; and that perhaps one or more among the races of man had already "become extinct," such as "some lower & more aberrant race, even than the Hottentot"—whose existence Darwin had good reason to fear might soon end. Darwin concurred with Lyell that the "White man is 'improving off the face of the earth' even races nearly his equals." He pointed out that "Agassiz & Co. think the Negro & Caucasian are now distinct species," yet whether the polygenists would have called them different species when they were formerly "less distinct" is essentially a "vain discussion" since they do not accept that species change anyway.[30] This last point suggests Darwin found Gray's argument—that natural selection reconciled monogenist and polygenist views—less than convincing; however, Gray's view would later prove more relevant than Darwin's when polygenists discovered they could co-opt natural selection to serve their own purposes by, in effect, replacing "multiple creations" with "multiple variations" as the explanation for the inequality between races.

Meanwhile, Darwin was pleased that, along with Lyell and Gray, Henslow was also investigating whether the discoveries of flint tools really provided evidence of men existing at the same time as now extinct animals. Meanwhile, Huxley was continuing to argue against Owen's sharp distinction between man and other primates by coming up with concepts such as a "pithecoid pedigree" for mankind that in no way lowered "the great and princely dignity of perfect manhood." However, Lyell then broke the news that his "work on antiquity of Man is entirely suspended" while he produce new editions of his two standard works on geology, though he promised these would include "nearly all I can say on the subject."[31] Darwin would have to be patient.

Lincoln also had to allow others to campaign on his behalf while he avoided issuing any statement that might be interpreted as some divergence from the party platform. Meanwhile, southern Democrats had splintered their party by refusing to acknowledge Stephen A. Douglas's nomination and backing instead a second Democrat, John C. Breckenridge. Realizing he could not now win the election, Douglas could nevertheless weaken his foes so that the party might later reunite under his leadership before the next election in 1864. He might also limit Lincoln's electoral success in the north, yet, knowing Lincoln was almost certain to win, Douglas did his best to dissuade southern legislators from carrying out their threat to secede from the Union if a "Black Republican" was elected president. Douglas broke with tradition and toured the whole country, giving speeches with a grace that came from serving his country and not worrying that Lincoln might turn up for some debate.

Cooling his heels in Springfield, Lincoln probably read in the *New York Times* that Douglas, while pretending not to be politicking, tarried for a few days in August in Newport, Rhode Island, coinciding with the fourteenth annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). "Prof. Agassiz's address on Methods in Zoology, . . . had the first place on today's programme," wrote the *Times* reporter. "The hall . . . accordingly was excessively crowded with visitors, among whom [was] Senator Douglas." Reading on, Lincoln could learn that "Prof. Agassiz's address, however, was quite brief; nor did he touch any of the grand theories of Life—only in a single sentence skirting along the verges of the great Darwin problem."[32] On the previous day, while discussing someone's ethnological paper, Agassiz "threw out some linguistic observations—the same as occur in his communication to Nott and Gliddon's *Indigenous Races*—which proved him far from being as strong on philosophy as he is on fossils."[33] The *Times* reporter also accused the AAAS of "either cowardice or incompetence [because] the great Darwin question . . . [was] purposely and pointedly ignored."[34]

The AAAS, like the nation, was suffering from internal tensions, some sectional, some personal, but both sometimes overlapping on "the Darwin question." Few southern scientists attended this year's meeting, yet they held the balance between larger factions and found themselves controlling the association's higher offices.[35] Senator Douglas knew all about such maneuverings and the risks of compromising with southerners. If Lincoln's election triggered secession, Douglas knew the Republicans would have difficulty achieving compromise and that Lincoln would not let the Union fall apart without a fight.

The fear of an upcoming war heightened interest in the presentation on "modern warfare" by Captain Edward B. Hunt of the Coastal Survey. The *Times* reporter called Hunt's paper "an exceedingly pleasant *mélange* . . . not so severely scientific in character as most of the papers read." The captain told his audience, "War is the applied science of destructive projectiles, and the philosophy of military material depends on scientific application. . . . Warlike science needs to be progressive." Hunt spoke of "the steam-gun" of the future, the need for chemical production (rather than importation) of niter (or "saltpeter"), replacing smoothbores with rifled handguns and artillery, asphyxiating shells, balloon telegraphic observatories, and much more.[36] In the audience, Douglas may have mused that his opponent back in Springfield would probably read the newspaper account of Hunt's martial presentation with the grim interest of a one-time inventor and soon-to-be commander-in-chief.

Two months later, Lincoln won the presidential election, taking a majority of the electoral votes while winning only 39 percent of the popular vote: in ten southern states where the Republican party did not exist, Lincoln's name was not listed on the ballots. During the following four months, as several southern states seceded and as lame-duck President James Buchanan said he could do nothing about it, Lincoln kept silent, still lacking power to act and feeling that more words might simply exacerbate raw feelings. Although few southerners could vote for the Republicans, more than half voted for the "pro-union" candidates, Douglas and John Bell, rather than for the "secessionist" Breckenridge.[37] Lincoln was not being as irrational as his biographer David Herbert Donald has suggested by believing "that Unionists were in a majority throughout the South and that, given time for tempers to cool, they would be able to defeat the secessionist conspirators."[38]

If that rational hope proved wrong, Lincoln might need to consider the suggestions contained in the paper by Captain Hunt, who would never attend another AAAS conference. The next one was scheduled to meet in Nashville in April 1861, but the war's outbreak prevented it.

13

Designers and Inventors

Whatever else Lincoln may have seen in the newspapers, about two weeks after his election he certainly read about a speech "recently delivered (I think) before the Georgia Legislature, or its assembled members. If you have revised it, as is probable, I shall be much obliged if you will send me a copy."[1] Lincoln first met the speech's author, Alexander H. Stephens, twelve years earlier when they served as fellow Whigs in Congress. Back then, Lincoln wrote, "Mr. Stephens of Georgia, a little, slim, pale-faced, consumptive man . . . has just concluded the very best speech, of an hour's length, I ever heard." Even Stephen A. Douglas was happy to urge the audience during the 1858 debates to "read the speeches of that giant in intellect, Alexander H. Stephens, of Georgia."[2]

Now, with Lincoln elected president and several southern states already seceded from the union, Lincoln was impressed that on 14 November 1860, Stephens spoke during a stormy debate in Savannah about whether to secede, arguing impressively against secession—which few southern leaders of Stephens's stature had been doing lately. He asserted that constitutional checks should prevent Lincoln from restricting the extension of slavery, and if they did not, then Stephens himself would advocate secession: but he wanted the Republicans, not Georgia, to make the first wrong move.[3]

Lincoln would grasp at any unionist straw in the south, yet he was wary, probably recognizing what Stephens had left out of *this* address but had included in a speech delivered over a year earlier upon his retirement from Congress. In that 1859 speech, Stephens maintained, "African Slavery with us rests upon principles that can never be successfully assailed by reason or argument. . . . The world is grown wiser, and upon no subject more rapidly than that of the proper status of the negro. In my judgment there are more thinking men at the North now who look upon our system of Slavery as right, socially, morally and politically, than there were even at the South thirty years ago." Stephens admitted that "nearly all" of the founding fathers "were against" slavery, but "it was a question which they did not, and perhaps could not thoroughly understand at that time." According to

Stephens, the ancient Greeks' slave system failed because they enslaved people of their own race, but Americans had avoided this error and increasingly recognized that "subordination is the normal condition of the negro. This great truth, that such was the normal condition of any race, was not recognized in [the ancients'] theories." Going further into natural history, Stephens declared, "'Order is nature's first law'; [and] with it come gradation and subordination [as seen] in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, ranging . . . from the hugest monsters of life . . . to the smallest *animalcule*. . . . We see similar distinctions and gradations in the races of men—from the highest to the lowest type." Stephens concluded that it was folly to "attempt to make things equal which God in his wisdom has made unequal."[4]

Stephens had actually used a phrase echoing the subtitle of John H. Van Evrie's 1853 pamphlet, *Negroes and Negro "Slavery": The First an Inferior Race; the Latter Its Normal Condition*. This lends credence to Van Evrie's later claim that he once presented Stephens with a copy of the pamphlet, converting him into the "most complete exponent and advocate of the new doctrine among all the public men of the day."[5] Although Van Evrie's claim of directly influencing both Stephen A. Douglas and Alexander Stephens was unknown to Lincoln, he recognized that the same views, based on the new scientific racism, were offered by both men, if more thoughtfully by Stephens. Yet, Stephens's more recent speech against secession made no reference to race, and possibly Lincoln hoped Stephens had modified his views. When Stephens replied briefly to Lincoln's request for a copy of that speech, he confirmed that the press accounts were substantially correct and closed sympathetically: "No man ever had heavier or greater responsibilities resting upon him than you have in this present momentous crisis."[6]

Lincoln wrote back that he fully appreciated the present peril but said the people of the south had no reason to fear "that a Republican administration would *directly, or indirectly*, interfere with their slaves, or with them, about their slaves." Lincoln knew this assurance meant nothing: Stephens's argument for delaying secession was to allow southerners to oppose the one policy on which Lincoln could not yield—halting the expansion of slavery. But Lincoln went straight to the more essential difficulty: "You think slavery is *right* and ought to be extended; while we think it is *wrong* and ought to be restricted. That I suppose is the rub. It certainly is the only substantial difference between us."[7]

Stephens's reply also sought the essence: "The [Republican Party's] leading object . . . [has been] to put the institutions of nearly half the States under the ban of public opinion and national condemnation. . . . We at the South do think African slavery, as it exists with us, both morally and politically right. This opinion is founded upon the inferiority of the black race." Stephens freely admitted that since the writing of the Constitution, "the changes have been mainly to our side"—exactly Lincoln's point during his debates with Douglas—but also stressed that the union could not be saved by use of force. He could recommend no specific course of action except to suggest Lincoln should say something to modify the threat posed by his party's stated policy. Alluding to scripture, Stephens wrote, "A word 'fitly spoken' by you now would indeed be like 'apples of gold in pictures of silver.'"[8]

There was no further correspondence, yet that scriptural passage goaded Lincoln to write a memorandum as if in reply. In this fragment, Lincoln argued that "there is something back of these," and "that something is the principle of 'Liberty to all'" as stated in the Declaration of Independence. There was no need to make some statement now that might placate the south because "the assertion of that *principle*, at *that time*, was *the* word, '*fitly spoken*' which has proved an 'apple of gold' to us."[9]

Both men had boiled the conflict down to the "inferiority of the black race" versus "liberty to all," and Lincoln would not consider that "all" could exclude blacks.

As the excitement over *The Origin* began to abate, Darwin returned to writing the first volume of his "big book," though he made little progress because of ill health and a sideline into the study of orchids. Meanwhile, he told Charles Lyell he feared "your volume on Geolog. Hist. of Man will slip through your fingers."[10] Darwin continued reading and thinking about man, was delighted to receive a gift copy of Jean Louis Armand de Quatrefages de Bréau's *L'Unité de l'Espèce Humaine* (1861), asked Lyell to help him obtain an 1850 pamphlet by Samuel G. Morton attacking John Bachman on issues of hybridity, and told Leonard Horner, outgoing president of the Geological Society, that he had learned a great deal from his recent address (which in part dealt with "Evidence of the early existence of the human race") even though Darwin "thought that I had read up pretty well on the antiquity of man."[11]

Darwin's correspondence with Asa Gray slackened after the intense exchanges during *The Origin*'s publication, but also political events proved a distraction for Gray, and their differences over religion were becoming more visible. Although content that Gray's writings seemed to reconcile natural selection with "natural theology," Darwin was grieved "to say that I cannot honestly go as far as you do about Design. I am conscious that I am in an utterly hopeless muddle. I cannot think that the world, as we see it, is the result of chance; & yet I cannot look at each separate thing as the result of Design." Pressed to clarify his objections, Darwin balked, "I have no real objection, nor any real foundation, nor any clear view. As I before said I flounder hopelessly in the mud."[12]

While both Lincoln and Darwin had long since abandoned conventional Christianity, Lincoln was more content with the probability of design. Darwin did not like to see the world as "the result of chance" but allowed that we might see it wrongly in any case. He saw no evidence of a designer or any need to argue the point. For Lincoln, perhaps the most significant, yet bizarre, evidence of a designer, or perhaps of Providence, was the fact of his own life. By normal processes, someone of his origins should not have become the occupant of the White House. Lincoln knew how greatly his development had been the result of his own effort and will, and yet, as he now struggled with a crisis that had made him the sixteenth president of the thirty-three United States and threatened to reduce that number by eleven, Lincoln seemed almost eager to see evidence of Providence—some intended purpose—behind the threatened conflict. When confronting certain developments that were intrinsically inexplicable, Lincoln was at least willing to imagine some supernatural explanation, while Darwin was more insistent that at bottom there was some natural explanation. For all his much-vaunted rationalism, Lincoln still had a capacity, and perhaps a need, for the spiritual. And although Darwin took cover behind Gray's theistic essays, supportive quotations from the Reverend Charles Kingsley, and the Butler epigraph that asserted God's agency in the natural as well as the supernatural, he had little capacity for belief in the supernatural and less need.

About June 1861, Emma Darwin wrote a letter to Charles, the third and apparently last time she used this mode to express her mixed feelings of love for him and spiritual pain at his inability to see a role for God. While she felt "in my inmost heart your admirable qualities & feelings," she also expressed her hope "that you might direct them upwards, as well as to one who values them above every thing in the world." Around this time, Darwin told his friend Gray, "I have been led to think more on this subject [of design] of late, & grieve to say that I come to differ more from you [as a result of] studying lately domestic variations & seeing what an enormous field of undesigned variability there is ready for natural selection to appropriate for any purpose useful to each creature."[13]

Darwin closed that letter on a different topic: "But I suppose you are all too overwhelmed with public affairs to care for science. I never knew the newspapers so profoundly interesting." This was not the first time Darwin's correspondence revealed his concern about the political crisis developing in America, and several of Gray's letters from this time that have failed to survive may have made some reference to Lincoln's election or other political issues. Darwin showed his interest in a postscript: "Have you read Olmsted *Journey in the Back Country*; what a remarkably interesting Book."[14]

Frederick Law Olmsted, a New Englander who traveled extensively in the south, wrote perceptive accounts of his journeys. Darwin had already admired two that appeared in 1856 and 1857.[15] The book mentioned in Darwin's postscript was published in 1860 and also provided "an admirably lively picture of man & Slavery in the S. States," as Darwin wrote when he recommended *Journey in the Back Country* (twice) to Joseph Dalton Hooker.[16] One of Darwin's sons remembered his father "talking with horror of his sleepless nights when he could not keep out of his mind some incidents from Olmsted's [book, which] he had lately been reading." Similarly, another son recalled, "The remembrance of screams, or other sounds heard in Brazil, when he was powerless to interfere with what he believed to be the torture of a slave, haunted him for years, especially at night."[17]

In early 1861, as the secession crisis developed prior to Lincoln's inauguration, Darwin wrote to Gray, "I fear that the state of the U. States must stop all interest in everything not political." Gray had recently asked a fellow scientist in Charleston if there were no union men in South Carolina; "I answer none" was the reply.[18]

Lincoln's hopes that pro-union sentiment would eventually push aside the secessionist hotheads were fading as his inauguration approached in March and as Stephens was sworn in as Vice-President of the Confederacy on the very day that Lincoln began his slow train journey to Washington, D.C. Lincoln's farewell to his friends in Springfield struck a deeply religious note: "I go to assume a task more difficult than that which devolved upon General Washington. Unless the great God who assisted him, shall be with and aid me, I must fail. But if the same omniscient mind, and Almighty arm that directed and protected him, shall guide and support me, I shall not fail, I shall succeed. Let us all pray that the God of our fathers may not forsake us now."[19]

Similar sentiments were addressed to audiences all along the roundabout route to the nation's capital. On inauguration day, soldiers lined the streets, and riflemen watched from the rooftops as the president-elect proceeded to the swearing in. His inaugural address offered no concessions on fundamental issues but echoed Stephens's argument that the Republican administration had no authority to interfere with slavery where it already existed. He also paraphrased what he had told Stephens: "One section of our country believes slavery is *right*, and ought to be extended, while the other believes it is *wrong*, and ought not to be extended."[20] He did not attempt to explain the basis for those beliefs: whether one considered slavery right or wrong was largely determined by received tradition and economic interest, and scientific racism gave only a veneer of intellectual justification to preexisting attitudes.

Stephens had advised Lincoln that the union could not be maintained by force, and for the same tactical reason that made Stephens delay his support for secession, Lincoln declared he would not launch the first attack. The south would have to strike the first blow, as he knew eventually it would when the federal government, no longer led by the insipid Buchanan, stopped yielding to southern demands for control of federal installations in their states.

Despite southern claims to the contrary, Lincoln knew that the south actually lacked the "just cause" their grandfathers had when they seceded from the British Empire. Instead of basing the Confederate system on liberty, even the most brilliant of southern leaders made the mistake of basing the Confederacy on the doctrine of negro inferiority. Two weeks after Lincoln's inauguration, Stephens delivered what became known as the Cornerstone Speech, which echoed ideas found in Van Evrie's writings and in Stephens's retirement speech two years earlier.

> Our new government is founded upon [and] its cornerstone rests upon the great truth, that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery—subordination to the superior race—is his natural and normal condition. This, our new government, is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth. This truth has been slow in the process of its development, like all other truths in the various departments of science. It has been so even amongst us. Many who hear me, perhaps, can recollect well, that this truth was not generally admitted, even within their day.

Just as Lincoln in his inaugural called for "a firm reliance on Him, who has never yet forsaken this favored land," so Stephens urged that the slave system was "in conformity with the ordinance of the Creator. It is not for us to inquire into the wisdom of his ordinances, or to question them. For his own purposes, he has made one race to differ from another."[21]

The issue dividing the country could not be resolved through theology or politics, let alone anthropology. Yet, other sciences would be crucial in the coming struggle for survival, since the fittest would be those whose leaders were best able to adopt the latest military technology.

A month after Lincoln's election, *Scientific American* included a piece entitled "The President Elect's Mode of Buoying Vessels. Patented May 22, 1849": "The merits of this invention we are not disposed to discuss; but we hope the author of it will have better success in presiding as Chief Magistrate over the people of the entire Union than he has had as an inventor in introducing his invention upon the western waters, for which it was specially designed." The editors included a large image of the model in the Patent Office and a copy of the patent itself. They also acknowledged that "among our readers there are thousands of mechanics who would devise a better apparatus for buoying steamboats over bars, but how many of them would be able to compete successfully in the race for the Presidency?"[22]

Unfortunately, this was exactly the moment when the secession crisis boiled over, and Lincoln's success as chief magistrate would be measured by his ability to quell what he always referred to as a "rebellion." Lincoln now had to apply his rational brain to finding a way to save the union. "The tug has to come," he told Lyman Trumbull back in December, "& better now, than any time hereafter."[23] That ruled out two options preferred by many, perhaps most, Americans. One was letting the Confederates go, saying good riddance, and possibly expecting they would return when they realized their folly. The other was, as so often in the past, to cobble together another compromise—but this meant concessions Lincoln could not make without betraying those who had voted for the Republican platform. That left only the resort to force, which courted disaster since the eight slave states then still remaining in the union expected Republicans to make concessions. Lincoln was hoping some of those states would rally to the union if the rebels attacked it before being themselves assaulted by the federal government. A rebel attack might also increase northern support for armed conflict, which is why Lincoln handled the issue of Fort Sumter so carefully, maneuvering the South Carolinians into becoming the aggressors when they began the bombardment on 12 April 1861.

As war became a reality, four more slave states joined the Confederacy and greatly strengthened it by increasing the overall population from five million to nine million. The greatest loss was Virginia, which chose secession after Stephens made a long speech before the legislature: "The enemies of our institutions . . . set out with the assumption that the races are equal; that the negro is equal to the white man. If their premises were correct, their conclusions would be legitimate. But their premises being false, their conclusions are false also."[24] Although President Lincoln was devastated that Confederate territory across the Potomac River was now visible from the windows of the White House, he was relieved that for the moment Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, and Missouri—the Border States—remained in the union, and that the north responded enthusiastically when Lincoln called for seventy-five thousand volunteers for ninety days' service.

Lincoln intended to avoid the error of George III, who had repeatedly committed too few troops and too late when attempting to suppress the colonial rebellion. It was assumed that the Confederacy would have far more difficulty than the north in recruiting, supplying, and transporting an army. The south's population was less than half of the north's, and nearly half of the Confederacy's people were slaves. Only a quarter of the free population were themselves slave owners, and Lincoln still hoped there were unionists among the less "aristocratic" classes. Transporting men and supplies to defend specific points would be difficult for the south's underdeveloped railroad system, and its industrial base was almost nonexistent. Although the rebels had been able to seize arms and ships at several federal installations, the largest stockpiles of small arms were in the north along with the industries to make new ones. Northerners hoped for a quick victory, but evidently the president and his advisers were also planning for a longer struggle.

Lincoln's call for seventy-five thousand troops on three-month enlistment did not mean he seriously thought that number and period would prove sufficient. While some bandied slogans about one Yankee being worth ten rebels, or vice versa, Lincoln accepted that "exceptional advantages on one side are counterbalanced by exceptional advantages on the other. We must make up our minds that man for man the soldier from the South will be a match for the soldier from the North and *vice versa*." When Congress assembled in early July, Lincoln requested support for an army of four hundred thousand men, and Congress immediately raised this to five hundred thousand.[25]

That Lincoln thought the war might not end swiftly is also indicated by his effort to bring about technological improvements in the union's weaponry that some experts, including General James W. Ripley, the head of the Army's

Ordnance Department, thought unnecessary and even reckless, since there were already large stockpiles of arms. The loss of uniformity and interchangeability in types of ammunition might complicate supply issues, and the war might be over before new designs could be fully tested and manufactured. Lincoln increasingly ignored this sensible view—with tremendous long-term benefits for the union cause—partly because of his own peculiar fascination with science and inventions.

Lincoln's interest in science and technology remained a fixture throughout his life. A young legal colleague recalled seeing Lincoln distracted in 1856 by an exhibition of a "self-raking reaping machine." Lincoln "examined it with much interest" before "explaining, in the fewest words but with great clearness, how power and motion were communicated to the different appliances, especially to the sickle, the revolving rake, and the reel. His faculty for comprehending and understanding machinery I afterward saw exemplified when I heard him argue a patent case."[26]

Lincoln might have read the article about the Illinois State Agricultural Society's "Trials of Reapers" in his 1855 volume of the *Annual of Scientific Discovery.* In a different trial earlier that year, Lincoln learned a great deal about reapers when some high-priced Ohio patent lawyers retained him to assist as a local attorney in a patent-infringement case between two Illinois reaper manufacturers. When the case was transferred to Cincinnati, the specialist lawyers dispensed with Lincoln's services, but he had already visited the factory and "spent half a day examining and studying Manny's Machine."[27]

In March 1857, a young telegrapher in Pekin, Illinois, noticed Lincoln staring at the telegrapher's key and receiver. Answering Lincoln's questions about various intricacies, the telegrapher found him "already well furnished with knowledge of collateral facts and natural phenomena; and . . . he comprehended quite readily the operation of the telegraph, [even though the] wires had been extended west of the Alleghany Mountains only five or six years."[28]

In September 1859, Lincoln addressed the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, and despite jokingly calling himself "in some sort a politician, and in no sort a farmer," he discussed agriculture in familiar terms while also stressing the need for exploiting "recent discovery, or invention." He cited Patent Office reports on crop yields per acre; advocated "deeper plowing, analysis of soils, experiments with manures, and varieties of seeds, observance of seasons, and the like"; and judged that "the soil has never been pushed up to one-half of its capacity." He gave an almost Euclidean analysis of the potential for "the successful application of *steam power*," arguing that any "steam plow" must be "so contrived as to apply the larger proportion of its power to the cutting and turning the soil, and the smallest, to the moving itself over the field," while suggesting that currently, with horse-drawn reapers, "fully nine-tenths of the power is expended by the animal in carrying himself and dragging the machine over the field." Lincoln spoke of the "profitable enjoyment" of studying problems connected with "draining, droughts, and irrigation[,] . . . saving crops, pests of crops, diseases of crops, and what will prevent or cure them—implements, utensils, and machines, their relative merits, and [how] to improve them." He mentioned the assistance to be gained from botany, chemistry, and "the mechanical branches of Natural Philosophy . . . especially in reference to implements and machinery."[29]

Now, less than a month after his inauguration and shortly before Fort Sumter, Lincoln displayed keen interest in the testing and production of weapons when he paid the first of many visits to the Washington Navy Yard.[30] Fascinated by the steam hammers, blast furnace, hydrostatic press, pyrotechnical laboratory, rolling mill, foundries, and all the boring, turning, and planing machinery, Lincoln was equally pleased by the enthusiasm of Captain John A. Dahlgren, who had served at the yard since 1847 and was shortly to replace the previous commander who had deserted to the Confederacy.

For three months after Fort Sumter, while others still hoped for a short war, Lincoln became interested in new types of weapons that might help to shorten a long war. He was aware that Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy, knew a great deal about military technology, since the 1855 volume of *Annual of Scientific Discovery* had given a detailed account of a report to Congress by then Secretary of War Davis about the latest European advances in weapons technology, emphasizing the "superiority of the grooved or rifle barrel and elongated ball" over the smooth-bore musket with its round ball and noting that the difficulties of loading rifles compared with smooth-bores was overcome by replacing the old muzzleloaders with breechloaders. The *Annual* also reported that in the following year, Davis's department found a practicable way to turn old musket barrels into rifled barrels: "it is not improbable that all now on hand at the Springfield [Massachusetts] Armory—some 255,000—will ultimately receive that improvement."[31]

Lincoln could assume that Davis was now applying his experience to the task of securing—under even more adverse conditions than Lincoln faced—the best weapons available for Confederate troops. Lincoln's problem was that, in fact, few of those old muskets had been converted to rifles, and Ordnance Chief Ripley was busy distributing existing weapons into the hands of the tens of thousands of fresh recruits. Governors and commanders who were contributing troops to the cause often demanded that their men receive the few superior weapons in the armories. New York state sent an agent to Britain to purchase nineteen thousand Enfield rifles, and General Ripley at first supported the idea of purchasing a hundred thousand arms in Europe, but the Secretary of War Simon Cameron opposed, mainly to avoid spending money abroad rather than at home.[32] This proved a great blunder, because the South, with fewer options, had no such qualms about foreign purchases.

If Ripley and Cameron had been less obstructive, Lincoln might not have interfered, but pressure came not only from recruits clamoring for modern rifles as a matter, literally, of life and death but also from a flood of letters and visits by inventors and manufacturers, both genuine and would-be, and all offering some new killing device that would save the union. Lincoln's private secretaries, who sifted the piles of post and passed to the president only those that could not be immediately discarded or redirected, allowed a disproportionate number of the letters from inventors through the screen, knowing Lincoln relished them.[33]

Lincoln was most interested in the designs for rifling both small arms and artillery, new breechloaders, "repeating" systems that allowed more rapid fire, and the corresponding new types of projectiles. Before the end of April, Lincoln endorsed a letter from the vice-president in favor of placing a large order for rifled cannon. On 16 May, Lincoln and Secretary of State William H. Seward inspected the Ordnance Office at Dahlgren's Navy Yard, and in the same month, Dahlgren hinted to Lincoln that if the war lasted any considerable time, there could be problems about maintaining supplies of niter (saltpeter) for gunpowder production. Early in June, Lincoln watched a demonstration of an early machine gun, which he dubbed "the coffee mill gun." He praised it to Dahlgren and recommended it to Ripley as "worth the attention of the Government." He was less impressed with a "centrifugal gun" meant to be powered by steam. The prototype Lincoln tested was hand cranked and so inaccurate that the target had to be quite close, causing the balls flying out of the machine to bounce back among the shins of the bystanders, which, according to his secretary John Hay sent Lincoln into "peals of Homeric laughter."[34]

The next day, Lincoln was introduced to some of that potential military technology Captain Edward B. Hunt had mentioned at the Newport AAAS meeting. The head of the Smithsonian, Joseph Henry, brought a young balloonist named Thaddeus Lowe to the White House. A few days later, Lowe was floating over it in the *Enterprise* and sending telegraph messages to demonstrate the balloon's usefulness for reconnaissance. Lincoln gave Lowe a letter of introduction to the highest officer in the Army, General Winfield Scott, who managed temporarily to sideline the project.[35]

Later in the month, Lincoln dragged Cameron and Ripley along to watch experiments with rifled cannon at the arsenal in Washington, and at least twice around this time, Lincoln went out to an empty field near the White House to test some weapons himself. He usually took along an ex-soldier and messenger named Mullikin from the Ordnance Office, but once when a clerk told him that Mullikin was unavailable, Lincoln made do with the clerk. Lincoln was keen that day to try out the new Spencer repeating rifles that Dahlgren had already tested to great satisfaction. Lincoln thought he had a better idea about the design of the gun sight and whittled one out of wood. The clerk placed a paper target on a large woodpile, and Lincoln fired seven rounds in rapid order, reloaded and fired another seven, hitting the target nearly every time.[36]

Lincoln carried out a similar test on two breech-loading rifles, and this time his shooting partner was his third secretary, William O. Stoddard, who fired a single-shot weapon while Lincoln tried out a new repeater. Stoddard proved a good shot, and Lincoln laughed, "I declare, you are beating me!" Some soldiers heard the unauthorized gunfire and came running up shouting, "Stop that firing!" They had not come very close before they recognized the tall marksman and beat a retreat. "Well," Lincoln remarked, "they might have stayed and seen the shooting."[37]

Lincoln had testing times not only with the weapons but also with their inventors, although, according to secretary Hay, they "were more a source of amusement than annoyance."[38] One brought a rocket to Lincoln's office and seemed surprised when as he struck a match, his president ducked behind a desk. "Mr. Lincoln," said the inventor, "you make a better President, I guess, than you would a soldier." Lincoln's sense of self-preservation was usually less attuned. "On my arrival at the White House," recalled another inventor, "I was ushered immediately into the reception room, with my repeating rifle in my hand, and there I found the President."[39] If Lincoln showed little fear that any of his inventive visitors were deliberately dangerous, he had less confidence in their devices. Bullet-proof steel vests to protect the troops were brought to Lincoln in such profusion that he sifted out the really hopeless ones by offering to let the inventor wear his own device in a test. One such vest was described by its inventor as a "cuirass," an archaism that moved Lincoln to pun: "Well, the inventor must be a queer ass to think a man could lug that thing on a march in a hot sun." One might have thought nothing could be more absurd than the gun with two diverging barrels to be used by cross-eyed men who, according to its cross-eyed inventor, "could march down the river and clear out both banks at once," but Lincoln only laughed, "There's about as much in it as there is in some of the other plans they want me to take."[40]

According to Hay, "Lincoln had a quick comprehension of mechanical principles, and often detected a flaw in an invention which the contriver had overlooked."[41] Nevertheless, General Ripley simply could not take Lincoln seriously and complained to the Secretary of War in June 1861 of "the great evil" of "the vast variety of the new inventions, each having, of course, its advocates, insisting on the superiority of his favorite arm over all others and urging its adoption by the Government." Ripley said all this was "very injurious to the efficiency of troops," and the solution was to refuse to purchase "new and untried arms" and to adhere to the "rule of uniformity of arms for all troops of the same kind."[42]

So far Lincoln had shown interest, curiosity and open-mindedness, but he had often bowed to the authority of military chiefs. After the Union defeat at

Bull Run on 21 July 1861, Lincoln showed less deference and more insistence on the importance of new technology.

Darwin's best source of information about the American Civil War came from letters that American colleagues sent to him or to Lyell and Hooker. The colleagues were mainly New Englanders since Darwin had no regular contact with any southern scientists and might doubt their opinions anyway. The same applied to Agassiz, who otherwise might have made a useful observer, being a nonnative resident in New England but also very familiar with the south. Even Darwin's most frequent and admired correspondent, Gray, wrote at best only once every three weeks, the least time required for a letter sent across the Atlantic to fetch a reply. Darwin's daily dose of war news came from the *Times* of London.

Darwin was an avid reader of the *Times*, which proved aggravating since, after initially taking a position Darwin could approve, the newspaper was blatantly pro-South for most of the war. A contemporary wrote in 1865 that the *Times*'s "errors were of a class which, besides the ordinary measure of human fallibility, implies a total misconception of the conditions of the struggle," while a more recent study concluded, "*The Times* made a fool of itself over the American Civil War."[43] President Lincoln showed considerable respect when William Howard Russell, the newspaper's star foreign correspondent, was first introduced to him.[44] "The London *Times* is one of the greatest powers in the world," said Lincoln. "In fact, I don't know anything which has much more power, except perhaps the Mississippi. I am glad to know you as its minister." Further cajoleries from the president left Russell "agreeably impressed with his shrewdness, humour, and natural sagacity," and the following day, he was invited to attend the first state dinner in Lincoln's White House, the other guests being cabinet members and their families.[45]

Shortly after this, Russell began touring the country, starting in the south. His reports were objective, sometimes complimentary, yet never disguised his hatred of slavery or his amazement at the way it warped southern society. Russell's dispatches took nearly a fortnight to reach Darwin's breakfast table and another to rebound across the Atlantic to the White House.[46] So Darwin and (some days later) Lincoln would both have memories stirred by Russell's description of a negro being auctioned in Alabama, which deeply affected Russell despite his declaration that he was "neither a sentimentalist nor Black Republican, nor negro worshipper." His closing line showed his contempt for polygenism: "There was no sophistry which could persuade me the man was not a man—he was, indeed, by no means my brother, but assuredly he was a fellow creature." Two weeks later, Russell wrote in his diary about southern "gentlemen . . . who indulge in ingenious hypotheses to comfort the consciences of the anthropo-proprietors. The negro skull won't hold as many ounces of shot as the white man. Potent proof that the white man has a right to sell and to own the creature!"[47]

Lincoln could only be pleased while Russell filed such reports for British readers, although Darwin possessed his "own foreign correspondent." Because Gray's letters were also greatly valued for their scientific content and were passed among Darwin, Hooker, Lyell, and Francis Boott, many went missing, and none have survived that Darwin saw between July 1860 and August 1861, during which time Darwin wrote at least seventeen letters to Gray.

Hooker's letters to Gray entirely lacked the sympathy normally expressed by Darwin, and Gray was often annoyed by reports in or reprinted from British newspapers.[48] Writing to Darwin on 6 May 1861, Gray must have expressed some displeasure about the lack of British support among other things, and Darwin's belated reply apparently responded point by point but also made clear what he considered the most vital issue.

> But I suppose you are all too overwhelmed with public affairs to care for science. I never knew the newspapers so profoundly interesting. N. America does not do England justice: I have not seen or heard of a soul who is not with the North. Some few, & I am one, even wish to God, though at the loss of millions of lives, that the North would proclaim a crusade against Slavery. In the long run, a million horrid deaths would be amply repaid in the cause of humanity. What wonderful times we live in. Massachusetts seems to show noble enthusiasm. Great God how I should like to see that greatest curse on Earth Slavery abolished.[49]

Five days after Darwin first raised the issue of slavery—before Gray even received that letter—Gray, too, mentioned slavery for the first time, in a touchy letter to Hooker: "I am no *abolitionist*, but if the rebels & scoundrels persevere, I go for carrying the war so far as to liberate every negro, tho' what we are to do with this population I see not." Hooker, perhaps unimpressed that Gray seemed to view emancipation as an expedient rather than a moral imperative, condescendingly sought to terminate the discussion: "I think the less said the sooner mended about the war & your *slightly animated!* description of John Bull's opinions & notions. A nation at war is no longer in its senses; however just the cause."[50]

To another fellow naturalist in America less pro-Union than himself, Gray wrote, "Peace is not worth having till the rebellion, based on a plot formed years ago, is put down. . . . If you think me belligerent, I am nothing to Agassiz."[51] Biographer Edward Lurie comments that Agassiz "advocated the Union cause with an uncompromising patriotism," citing his very public application for American citizenship and his letters to friends in England "chiding them for the policy of their country toward the United States"—very like Gray in that regard.[52] This was commendable considering Agassiz's previously close relations with southern colleagues, but he had more important ties with the influential, wealthy, and solidly pro-Union Bostonians who lavishly funded his museum. Moreover, Agassiz was part of a clique of leading scientists who jokingly nicknamed themselves the

"Lazzaroni" (lepers in Naples, i.e., outcasts) and included high-ranking government officials and military officers such as Alexander Dallas Bache of the Coastal Survey and Captain Charles Henry Davis of the Nautical Almanac office. Yet, Agassiz's patriotism dampened when it conflicted with his professional activities. After catching a student reading a newspaper in the museum, Agassiz threatened to ban such publications from the building, and another student recorded in his diary how cross Agassiz became when the same student joined the army: "If they knew in Boston how greedy Prof is of our time . . . and actually unpatriotic, it would kill the museum."[53] Obviously, Gray must not have known any of this when he praised Agassiz's support for the war.

Darwin wrote that he sympathized with Gray's insistence that the war was necessary: "After carefully reading Olmsted's last Book I never doubted the North would conquer the South." Yet, Darwin had other doubts: "But then what is to follow? From Olmsted & Russell's letters in *Times*, I cannot believe that the South would ever have fellow-feeling enough with the North to allow of government in common. Could the North endure a Southern President?"[54] Darwin could see that bitterness was an obstacle to re-union—without quite grasping the lesson of Lincoln's election: that the south had lost its controlling influence on presidential elections.

Correspondent Russell, although glad to condemn slavery, was also impressed by the growing evidence that the Confederacy was determined—and possibly able—to maintain its independence, while his editors back in London were increasingly confident about expressing their pro-Confederate opinion—infuriating Gray—that the divided United States could never be rejoined.[55] While Gray was willing, if the rebels "persevered," to see slaves freed, Darwin saw no point in the war if it did not end slavery. "The whole affair is a great misfortune in the progress of the World," Darwin told Gray, "but I should not regret it so much, if I could persuade myself that Slavery would be annihilated. But your president does not even mention the word in his Address." Clearly, Darwin had read carefully the reports of Lincoln's address to the special session of Congress on 4 July and was disappointed—as were American abolitionists—that Lincoln made no reference to slavery.[56] And yet, it was understandable that Lincoln, to avoid George III's mistakes, did not wish to broaden the conflict beyond the illegality of secession or undermine the Unionists of the Border States by taking any precipitous action against slavery.

Whether Darwin grasped this intellectually, on gut level he was dissatisfied. "I sometimes wish the contest to grow so desperate, that the north would be led to declare freedom as a diversion against the Enemy," he told Gray, anticipating events. Darwin was also correct that ending slavery might itself cause long-term trauma: "In 50 or 100 years your posterity would bless the act." Darwin could not know how prescient he was on both points. "But Heaven knows why I trouble you with my speculations; I ought to stick to Orchids."

Darwin wrote these speculations on the very day Lincoln's invasion force was defeated at Bull Run, extinguishing hope that the war would end quickly. Russell of the *Times* described the defeat in an unsparing report that, when it bounced back to America, angered Northerners intensely. As one historian expresses it, "Unhappily Russell's dispatches were unendurable mostly because they appeared in *The Times*."[57]

Lincoln had more to worry about than Russell's dispatches. As he now prepared for a long war, the potential military usefulness of new weapons grew in his estimation. The most useful innovations were exactly those that could only be developed on a large scale, in a reasonable time, at minimal cost, and with the expectation of inflicting the greatest damage on the enemy. The inventor in Lincoln now went back over some of the weapons projects that military "experts" had so far resisted. And he also began to consider a highly dangerous weapon that might easily backfire. Yet Lincoln was still eighteen months away from implementing the idea that already exercised the minds of most abolitionists, including one in England: to "declare freedom as a diversion against the enemy."

14

Inventions for a Long War

After the debacle at Bull Run in July 1861, Lincoln placed General George McClellan in charge of reorganizing the swelling army of volunteers, but he also pursued more vigorously the development of new weapons of war. Four days after Bull Run, Thaddeus Lowe, the balloonist recommended by Professor Joseph Henry, informed Lincoln that although he had just returned from making an important reconnaissance of rebel forces following the battle, the army still had not commissioned him to develop a useful balloon service. Lincoln wrote a note for Lowe on 25 July: “Will Lieut. Gen. Scott please see Professor Lowe once more about his balloon?” The president may even have escorted Lowe to see the general. Soon Lowe obtained a government contract to develop an “air corps” of seven balloons, which performed valuable service in several battles in 1862. By 1863, Lowe gave up the effort when the army failed to commission or fund him properly.[1]

To help Lincoln conquer not only the air but also the sea, in September 1861 Brutus de Villeroi, an immigrant inventor in Philadelphia, described in a long letter his experiments with a submarine whose crew could remain submerged for up to three hours while also sallying through an airlock to carry out reconnaissance or plant explosives on the keels of enemy ships. Lincoln personally endorsed the letter to the Navy Department, whose officials ordered a larger model for testing. Just over a year later and after numerous delays, one test of the *Alligator* took place in the presence of President Lincoln, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Gustavus V. Fox, General Benjamin F. Butler, and Professor Eben Horsford, the last of whom actually descended in the vessel and remained submerged for over an hour. All were described as being “perfectly satisfied.” Although Lincoln apparently recommended another submarine proposal to navy experts early in 1862, they decided the air supply was insufficient and the probable speed too slow. In April 1862, Villeroi grew so disgusted over the treatment of his project that he washed his hands of the whole business, and a year later, the *Alligator* sank in a heavy gale while under tow.[2]

Another tragedy connected with underwater technology was the death in October 1863 of one of the best scientists in the navy, Captain Edward B. Hunt, who had delivered many papers before the AAAS, including the one on future military technology read in the presence of Stephen A. Douglas. Hunt had argued for the development of numerous weapons, including asphyxiating shells, and while testing an artillery battery that could be fired underwater, Hunt was suffocated by escaping gases and killed by falling into the hold of the test vessel.[3] Hunt's brother was a former governor of New York, so Lincoln would certainly have heard of this loss to science, and another who probably mourned that loss was Charles Darwin. Two months before Hunt's death, Darwin had received from him a scientific paper arguing that Florida's coral reefs were at least 5.4 million years old.[4]

Hunt had also advocated the "steam gun," and early in September 1861, some politically influential Bostonians endorsed a design for one, which they sent first to General James W. Ripley and then, when he showed no interest, to the president. Impressed or not, Lincoln knew better than to offend the project's distinguished backers and asked the engineer in chief of the navy to examine the proposal. When he declared the concept unfeasible, Lincoln let the matter drop.[5]

Returning to more conventional weapons, Lincoln scrutinized a breechloading cannon in September 1861 and ordered twenty into service by November. On 5 September, Lincoln endorsed a deal belatedly arranged by Secretary of War Simon Cameron for the overseas purchase of a hundred thousand rifled muskets with percussion-cap firing: the guns were surplus weapons of European governments modernizing their arsenals with breechloaders. Two days later, Lincoln interviewed a Philadelphia merchant about arranging further European purchases.[6]

On the evening of 15 September, Captain John A. Dahlgren took Lincoln to watch tests of an "electro-mercury light" recently developed by a British chemist. Dahlgren was interested in its potential for signaling or illumination for night fighting.[7] Lincoln also made almost daily rounds of the military camps surrounding Washington to see how the equipping and training of the Army of the Potomac progressed. On 20 September, the *New York Times* reported that "the President, Secretaries Cameron and Seward, the Prince de Joinville and suite, Private Secretary Nicolay, Gen. McClellan and Staff, Gen. Mansfield and Staff, and a large number of ladies and gentlemen" attended a review of Colonel Hiram Berdan's regiment of sharpshooters: "Something like four hundred shots were fired at a distance of 630 yards."[8]

Berdan, a New York engineer whose avocation was rifle marksmanship, had recruited this specialist corps of skirmishers by advertising for men skilled with fine weapons and promising to outfit them with the single-shot Sharps rifle, a breechloader that had been on the market since the mid-1850s. Unfortunately, General Ripley refused to purchase the new weapons and instead issued old Springfield muskets. At the very least, Lincoln must have collaborated in arranging the high-profile visit by this prestigious delegation, which was a deliberate coup. Lincoln himself fired a few rounds, commenting, "Boys, this reminds me of old-time shooting!"—which brought a cheer from the troops. Lincoln told the colonel to come see him the following day so he could write out an order for the breechloaders. After various further delays and a near-mutiny by the troops themselves, eventually the unit was properly equipped and went on to kill more Confederates than any other regiment in the Union army.[9]

In the month of October alone, Lincoln observed the ascension of another balloonist on the fourth, personally inspected a new design for a gun carriage on the fifth (dropping it when other experts pointed out shortcomings), directed General Ripley to order twenty-five thousand Marsh breechloaders on the fourteenth, again walked out to Treasury Park with an inventor to test his new type of bullet on the twenty-fifth, and on the twenty-sixth invited General McClellan to join him and a group of military and scientific men for a demonstration of a battery of repeating guns on wheels—and when McClellan was unable to attend, Lincoln went without him and took the responsibility by the end of the day to order ten batteries at $1,300 apiece.[10]

In November, an inventor from New Hampshire, failing to interest General Ripley in his new breech-loading cannon, arranged an audience with Lincoln, who spent nearly an hour going over the plans. Promising to arrange a test if the inventor's state governor would endorse him, Lincoln soon received the letter and endorsed it with a request that the War Department send someone to New Hampshire to test the weapon. However, General Ripley found ways to delay the inspection and then bury the report, so nothing came of Lincoln's intervention. Shortly afterward, Lincoln managed to get McClellan to express a desire for more machine guns, so in December, Lincoln ordered Ripley to purchase fifty of them; and a week later, again by Lincoln's direct intervention, Ripley finally ordered ten thousand Spencer repeating rifles.[11]

Apart from whittling a temporary gun sight, Lincoln played no role in actually designing new weapons. However, the perception that he valued new technology encouraged inventors to bring forward their ideas despite General Ripley's obstructive reputation. Most new regiments were provided with better weapons than they would otherwise have had simply because Lincoln overruled objections to the purchases abroad.[12] Lincoln's personal attention to inventors and growing resistance to the opinions of his chief of ordnance and his secretary of war meant that by the end of 1861, thirty-seven thousand American-made breech-loading rifles, single-shot or repeating and using both paper and metallic cartridges, were on order. According to historian James M. McPherson, "These guns turned out to be the best shoulder weapons of the war. The carbines gave Union cavalry a significant advantage in the last fifteen months of the war. Infantry regiments armed with the Spencer rifles gained a fearsome reputation among enemy units." What Robert V. Bruce, the best authority on Lincoln's interest in weapons, says of the entire period of the war was actually true by the end of the first year: "During the Civil War, the nearest thing to a research and development agency was the President himself."[13]

Various people, whether inspired or appalled by Lincoln's efforts and Ripley's stubbornness, hoped to place research and development on a more professional level. At the end of 1861, Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles wrote out instructions for a "Naval Examining Board" that would make recommendations about inventions on the basis that money could not "be applied to any experimental purpose but only for objects of undoubted utility." This board, though somewhat a failure in itself, marked an important preliminary step in the development of science in America.[14] Welles, already pressured by Congress about costs and corrupt contractors, was disturbed about the time Dahlgren spent dealing with increasingly hare-brained inventors. Also, the U.S. Navy seemed particularly backward at that moment because of two simultaneous and related crises, both involving a new technology in which Lincoln took a particular interest: ironclads.

Another of George III's blunders that Lincoln tried to avoid was allowing the colonial rebels to obtain vital supplies of arms from abroad. Both the North and the South knew that international trade was a crucial issue: Lincoln's navy must close or blockade Southern ports, and the South must prevent such an effort from succeeding. The Confederacy was fortunate that its Secretary of Navy, Stephen R. Mallory, a Floridian who previously chaired the Senate's naval affairs committee, recognized immediately that the South lacked the resources to challenge the Union navy in any conventional way.

Exactly when President Lincoln first learned that the Confederate navy was building an ironclad warship is unknown, but neither the technology nor the South's wish to build such a vessel was any surprise. Despite his patent for a device to aid navigation, Lincoln knew even less about naval armaments than he did about land armaments, which was still a great deal more than most people. Although Lincoln allegedly joked once, "I do think I knew the difference between the bow of a ship and her stern, and I don't believe Secretary Welles did," he admired the administrative ability of Welles, who had some prior experience of the Navy Department, if less than the Confederacy's Mallory.[15] Moreover, Welles was a Connecticut Yankee who had been a canny journalist—and soon he had an important scoop for Lincoln. On 8 May, only three weeks after Confederate forces seized the naval yard in Norfolk, Virginia, Mallory had written to the Confederate Congress urging the immediate construction of an ironclad that he believed could destroy the Union's wooden fleet. Somehow, this document came into Welles's possession.[16]

As a congressman, Lincoln had once sponsored a petition from a Baltimore inventor who since 1814 had been seeking support for a steam warship with sloping armored sides, but nothing came of it at the time.[17] Early in 1861, *Scientific*

American regretted that "the Secretary of the Navy has not paid attention" to the fact that while the United States did not have "a single first class war steamer," the French and British were building "iron-cased war wolves."[18] A month later, *Harper's Weekly* offered an illustrated account of the first ocean-going ironclad warships built by the French and British in 1859 and 1860, respectively. In the same week, Captain Dahlgren urged the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs to order the "the construction of some *armored* Gun Boats" as well as "at least the one heavy frigate [which] may cost 1¾ to 2 millions which is the estimated expense of the English Plated-frigate [HMS] *Warrior*, just launched." Dahlgren urged haste: it would take at least two years "to get a ship ready for service."[19] Dahlgren probably expressed these views to Lincoln when, a few months later, he became the new president's favorite weapons adviser.

In the month following Mallory's letter, further information reached Welles regarding the Confederates' efforts to raise a ship, the USS *Merrimack*, which had been only half-destroyed when retreating federals abandoned Norfolk, Virginia, to the rebels. Eventually this ship (rechristened CSS *Virginia* but still known in most histories as the *Merrimack*) was to be rebuilt above the waterline with sloping sides covered with iron plates—a process slowed by the Confederates' relative lack of iron foundries.

Meanwhile, early in the summer of 1861, Lincoln had already met with James B. Eads, an engineer and inventor from St. Louis, Missouri, who had ideas for an ironclad vessel to help the Union campaign along the Mississippi River. Eads brought a model to the president, "and they sat down together and discussed Western steamboats and flatboats and gun-boats, and they turned the thing inside out," wrote Lincoln's secretary William O. Stoddard. "It is the first model of a 'tin-clad' gunboat, . . . and the President has had more to do than most men are aware of with the beginnings of the Mississippi flotilla."[20] Eads had previously met obstructions as Welles sought to shift responsibility for river operations to the War Department, but some time after showing Lincoln his model, Eads signed a contract with the navy to build eight ironclad gunboats for use in the river war in the west.[21] Two years later, Eads sent Lincoln a photograph of the USS *St. Louis*, which Eads's accompanying letter called "the first armored vessel against which the *fire of a hostile battery* was directed on this continent; and . . . the first iron clad that *ever engaged* a *naval force in the world*" (original emphasis). Eads presented the picture, "assured that your identification with the interesting incidents of her history would make it acceptable."[22]

Reacting to Mallory's effort to clad the *Merrimack* with iron, Welles and assistant secretary Fox consulted with various department heads about building ironclads. "All were skeptical," according to Welles's biographer, so Welles decided to wait until Congress met in July, when he drafted a bill to approve not only an "ironclad board" to examine designs but also appropriations for constructing three experimental vessels.[23] Both houses approved, and Lincoln signed the bill on 4 August 1861. It is inconceivable that Welles arranged all this without Lincoln's prior approval.

To lobby the bill through committee, Welles had employed an old Connecticut friend, businessman Cornelius S. Bushnell, who now submitted one of the seventeen design proposals examined by the Ironclad Board. After the board criticized it, Bushnell contacted naval engineer John Ericsson, who showed him a model of an iron-hulled vessel he had designed five years earlier. Bushnell perceived the design's great virtues and began promoting it instead of his own. Bushnell's lobbyist instincts drove him along an indirect route back to the Ironclad Board via Welles, two New York iron contractors, Secretary of State William H. Seward, and President Lincoln.[24] Ericsson also wrote to Lincoln, assuring him he could construct a "vessel for the destruction of the rebel fleet at Norfolk," although it is not certain Lincoln ever saw this letter.[25] Bushnell himself explained Ericsson's proposal to Lincoln, who "was at once greatly pleased with the simplicity of the plan" and probably learned also that Ericsson's differences in the past with the Navy Department might cause prejudice against him and his revolutionary design. Backed up by information from Ericsson and the iron manufacturers, Bushnell was confident the vessel could be built within ninety days, far less time than other designs required. Lincoln knew that time was becoming precious as intelligence filtered in regarding the Confederates' progress with converting the *Merrimack*. According to Bushnell, the president "agreed to accompany us to the Navy Department . . . the following day, and aid us as best he could."[26]

Lincoln was not competent to judge any technical issues but probably feared the experts' reluctance to take a reasonable risk on something so radical. Bushnell recalled that the president "was on hand promptly at 11 o'clock" at the meeting, where all present "were surprised at the novelty of the plan." Some advised trying it; others ridiculed it. The conference ended with Lincoln's remark, "All I have to say is what the girl said when she put her foot into the stocking, 'It strikes me there's something in it.'" Lincoln avoided any pretense of expertise or any sign of giving an order, but his evident interest meant Ericsson's design could not be easily dismissed.[27]

Eventually, approval was given, and the USS *Monitor*'s delivery was contracted for no later than 12 January 1862, whereupon it was to head for Norfolk to sink what little there was of a Confederate fleet there and, in particular, to finish the job only half done before: the destruction of the *Merrimack*, which Northern experts assumed would still be in dry dock.[28] When the Confederates proved more efficient than expected, it was not only the rebel ironclad that demonstrated that the U.S. Navy was woefully behind times. Six weeks before the *Monitor* was scheduled for completion, a more severe threat arose—and not from the South but from Britain.

When Gray did not reply for over a month to his letter of 21 July, Darwin may have feared he had complained too stridently about Lincoln's inaction regarding slavery. The reply did finally arrive in mid-September, and Darwin was pleased not only by Gray's still friendly tone but even more by his reference to the respected head of the Smithsonian, Joseph Henry. In an earlier letter, Darwin had been unable to resist mentioning that John Stuart Mill had praised the inductive logic of *The Origin*, and Gray now responded, "What you say of *Mill* well accords with what Prof. Henry of Smithsonian Inst. says of your investigations, your method, &c, and he is the best judge of the logic of investigation I know of."[29]

Gray's letter, of which only one page survives, must have reflected on events following Bull Run. Darwin replied at length, addressing numerous points presumably brought up by Gray's "very long & interesting letter, political & scientific."

> I agree with much of what you say & I hope to God we English are utterly wrong in doubting (1) whether the N. can conquer the S. (2) whether the N. has many friends in the South & (3) whether your noble men of Massachusetts are right in transferring your own good feelings to the men of Washington. Again I say I hope to God we are wrong in doubting on these points. It is number (3) which alone causes England not to be enthusiastic with you. What it may be in Lancashire I know not, but in S. England cotton has nothing whatever to do with our doubts. If abolition does follow with your victory, the whole world will look brighter in my eyes & in many eyes. It would be a great gain even to stop the spread of Slavery into the Territories: if that be possible without abolition, which I should have doubted. You ought not to wonder so much at England's coldness, when you recollect at the commencement of the war how many propositions were made to get things back to the old state with the old line of Latitude. But enough of this: all I can say is that Massachusetts & the adjoining States have the full sympathy of every good man whom I see; & this sympathy would be extended to whole Federal states, if we could be persuaded that your feelings were at all common to them. But enough of this. It is out of my line, though I read every word of news & formerly well studied Olmsted.[30]

Hoping to God that "we English are utterly wrong," Darwin deferred to Gray's more direct understanding, while also expressing disagreement and the depth of his interest. Darwin was right that, were the war to end tomorrow, the Southern states could return to the Union with slavery still intact. Having thought about it seriously, Darwin wondered if a return to the status quo ante bellum would mean the Republicans could even achieve their narrower goal of preventing the extension of slavery.

Gray's letter apparently alluded to the notion widespread in America that Britain was likely to support Southern independence in order to gain unfettered access to the cotton crop so vital to the wealth of Lancashire mill owners. While Darwin admitted uncertainty about attitudes in Lancashire, he felt confident that

England in general was not motivated by greed. Confederates certainly hoped the British would be driven by their hunger for cotton into recognizing their country and opening direct trade, with profits from cotton sales used to purchase arms for the rebel armies. Lincoln was probably as aware as most Southerners that during the American Revolution, the colonists' ability to purchase French arms had been crucial to the Revolution's success—and that Robert E. Lee's great-uncle Arthur Lee had been the colonies' first agent for negotiating arms deals with Pierre-Augustin Beaumarchais.[31]

Lincoln's method for interdicting Confederate trade has received much criticism, which originated during cabinet infighting over which policy to follow. Those whose advice Lincoln did not heed (especially Welles) later contended that Lincoln had made a grave mistake.[32] In fact, Lincoln's approach to the problem was calculating and subtle.

First, Lincoln collected data by asking Welles "what amount of Naval force you could at once place at the control of the Revenue service. And also, whether at some distance of time you could so place an additional force; and how much? and at what time."[33] Determining that there were far too few ships for any *effective* control in the *near* future, Lincoln saw that his two main options could not be differentiated solely on the basis of likely effectiveness. Congress could pass laws closing Southern ports, but the Confederates would not obey them, and Lincoln had too few ships to implement the laws. Alternatively, Lincoln as commander-in-chief could declare a blockade, but that was internationally recognized as act of war that would technically elevate to the status of "foreign enemy" the people Lincoln always maintained were U.S. citizens in rebellion—and he also lacked the force to effect an offshore blockade. Through Secretary of State Seward, Lincoln obtained the opinion of the British ambassador, Lord Lyons, that Britain was more likely to respect an international blockade than any domestic legislation (as required for a port closure) that failed to acknowledge that an actual war existed.[34]

"The President said we could not afford to have two wars on our hands at once," Welles recalled, but the navy secretary remained bitter about this decision for years, blaming Seward and arguing that the Proclamation of a Blockade on 19 April was the main cause for Britain's decision, three days after learning of the blockade, to issue a Proclamation of Neutrality that acknowledged the Confederacy as a "belligerent" and might be the first step toward full diplomatic recognition.[35] But Welles was wrong, and Lincoln and Seward were right: avoiding war with Britain outweighed all issues of trade, the status of the conflict as "war" or "insurrection," the legitimacy of the Confederacy, and even the risk of foreign recognition of the Confederacy.

Lincoln's carefully worded blockade proclamation "deemed it advisable to set on foot a blockade of the ports within the States aforesaid, in pursuance of the laws of the United States and of the law of nations in such case provided."[36] "To set on foot" was a quiet admission that the blockade could not immediately be “effective.” The cleverness of this move is that the proclamation gave the appearance of strong action but would not reduce the flow of cotton for a long time, thus postponing the moment when Britain would feel the stress of a cotton shortage. Lincoln was aware that as that stress grew, the British cabinet would feel more inclined to make some intervention, either to reopen trade with the South by force or at least demand a right to intervene as a mediator. Lincoln wanted neither and was buying crucial time.

Congressman Thaddeus Stevens chided Lincoln for issuing a proclamation under international law that in effect recognized the Confederacy. “I don’t know anything about the law of nations,” Lincoln replied. “I’m a good enough lawyer in a western law court, but we don’t practice the law of nations up there, and I supposed Seward knew all about it, and I left it to him. But it’s done now and can’t be helped, so we must get along as well as we can.”[37] This combination of self-deprecation, shifting blame or credit to Seward, avoiding a genuine explanation, and joking at the expense of the humorless Stevens, is pure Lincoln. What remains unknown is whether Lincoln’s intelligent analysis foresaw either of two actions by the Confederate government that followed closely upon the blockade decision. One was Jefferson Davis’s announcement that he would issue letters of marque so that the virtually nonexistent Confederate navy could be supplemented with privateers. Lincoln promptly responded that the so-called privateers would be considered pirates, liable to hanging. The news of the blockade, the privateers, and Lincoln’s promise to hang them reached London together and only shortly after the news of Fort Sumter arrived. The British government had to consider its position in view of what was now an actual war. The privateer issue alone was sufficient to force the decision that, as historian Stuart Anderson explains, “since only a belligerent could legally send privateers to sea, Great Britain either had to recognize the South as a belligerent or treat Southern privateers as pirates.”[38] Consequently, on 13 May, the British government was forced, more by Davis than Lincoln, to issue the Queen’s Proclamation of Neutrality acknowledging the belligerent status of both sides.

Many Americans—including Asa Gray—were offended that the British government had gone so far. What Lincoln and Seward feared and Davis hoped was that the British might take the next step and fully recognize the Confederate government, receiving its envoys publicly and according them diplomatic status. But the British had done what they had to do and went no further, for the moment.

The second action by the Confederates was intended to hasten the involvement of Britain and France. Grasping that Lincoln’s “set-on-foot” blockade would not in the short term impede cotton exportation, the Confederates decided to impede it themselves: the sooner the Europeans felt the pinch, the sooner they would take steps to break the blockade. By August, cotton merchants in the major Southern ports, prohibited from exporting their goods, were refusing to receive further consignments from the interior. Thus, it was the South rather than the North that created the shortage of cotton in the mills in Europe. The South had blundered into a step it would hugely regret and struggle to reverse a few months later.[39]

The men of Lancashire had little reason to blame Lincoln for the shortage of cotton when it finally occurred. And as Darwin had told Gray—before that shortage had yet developed—"cotton has nothing whatever to do with our doubts."

15

The Trent *Affair: A Chemistry Problem*

Asa Gray's letter dated 9 November 1861 dealt mainly with botanical matters but closed with optimistic hopes about Captain Samuel F. du Pont's naval expedition to capture Port Royal on the coast of South Carolina. At the time, Gray could not know that the expedition had already proved successful or that on the previous day an entirely separate naval action would have results that were potentially disastrous. Darwin's reply on 11 December began (after thanks for previous letters): "What a thing it is, that when you receive this we may be at war, & we two be bound, as good patriots, to hate each other, though I shall find this hating you very hard work."[1]

On 27 November, the day after Gray's letter had arrived, the London newspapers broke the news of "The *Trent* Affair"—which brought Britain and America closer to war than they had been since the Queen's Proclamation in May had recognized the South as a "belligerent."[2] Darwin could soon learn all the background in the *Times*. Following the Queen's Proclamation, the three Confederate envoys then in Europe hoped they would soon be accorded full diplomatic recognition and could begin coordinating plans with Britain for formal trade agreements and a speedy breaking of Lincoln's blockade. When none of that happened, the Confederate government replaced the failed envoys with two possessing greater status and experience, James M. Mason and John Slidell.

These were prestige appointments and well publicized. Word leaked—or was planted—that the new envoys would run the blockade from Charleston, South Carolina, aboard a Confederate warship, CSS *Nashville*, but for various reasons, they used other vessels. Eventually, the envoys reached Havana, where they planned to depart on the next British packet on 7 November.

While Mason and Slidell were privately entertained by the diplomatic corps in Cuba, a U.S. warship, the *San Jacinto*, arrived off the coast. Ordered to return from a station on the African coast in order to participate in the attack on Port Royal (about which Asa Gray had boasted to Darwin), the *San Jacinto*'s captain, Charles Wilkes, on reaching Cuba, heard about the hunt for the envoys and eventually discovered not only the date of their planned departure but also which vessel they would use, the *Trent*. Gray and Darwin probably recognized Wilkes's name when it appeared in the newspapers, for he had formerly commanded an American version of the *Beagle* voyage, the United States Exploration Expedition.

Wilkes waylaid the *Trent* in international waters and sent a boarding party to search for Confederate dispatches (which, as "contraband," would give Wilkes legal justification, he hoped). No dispatches were found (though they were there), but the two envoys and their secretaries were removed from the *Trent* before it was allowed to continue its voyage to Britain. By 15 November, Wilkes had conveyed the captives to the United States, but the British government, although aware that the U.S. Navy had hoped to capture the envoys, did not learn of their seizure from a British vessel until 27 November.

"How curious it is," Darwin continued in his 11 December letter to Gray, "to see two countries, just like two angry & silly men, taking so opposite a view of the same transaction! So far as I can see we rest entirely on Wilkes' acting as Judge." Darwin had obviously read his *Times* carefully. One passenger from the *Trent* reported that the officer commanding the boarding party had been heard to say that Wilkes was not acting under any specific orders, but the British newspapers emphasized that, according to the British government, Wilkes had not followed the correct procedure: to make any seizures from a neutral ship, he should have taken the vessel as a "prize" to some port where a court could decide the fate of the ship, its crew, passengers, cargo, and mails. Wilkes had instead acted as his own judge, probably concluding that procedures mattered less than capturing Mason and Slidell with minimal inconvenience to the *Trent*'s other passengers.

The news caused a storm in Britain. An emergency cabinet meeting determined that Wilkes had violated international law, and on 30 November, a letter was drafted and sent to the British ambassador in Washington for presentation to the American government. Up until 2 December, the *Times* had dismissed the report that Wilkes was not acting under orders and blamed the warmongering Secretary of State William H. Seward for causing this crisis. The contents of the official letter were not yet published, but judging from the reports that the British government had ordered ten thousand troops to be sent to Canada, Darwin guessed correctly that the letter was an ultimatum that the United States either release the envoys or accept war.

It would probably take a month before Britain would know the American response to the ultimatum, but there was naturally hope that Wilkes's superiors had by now recognized his blunder and released the envoys. Darwin held off replying to Gray's letter.

On 4 December, Darwin could read in the *Times* William Howard Russell's dispatch (written on 19 November) describing the jubilation that swept through America at the news of the envoys' capture.[3] In another dispatch printed on 10 December, Russell described the hysterical joy caused by this Union "victory" in the face of so many Union defeats. Two traitors had been captured, the British Lion's tail had been twisted, and Wilkes was the hero of the hour. Russell interviewed various foreign dignitaries and American officials who believed Wilkes's action violated international law, but he also saw "so much violence of spirit among the lower orders of the people . . . saturated with pride and vanity" that if Lincoln's government attempted "any honorable concession," such as releasing the prisoners, it "would prove fatal to its authors."

When young Henry Adams, the secretary and also son of the American ambassador in London, read Russell's dispatches, he wrote to his brother in America, exclaiming, "Good God, what's got into you all? What in Hell do you mean by deserting now the great principles of our fathers . . . ? You're mad, all of you."[4] Two days earlier, Darwin's similar distress caused a temporary loss of the sympathy:

> I fear there is no shadow of doubt we shall fight, if the two Southern rogues are not given up. And what a wretched thing it will be, if we fight on side of slavery. No doubt it will be said we fight to get cotton; but I fully believe that this has not entered into the motive in the least. Well, thank Heaven we private individuals, have nothing to do with so awful a responsibility. Again how curious it is that you seem to think that you can conquer the south; & I never meet a soul, even those who would most wish it, who thinks it possible, that is to conquer & retain it. I do not suppose the mass of people in your country will believe it; but I feel sure if we do go to war, it will be with the utmost reluctance by all classes, ministers of government & all. Time will show, & it is no use writing or thinking about it.[5]

Darwin could then put the matter aside and turn to the science that bonded himself and Gray, but Lincoln had no such option and had already spent nearly a month "thinking about it." When news of Wilkes's action reached Lincoln on 16 November, he made no snap decision about how to proceed. Congress was not in session, there was no sudden emergency cabinet meeting, and Russell of the *Times* recorded "reticence" at both the State Department and the British legation—while American lawyers rummaged for arguments to justify Wilkes.[6]

Sources of varying reliability reported that Lincoln immediately recognized that Wilkes was in the wrong and the envoys would have to be released.[7] That view, however, was opposed by a later and semi-official view largely accepted by historians: that Lincoln's cabinet had to talk a reluctant president into handing back the envoys.

Lincoln the lawyer probably soon discovered that international law on such matters was thoroughly muddled.[8] Considering this low degree of legal certainty and high degree of popular joy, Lincoln would have been foolish to release the envoys sooner rather than later, after the euphoria had begun to subside. Perhaps as lawyers began to quibble, the legality of Wilkes's move would become less widely assumed in America; or the British, remembering their own past sins, might not press a claim that, apart from upholding some dubious legal principle, would gain them nothing but two extra Confederate emissaries. Possibly, the British would appreciate Wilkes's sea-dog spirit, or his courtesy in letting the *Trent* finish her voyage, or that, prior to the incident, he had been patrolling the African coast alongside British squadrons trying to suppress the Atlantic slave trade. Lincoln's best course was to wait for the British response while saying nothing that might make it even more unpopular to hand over Mason and Slidell should that become necessary. If the worst happened and Britain made angry demands, Lincoln had to avoid the appearance of kowtowing while he weighed the risk of war.

Lincoln knew that the Royal Navy already possessed iron-hulled warships, such as HMS *Warrior*, while the U.S. Navy would not have even one until January, if Ericsson kept to schedule. The Royal Navy had the capability to bombard American ports more or less with impunity and to turn Lincoln's blockade of the South into Britain's blockade of the North. Yet, it seemed unlikely that Britain would resort to violence merely to maintain an uncertain maritime principle and liberate two unsavory slave owners. Lincoln soon discovered, however, that the British had other options.

Seven months earlier, Captain John A. Dahlgren had suggested to Lincoln that if the war was not brief, there could be a problem maintaining an adequate supply of niter.[9] In May 1861, Captain du Pont had learned from his cousin Henry du Pont that the family's gunpowder company—the largest supplier to the Union army—possessed only six months' supply of niter, imported from British India. Speculators in Boston and New York were buying up stocks hoping for large profits as prices rose. This information was passed along until the army, possessing 3.8 million pounds of niter accumulated during the Mexican-American War, decided there was no cause for alarm (even though that degradable material was a dozen years old), and the matter was dropped.[10]

Bull Run changed everything: the price of niter began increasing rapidly in October, and this time, Captain du Pont raised the issue with Assistant Secretary of the Navy Gustavus V. Fox, a close adviser of the president.[11] Fox conferred with Lincoln, and action was taken far above the level of ordnance chiefs. Henry du Pont was summoned for a meeting on 30 October with both Secretary of the War Simon Cameron and Seward. They decided to send Lammot du Pont, Henry's thirty-year-old nephew, to London urgently to purchase vast quantities of niter, avoiding suspicions (and higher prices) by pretending not to be purchasing for the U.S. government.[12] Seward now became Lammot's high-level minder and no doubt kept Lincoln fully informed. Within two days, Lammot had a passport, and he arrived in London on 17 November. This was ten days before London learned about the seizure of Mason and Slidell, by which time Americans had already been celebrating for twelve days.[13]

While Southerners joyfully assumed the "*Trent* Affair" would at last bring Britain into the war, Bostonians held a public banquet on 28 November to honor Captain Wilkes, and Lincoln could read the *New York Times*' paraphrase of Wilkes's speech asserting the legality of his action by declaring that "bearers of dispatches were the very embodiment of contraband."[14] Lincoln no doubt dismissed Wilkes's wishful thinking and felt appalled by Wilkes's naive description of the South as a "belligerent"—exactly what Lincoln's government formally denied. Lincoln probably enjoyed the rest of the article even less, for it quoted two prominent Massachusetts judges proclaiming that international law was on America's side—which Lincoln knew was doubtful at best. Later that day, Lincoln held a previously scheduled cabinet meeting, but what had not been scheduled were the two letters sent out the following day, 30 November, by Seward and Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles.[15]

During the previous fortnight, while others wined and dined the heroic Wilkes, Lincoln had made no public comment, Welles had given no official reaction to Wilkes's behavior, and Seward had offered no explanation to the British government. Now, while Lincoln remained mute, Welles sent Wilkes a congratulatory letter (swiftly leaked to the press) praising the officer's "intelligence, ability, decision, and firmness" and declaring that his conduct "has the emphatic approval of this department" but adding a firm warning to Wilkes that his action "must not be permitted to constitute a precedent hereafter for [handling British] infraction of neutral obligations."[16]

The letter sounded nothing like an attempt to appease Britain, yet the British cabinet might note that "department" approval was not government approval and that the ambiguous "warning" at least implied there had been no prior authorization for Wilkes's action—the very point also conveyed to the British through a letter Seward now sent to his ambassador in London. When that official message reached London two weeks later, it caused great relief. But, of course, the day that Seward wrote his official letter, 30 November, was the same day the British government had dispatched to Washington its letter, expressing the hope that Wilkes had acted without authorization but nevertheless containing an ultimatum: whether or not Wilkes acted alone, if the envoys were not released now, it would mean war.

While those two letters were passing each other on the Atlantic, Lincoln faced the problem that Congress would reassemble on 2 December. He was obliged to submit a written address about current affairs, and senators and congressmen might exacerbate the situation in their rush to place their praise for Wilkes on the record, especially when they saw that the president's wide-ranging address made absolutely no reference to the *Trent* Affair. But instead of a free-for-all of representatives outdoing each other's panegyrics, with Democrats leading the way in order to flush out the mysteriously silent president, one Republican congressman immediately proposed a moderately worded joint resolution (which, avoiding any reference to "seizure," "envoys," "contraband," "belligerents," or "international law," might have been describing an arrest on some American street), and another Republican congressman immediately suggested an appalling amendment—giving Wilkes a gold medal and calling Mason and Slidell "ambassadors." This amendment became the sole focus of debate before it was cheerfully voted down and the original resolution swiftly approved. Lincoln's possible role is suggested by the fact that the original proposer was Owen Lovejoy, later described by Lincoln as "the best friend I had in Congress," while the ludicrous amendment was moved by Sidney Edgerton, subsequently appointed by Lincoln to a judgeship in Idaho and later the governorship of Montana Territory. In the senate two days later, Republican Senator John P. Hale moved that the proposal for the joint resolution be referred to the Committee on Naval Affairs, which he chaired. The resolution did not reemerge until February, when it was "postponed indefinitely."[17]

On the day Hale buried the resolution in committee, 13 December, American newspapers contained the first information from British newspapers about London's reaction to the seizure of Mason and Slidell, which was basically furious. But Seward and Lincoln would be particularly worried by a financial report reprinted from the London *Times* of 28 November: the news of the "aggression" produced "an indescribable effect" on the London Exchange, "the market for saltpetre had been singularly affected by some recent transactions" by buyers acting for the federal government, and it was "now assumed to be likely" that the British Government would immediately prohibit the export "of such contraband of war"—perhaps including the large quantities of rifles that hitherto had been shipped to the United States under the designation "hardware."[18]

Lincoln now knew that the incensed British, without threatening war, a diplomatic rupture, or recognition of the Confederacy, could exert enormous pressure on the United States by simply preventing the departure of all that niter that Lammot du Pont had been sent to purchase.[19] It was unpleasant to contemplate the political damage to Lincoln if he was forced to release Mason and Slidell simply because the British had such control over the world's supply of niter. The hope that Lammot du Pont had already shipped his purchases before the embargo was implemented was soon dashed: immediately after the prohibition began on 30 November, Lammot must have sent a message to his uncle Henry du Pont, who informed Seward on 13 December.[20]

Lincoln and Seward recognized that unless the British lifted the prohibition, the Union could not defeat the South, let alone fight the British. They would have to comply with almost any demand the British made regarding Mason and Slidell. The hope remained that the British cabinet might swiftly lift the embargo when—any day now—it learned officially via Ambassador Adams that Wilkes's action had been unauthorized. But within two more days, further press reports made clear that the British had sent some sort of ultimatum and also that they had been further enraged when they received the reports of the celebrations for Wilkes. The *New York Times* reported on England's preparations for war: a large vessel being loaded with Armstrong guns, eighty thousand Enfield rifles and ammunition, and ten thousand troops to be sent to Canada. The same newspaper also carried a British press report: "The export of saltpetre and warlike stores was formally prohibited. It was stated that one ship with a cargo of saltpetre for America has been stopped, and that the relanding of warlike stores, already shipped, had been required."[21]

The challenge now was how to make the best of this dire situation and avoid the appearance that Lincoln's government lacked courage and unity of purpose—never easy with the touchy and ambitious egos in the administration. Cabinet members, the newspapers, and the people all needed time to be acclimated to an eventual decision without being entirely informed about its necessity. Fortunately, the month-old ecstasy about Wilkes was subsiding, while the stark threat of war with Britain was sobering.

Lincoln's old friend Senator Orville Hickman Browning was visiting him on 15 December when "Mr. Seward came in with dispatches stating that the British cabinet had decided that the arrest of Mason and Slidell was a violation of international law, and that we must apologize and restore them to the protections of the British flag." These "dispatches" were not yet official, and Browning believed the British would not do "so foolish a thing," yet he told Lincoln and Seward that if Britain "is determined to force a war upon us why so be it. We will fight her to the death."[22] Lincoln or Seward were not likely to say anything about the niter situation in front of Browning, who made no mention of it in his diary. Indeed, far from rebuking Browning's rash talk, Seward echoed it the next evening at a social event to which the London *Times* correspondent had been invited. Russell found Seward "in very good humour," pointing out to "all who were inclined to listen how terrible the effects of a war would be if Great Britain forced it on the United States. 'We will wrap the whole world in flames!' he exclaimed. 'No power so remote that she will not feel the fire of our battle and be burned by our conflagration.'" Russell was naturally alarmed—until someone told him, "That's all bugaboo talk. When Seward talks that way he means to break down. He is most dangerous and obstinate when he pretends to agree a good deal with you." The following evening, Seward found some excuse to invite Russell to dinner, where "Mr. Seward was in the best spirits, and told one or two rather long, but very pleasant, stories"—a contrast Russell considered "not intelligible."[23]

Seward was good humored because the month-long uncertainty was now over. He and Lincoln knew they had no options, and, ironically, Britain's serious threat of war made everything easier than it would have been if the British had simply trumpeted the niter prohibition. Caving in to the British so they might lift the prohibition would give the administration's opponents reason to denounce not only its incompetence in not securing adequate niter supplies in advance but also its vulnerability should Britain yank this particular leash again in the future. But the actual threat of war—which could be depicted as British opportunism during America's national crisis—simply made the British appear unreasonably belligerent and Lincoln's appeasement seem serenely sensible. Besides, a war with Britain would kill any chance of defeating the Southern rebels—and all for the sake of keeping one pair of them behind bars.

Those who at first reacted like Browning, blustering defiantly while thinking the British were bluffing, calmed down as it became clear that the British seemed prepared to resort to arms to uphold a principle. Of course, Lincoln and Seward knew that Britain had no need either to bluff or to resort to arms. By 19 December, Seward learned from Britain's ambassador, Lord Lyons, that the newspaper reports were largely accurate about his government's demands, that the government wished to avoid conflict and to believe Wilkes had acted without instructions and against traditional U.S. policy, and that he, Lyons, was privately instructed to divulge the ultimatum's contents a few days before giving official notification, allowing Seward more time to respond than the official seven-day deadline.[24]

Seward's phony blustering in front of Russell on 16 December was the beginning of a campaign to shape the public impression of the administration's decision making in order to minimize the potentially disastrous political effects of the inevitable release of the two envoys.

On 18 December, Lincoln and Seward visited the Navy Yard, whose commandant, Dahlgren, having "never seen the President or Mr. Seward more quiet or grave," understood the cause: "The British affair seems to weigh on them." While Dahlgren's visitors were tight-lipped, their message was being spread by others. On the same day, John W. Forney, a journalist close to Lincoln and called "Lincoln's dog" by the president's opponents, editorialized in his *Philadelphia Press* that war with Britain would be a disaster and that Mason and Slidell should be released. "We must yield every feeling of pride to maintain our existence."[25] The following day, the *New York Times* reported that at the previous day's cabinet meeting, it was agreed that the government "has no right to give new life to the rebellion by entering upon another and vaster quarrel, which at the same time would increase tenfold the burden upon the people of the North," while the *New York Evening Post* (whose editor, William Cullen Bryant, was a staunch supporter of Lincoln) ran an item mentioning casually that the nation's stocks of niter were "sufficient for all emergencies."[26] Seward and Lincoln, who probably supplied that information, knew otherwise. At some point, Seward must have asked Captain Dahlgren whether niter could be obtained from non-British sources, though he probably knew what the reply would be and had perhaps even received it long before 26 December when Dahlgren put the discouraging information in a letter.[27] Meanwhile, Lincoln and Seward exploited Lord Lyons's willingness to delay the formal presentation of the ultimatum so they could prepare the ground. It was probably no accident that the announcement of the envoys' release eventually fell in the week between Christmas and New Year.

On 21 December, Russell of the *Times* recorded in his diary a story related by "an old Treasury official the other day." Lincoln reportedly exclaimed, "I would sooner die than give them up!" The reply was, "Mr. President, your death would be a great loss, but the destruction of the United States would be a still more deplorable event."[28] Thus, with no reference to the facts that Wilkes acted improperly and that the niter embargo tied their hands, Lincoln and Seward were presenting the problem as a stark choice between permanent destruction of the old Union and temporary humiliation for a proud president reluctant to cave in.

On the same day, Senator Browning recorded a conversation with Lincoln, who said that "he feared trouble" with the British.[29] Lincoln told Browning he had already drafted a reply to the British demand for a swift apology and surrender of Mason and Slidell. He then read to Browning a draft letter to Lord Lyons proposing some third-party arbitration—which may at one time have made sense as a delaying tactic but no longer.[30] Nevertheless, Browning could now tell anyone who asked that the situation was grim but the president was dealing with it rationally: no rash defiance but also no backing down. Again, there was no mention of niter.

The idea of arbitration may have been proposed to Lincoln by Charles Sumner, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who had seen the president "almost daily and most intimately ever since the 'Trent' question has been under discussion." Sumner's own views on the *Trent* Affair were undergoing change. According to an early biographer, "sympathizing strongly with the American feeling that Captain Wilkes had won a great triumph . . . , [Sumner] was at first desirous of upholding him; but whether through the influence of Seward and Lincoln, or by reason of his own research . . . he speedily saw that this position was untenable."[31]

The day after showing the arbitration proposal to Browning, Lincoln told Sumner, "There will be no war unless England is bent upon having one." Before the crisis was resolved, Sumner wrote privately to a friend, "The President himself will apply his own mind carefully to every word of the answer, so that it will be essentially his; and he hopes for peace," and that although Sumner had earlier proposed arbitration to Lincoln, "in her present mood England will not arbitrate. . . . Seward is tranquil and confident." But after the crisis, Sumner explained to his British friend, the opposition politician John Bright, that "it was necessary that the case be decided at once. Its pendency caused a paralysis upon all our naval and military movements against the rebellion, which gave us a foretaste of the certain effect of a British war." Sumner's term "paralysis" may reflect some understanding that gunpowder could not be wasted until the British reopened the niter supply line—which would certainly not happen if war actually broke out with Britain. Whatever Lincoln told him, Sumner had—by his own account written on 24 December—already discussed with Lincoln the fact that a war with England would have the Royal Navy "sponging" American ships off the ocean and blockading Northern ports and the British government recognizing, trading with, and soon allying with the South.[32]

Meanwhile, Lincoln and Seward finally stopped stalling Lyons and accepted the formal presentation of the British government's demands on 23 December—probably a week since the two men had been fully apprised of them. Lyons's immediate report to his superiors included some remarkable perceptions:

> You will perhaps be surprised to find Mr. Seward on the side of peace. . . . He sees himself in a very painful dilemma. But he knows his countrymen[:] . . . if he can convince them that there is a real danger of war, they may forgive him for the humiliation of yielding to England, while it would be fatal to him to be the author of a disastrous foreign war.

Lyons added that while he could not predict how Seward would eventually act, Seward wished to avoid letting "the President and Cabinet throw the whole burden on his shoulders."[33]

Many members of Congress were now dispersing for the Christmas holiday, and whatever Lincoln decided upon during their absence would become slightly old news by the time they reassembled. The problem was that no cabinet member wished to be isolated from the rest or to bear "the whole burden"—including Lincoln. He especially did not wish to give the ambitious Secretary of Treasury Salmon P. Chase an opportunity later to accuse him of ill judgment, or ignoring cabinet advice, or simply ignoring Chase's advice. It was entirely in Lincoln's interest, therefore, to continue the charade that he himself was being forced by others—almost against his will and certainly against his inclination—to hand over Mason and Slidell.

Also on 23 December, Lincoln held various conferences with Seward, Welles, Chase, and Sumner. Seward could show a letter received two days earlier from Ambassador Adams, indicating that Britain was fully prepared, however reluctantly, to go to war, which was confirmed by Sumner's letters from two sympathetic British politicians. The following day, a letter from the American ambassador in Paris emphasized French support for the British position.[34]

On Christmas Day, Lincoln convened a cabinet meeting that lasted four hours. At the end, it was decided to meet again the following day. This holdover gave the appearance that Lincoln was undecided, which is not credible. Seward led the discussion, and there is no reason to think he differed with Lincoln on essentials. Neither appears to have brought up the subjects of arbitration or niter.

Little credence should be given to an account written half a century later by Seward's son and secretary, Frederick Seward, who was not present at the two conversations between Lincoln and Seward that he recounted. Both conversations occurred after the other cabinet members had left the room and, as Seward must have described them to his son, depicted Lincoln still hoping to find a way to avoid surrendering the envoys and Seward still laboring to convince him there was no alternative.[35] Whether Seward misled his son or his son simply remembered the tale Seward was spinning for everyone, it is inconceivable that either Lincoln or Seward doubted the necessity of surrendering Mason and Slidell. It is more likely that Seward and Lincoln thought they could more easily bring the other cabinet members on board if they were allowed to believe their support was necessary to move the president in the right direction.

Welles wrote a decade later that Seward started out by taking "high and untenable ground" but then inexplicably "lost heart and courage, and [became] provokingly submissive to British exactions." Welles also suggested that Seward then joined Lincoln and Postmaster General Montgomery Blair in wishing to release the two envoys. Attorney General Edward Bates, whose diary provides the best firsthand account of the 25–26 December cabinet meetings, summarized Seward's argument that surrendering Mason and Slidell was the only way to avoid war. At some point, Sumner was invited in to read out letters recently received from two British members of Parliament, urging the release of Mason and Slidell.[36] No source indicates who invited Sumner, but Lincoln, who often conferred with Sumner, is more likely than Seward, who saw Sumner as something of a rival. Still, since everyone feared Congress's eventual reaction, having the Foreign Relations Committee chairman on board made sense; and his letters from British friends served Seward's purposes.[37]

Sumner left the 25 December meeting confident that "the immediate pending question will be settled," and that evening Lincoln told Browning that the cabinet had agreed not to divulge anything—"and there would be no war with England."[38] If Sumner and Lincoln were both expressing confidence that war would be avoided, then they, like Seward and Blair and probably Bates, accepted that the prisoners would have to be released. *Why, then, was there any need for another meeting on 26 December?* Perhaps further effort was needed to bring Chase on board so he could not later claim to have stood by the people and justice and so on while the rest of the cabinet trembled when the British Lion growled.

Seward's daughter Fanny recorded in her diary on 26 December that "this morning Father read his wise & beautiful dispatch to England." Whether this was the final twenty-six-page version delivered the following day to Lord Lyons is unknown, but the scene suggests Seward was confident of Lincoln's approval. Fanny's next sentence reads: "sec. Chase called & he read it to him."[39] Perhaps this helped to enlist Chase's assistance in overcoming any argument for delay, knowing the dire effect the crisis was having on Chase's ability to raise loans to fund the war. Possibly, Seward mentioned to Chase, ingenuously or not, the subject of Lincoln's earlier thoughts on arbitration or promoted the view (which he certainly promoted later) that Lincoln was still trying to avoid releasing Mason and Slidell. Seward's best approach would be to appeal to Chase's ego, as if only Chase's voice could change stubborn minds in the cabinet to support the necessary step—with Lincoln depicted as the main recalcitrant.

Whether his private meeting with Seward made the difference, Chase wrote a long passage into his diary, ostensibly after the first cabinet meeting on Christmas Day but probably after the final meeting the next day. It was a justification for the step he may have refused to take at the previous session. The entry supposedly recorded his "remarks" to the cabinet, yet it had the tone of a pronouncement.

> But we cannot afford delays. While the matter hangs in uncertainty the public mind will remain disquieted, our commerce will suffer serious harm, our action against the rebels must be greatly hindered, and the restoration of our prosperity . . . must be delayed. Better, then, to make now the sacrifice of feeling involved in the surrender of these rebels than even avoid it by the delays which explanations must occasion. I give my adhesion, therefore to the conclusion at which the secretary of state has arrived.[40]

At the cabinet meeting on 26 December, unanimous agreement was reached. Bates recorded in his diary no individual's arguments but an apparent summing up: "the necessity of the case," war with England meant abandoning all hope of suppressing the rebellion, Britain's maritime superiority "would sweep us from all the southern waters," trade will be ruined, the treasury will be bankrupt. It was probably Chase who raised those last two points. Bates concluded his record, "There was great reluctance on the part of some of the members of the cabinet—and even the President himself—to acknowledge these obvious truths; but all yielded to the necessity, and unanimously concurred in Mr. Seward's letter."[41]

Missing from every account of the cabinet discussions is the subject that must have weighed heavily with Lincoln and Seward: the niter embargo. Historian Arthur D. Chandler made a fascinating argument over fifty years ago that the niter shortage played some role in these deliberations, and more-recent works support this view.[42]

After his niter-purchasing mission had been halted by the British prohibition, young Lammot du Pont caught a ship for America on 7 December. Evidence suggests he spent Christmas Day at his home in Delaware, but the next day he was certainly in Washington writing a letter addressed to Seward, presumably at Seward's request. The letter summarized Lammot's activities of the past few weeks and was endorsed as received by the State Department the same day, 26 December.[43]

Chandler argued that since Seward himself already knew the details, the letter was written "in order to give the Cabinet first hand information on the nitre purchases and the embargo" and to give Seward "an effective means of bringing Lincoln and most of the Cabinet to his more pacific way of thinking." But this is unlikely since no one recorded any cabinet discussion of niter, and more recent studies have suggested that Lammot met with Seward during some interval between sessions of that day's decisive cabinet meeting and may not have written the letter until *after* the decision had already been agreed in cabinet.[44] Moreover, since Lammot sailed from England on 7 December, he should have reached America long before Christmas. A confidential agent on a vital government mission would not head home, even for Christmas, without first reporting to the man who sent him, Secretary Seward. There is indirect evidence that at whatever point Lammot met with Seward, Lammot also met with Lincoln, for Lammot's aunt later recounted that her nephew "never saw two more worn down, haggard, worried-looking men."[45] Having probably reported to Washington some days earlier, when Lammot came to the capital on 26 December, it was not to provide new information but to receive fresh instructions.

Cabinet unity had been achieved, but the niter problem remained. Perhaps it was in order to maintain the fiction that Lammot's purchases were not for the government that his 26 December letter included a request that the secretary of state instruct Ambassador Adams in London to do what he could toward having the embargo lifted. Before that day ended, Seward not only handed Lord Lyons his formal twenty-six-page reply to the British demands but also gave Lammot a letter to carry to Ambassador Adams, instructing him to take action "for the relief of E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Co." regarding the niter shipment.[46]

The news of the cabinet decision hit the newspapers, and instead of uproar, there was a general sigh of relief from press, people, and even Congress. Mason and Slidell were quietly put on board a ship on New Year's Day—the same day that Lammot du Pont began another voyage to London. On 13 January 1862, Lammot wrote back that the niter embargo would probably be lifted within a week, and indeed it was on the eighteenth. The first of the reloaded ships sailed on 2 February, arriving a fortnight later. So few people were informed of the operation that even Chief of Ordnance General James W. Ripley said he knew no more about the shipments than what he read in the newspapers.[47]

The resolution of the *Trent* Affair was played out on a very public stage but far behind the scenes only a handful of people—Lincoln, Seward, the du Ponts, Dahlgren, and, perhaps, the British cabinet—knew that the outcome was largely determined by niter. Although the supply had been resumed, Lincoln understood that until some alternative source was found, the United States remained vulnerable. On the same day that Seward gave the formal letter to Lord Lyons, Lincoln delivered an order (rather than his accustomed request) to General Ripley to purchase ten thousand Spencer repeating rifles—which might yet be needed for a war on two fronts unless a solution was found for Lincoln's chemical problem.[48]

Less than a month after the *Trent* Affair seemed to be over, Lincoln was arranging congressional approval for a reorganization that placed Dahlgren in complete charge of research and development at the Navy Yard, with an assistant to handle administrative duties.[49] Dahlgren realized that the supply of niter was still a major concern. The spring and summer campaigns in 1862 brought the Union more defeats than victories and used up much of the niter brought from England in February. Most of what remained was under the army's control, while the navy needed more as blockade duties increased and a new threat developed from Confederate warships built in British shipyards—which might yet lead to war with Britain. Dahlgren made new arrangements: Henry du Pont was to make further indirect purchases in London and Calcutta; Welles was asked to approve the construction of storage facilities; a U.S. naval officer was sent to Yokohama in July to send back samples of possible Japanese sources of niter; and on 27 July, advertisements appeared in newspapers requesting bids from companies for domestic sources of niter.[50]

On 7 August, Seward and Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton accompanied Lincoln to the Navy Yard to observe Dahlgren's tests of a new "Rafael" machine gun that, despite using standard paper cartridges, could fire forty shots in twenty seconds, and it would be surprising if the event did not stimulate a discussion of the long-term problem of the supply of niter.[51] About a week later, a possible solution arose when Lincoln received a visit from an old acquaintance from Springfield.[52] Isaac R. Diller had briefly served as consul in Germany where he met chemist Heinrich Hochstätter, who had developed a gunpowder that relied on a chlorate instead of niter. Now acting as an agent, Diller wanted the secret formula to be tested in a way that would not negate future patent rights. Lincoln understood the motivation and sent Diller—carrying notes from the president—to Dahlgren and also to David P. Holloway, the commissioner at the Patent Office, who was asked to allow Dr. Charles M. Wetherill, the only chemist employed by the federal government, to work with Diller.[53] On 21 August, the day after contacting Holloway, Lincoln vaguely requested that Welles "afford all facilities" to Diller and Wetherill "for some chemical experiments which they desire to make privately under my direction."[54]

Preliminary tests showed promising results.[55] A detailed contract drafted in December included a long list of questions, apparently Lincoln's, that had to be satisfactorily answered through full-scale testing before Lincoln would "advise" (having no authority to promise) the payment of the huge sum of $150,000. A week later, when Dahlgren was summoned to the White House to discuss something else, the president showed him yet another letter from an inventor of some new gunpowder. Lincoln said he had already burned a bit of the sample that had been sent and thought it left too much residue. "Now, I'll show you," said Lincoln, conducting a mini-experiment by placing some powder on a sheet of paper and touching it with a live coal picked from the fireplace with tongs. After the flash and smoke, Lincoln glanced at the paper and said, "There is too much left there."[56]

Eventually, Welles learned "something . . . in regard to the great secret of this man Dillon." If unclear about Diller's name, Welles was precise about the

$150,000 that figured in "a written promise" from the president, about which he was informed after he apparently cornered Dahlgren on the subject on 22 February. In his diary, Welles ranted, as he no doubt had to Dahlgren, that "the President had no authority for it," "no appropriation," and he "could not divert sums." Welles blamed Dahlgren as an example of "subordinates, flattered by [Lincoln's] notice" who should not be "encouraging the President in these well-intentioned but irregular proceedings." In self-defense, Dahlgren suggested his efforts to restrain the president were "impotent" since Lincoln "has a propensity to engage in matter of this kind, and is liable to be constantly imposed upon by sharpers and adventurers." Welles noted, "Finding the heads of Departments opposed to these schemes, the President goes often behind them," and Dahlgren apparently provided his own "written promise" that neither he nor Welles was responsible for this deal with "Dillon."[57]

After various delays, Lincoln arranged in April that Dr. Wetherill (who in the meantime had become an employee of the Department of Agriculture) should be seconded for a month along with an assistant to do unspecified work in Philadelphia. In May, Lincoln called for Dahlgren and Ripley to share the costs of the experiments, and in July, he wrote directly to their chiefs to pay further bills "as former ones have been paid."[58] The new powder passed an important trial in mid-June, though a question remained whether the powder "preserves its properties after graining"—converting the powder into a more stable form for transport and controlled rate of burn.[59] But by October, it was found that the powder could only be grained if its formula was altered, which then made it too unstable for safe storage.

When Diller implored Lincoln for additional funding, Lincoln returned his calling card with a note, "I am sorry, but I fear I shall have to drop this powder business."[60] The project was partly superseded by Dahlgren's success, in cooperation with Henry du Pont, in finding by the end of 1862 some domestic manufacturers who could produce a substitute for niter made out of sodium nitrate (available in America but most easily mined in Chile) and potash. Initially, the price seemed prohibitive, but Dahlgren was determined to end dependence on British sources, and the prices eventually equalized as production of the substitute increased, and the price of niter from India rose. Chile then, and until World War I, replaced India as the primary source of saltpeter.[61]

Although Lincoln's pet project had failed, his unstinting support for Dahlgren had paid off, and one major result was that by the beginning of 1863, it was impossible for Britain to threaten the United States with a chemistry problem of which few were aware but which Lincoln had understood and helped to solve.

16

Delegation and Control

"Will the evidence that this mail carries satisfy the English that we want to live in peace with them?" Asa Gray wrote to Darwin on New Year's Eve 1861, knowing that the ship conveying his letter would also carry the news that James Mason and John Slidell were to be released. Gray acknowledged that some intemperate remarks in Darwin's last letter were "very natural" but also defended American actions, asserting that the Lincoln administration had "promptly conceded" and was "cheerfully" releasing the envoys: Gray was not one of the very few who knew the actual explanation, which was left out of William H. Seward's letter to the British foreign minister. Gray declared that America "must be strong to be secure and respected—Natural selection quickly crushes out weak nations" and was prescient on the issue dearest to Darwin. "As to slavery, the course of things is getting to meet your views. . . . [I]f the [Southerners] give up now they may save their institution in their own States to have the chance of abolishing it themselves in the only safe and easy way, with time and the gradual competition of white labor. But obstinate resistance will surely bring on wide sweeping manumission." Closing with New Year's greetings, Gray urged Darwin, "Keep up your lively sympathies with those who have very severe trials to undergo and sacrifices to make for what they deem the cause of right, honor, & future safety."[1]

Darwin had been disappointed for months that Lincoln had apparently done nothing to strike at slavery and then failed to disavow immediately the actions of Captain Charles Wilkes. He was miffed that Gray's letter, written the moment the crisis passed, still blamed the British for being too sympathetic to the South and "peremptory" in issuing demands to the North. Gray's letter arrived at a bad time, while the Darwin household was plagued by influenza: "What misery there is in this life," Darwin wrote to Joseph Dalton Hooker. Out of sorts, Darwin did not reply immediately but sent Gray's letter to Hooker with the extraordinarily sour comment: "Asa Gray is evidently sore about England: he does not say much; nor do I; but I have hitherto been able to write with some sympathy; now I must be silent; for I look at the people as a nation of unmitigated blackguards."[2]

Although that was Hooker's standard view, he was surprised by Darwin's fit of anti-Americanism. Eventually, Darwin felt able to send Gray a letter that mixed cordiality with grit. After various pleasantries and botanical business, Darwin grasped the nettle. "Now for a few words on politics; but they shall be few, for we shall no longer agree." After detailing his disgust over the *Trent* Affair—especially the Boston dinner in Wilkes's honor, which "quite turned my stomach"—Darwin concluded, "It is well to make a clean breast of it at once; & I have begun to think whether it would not be well for the peace of the world, if you were split up into two or three nations." With that off his chest, Darwin added that he could not "bear the thought of the Slave-holders being triumphant" or of a permanent frontier between North and South "with armies, fortifications, & custom-houses without end with your retrograde tariff. Bad man, as you will think me, I shall always think of you with affection. Here is an insult! I shall always think of you as an Englishman."[3]

It was a frank letter, tempered so as not to kill a friendship if charm could save it. Darwin must have felt relief at Gray's genial reply: "As I have not given you up notwithstanding your very shocking principles and prejudices against *design in nature*, so we shall try to abide your *longitudinarian* defection"—an in-joke about different attitudes resulting from different geographical origins. Gray agreed that the Boston banquet was all "bosh" but said it was odd that Darwin of all people should "fail to appreciate that it is simply a struggle for existence on our part, and that men will persist in thinking their existence of some consequence to themselves." Darwin's next letter showed his own feelings were still raw: "It is really almost a pleasure to receive stabs from so smooth, polished & sharp a dagger as your pen. . . . The Millennium must come before nations love each other, but try & do not hate me." Gray responded cheerfully, "Yes, I will promise not to *hate* you: quite the contrary!" and signed himself "Your cordial friend and true Yankee."[4]

As Darwin entered one of his worst phases of ill health, his research seemed to have lost direction. The two decades of preparation for a vast work on natural selection had been followed by two years of intense effort to produce and promote *On the Origin of Species*. After that, Darwin at first planned to write up his vast collection of notes on natural selection in a three-part project: a volume on variation among the relatively knowable domesticated animals and plants, followed by a study of the harder-to-measure variations among wild animals and plants, and concluding with the application of these analogies to the examination of the more difficult and controversial question of how only slight variations and modifications could have separated man from the rest of the animal world.

Although Darwin planned to demonstrate his theory's validity *before* applying it to man, most of his admirers and critics had prematurely connected the dots. But Darwin tried to stick to his original plan, expecting the subject of man's origins to be dealt with soon by other sympathetic colleagues. He was pleased that Thomas Huxley, Charles Lyell, and John Lubbock, a young biologist and Darwin's neighbor, were all investigating human origins or development and presumably applying natural selection to the subject. Darwin was content to let them bear the brunt of any new controversy while further experiments and data collection sidetracked his own larger study.

After barnacles and seed experiments, it was pigeons, primulas, and orchids: all useful studies, testing ideas about sexual selection and resulting in several papers and another book. At the start of 1862, Darwin was delighted when his publisher said his volume on orchids would probably appear about the same time as Lyell's study of human antiquity.[5] But the orchid book came out in four months, leaving the anxious Darwin to wait nearly a year before Lyell went to press.

As he waited, Darwin enjoyed Huxley's long-running scrape with Richard Owen, who argued that the human brain is utterly distinguishable from those of even the closest primates because it possessed a structure called a *hippocampus minor*, while Huxley insisted that this was simply another feature that, in fact, men shared with apes. Huxley also gave a series of lectures called "The Relation of Man to the Rest of the Animal Kingdom" to an attentive audience of largely working-class men. After one particularly full house, Huxley told his wife, "By next Friday evening they will all be convinced that they are monkeys."[6] Owen also gave a lecture, printed in the *Athenaeum* and entitled "The Gorilla and the Negro." Since his main purpose was to draw a rigid line between animals and men, Owen might have simply compared "Gorilla and Man," but Owen held that although the negro is indeed a man (being blessed with a *hippocampus minor*), he is also the "lowest variety of human race," inferior anatomically and mentally when compared with "Europeans." So, Owen's disparaging point was that *even* a negro is different from a gorilla! Huxley responded with a brief letter to the *Athenaeum*—printed under the title "Man and the Apes"—asserting simply that gorillas also have the *hippocampus minor* and never mentioning negroes. Owen sought to continue the debate, but Huxley protested, "Life is too short to occupy oneself with the slaying of the slain more than once."[7] Darwin told Huxley that his letter was "very well done, but almost too civil" and praised it to Hooker in a letter that also expressed admiration for Lyell's "capital work" investigating the flint tools fashioned by early men and found in preglacial geological levels in France: "The case gets more & more complicated. All, however, tends to greater & greater antiquity of man."[8]

Meanwhile, Huxley grew more assertive about man's origins, informing Darwin that during a lecture in Edinburgh, he made a "distinct statement that I believe Man & the apes to have come from one stock." Darwin was delighted that Huxley planned to publish his lectures soon. Between them, Huxley and Lyell might now apply evidence from geology, archeology, paleontology, and comparative anatomy to show that the races of man had a common origin, pushed back in time in a manner that would allow for that origin and later variations (races) to be explained by natural selection. While Lyell and Huxley worked on the problem from new directions, Darwin continued to seek less controversial evidence—from primulas and orchids—to demonstrate the viability of his theory, but he praised Gray for perceiving that the orchid book "was a 'flank movement' on the enemy."[9]

Flanking actions did not distract Darwin from the developing battle regarding human origins and unity. Corresponding with Charles Kingsley on the "grand & awful question of the genealogy of man," Darwin declared that compared with his initial reaction on first seeing the natives of Tierra del Fuego, he had no difficulty with his "present belief that an incomparably more remote ancestor was a hairy beast." And looking at it from the other side, Darwin added, "Monkeys have downright good hearts, at least sometimes, as I could show, if I had space. I have long attended to this subject, & have materials for a curious essay on Human expression, & a little on the relation in mind of man to the lower animals." Yet, though continually gathering materials, Darwin held back from publishing. "How I should be abused if I were to publish such an essay!" he told Kingsley. He was still hoping Lyell would soon produce something "on the relations of men & other animals; but I do not know what his recent intentions are."[10]

Huxley, meanwhile, lectured "On Fossil Remains of Man," arguing that it was necessary to "extend by long epochs the most liberal estimate that has yet been made of the antiquity of Man." Darwin doled out more praise and was delighted when Huxley told him the lecture would be written up "as a chapter of my forthcoming *Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature*."[11] Hooker, seeing an early draft, told Darwin the book was "an amusing as well as clever book on Monkey Man. It will be a great success," and Darwin replied that he heartily hoped "Huxley's book will be very successful. . . . he will be well abused." Darwin also told Lyell that he "heartily hoped" Lyell's book would be out in October, though "I fancy Huxley will be out sooner."[12] Unfortunately for the eager Darwin, neither book appeared until early in 1863.

In the meantime, Darwin's anxiety about the bloodletting in America had been temporarily eased in April 1862. "The North seems going on grandly victorious," he wrote Gray, "& thank God there is distinct ground broken on the Slavery question; but we stupid English cannot yet believe that you will ever be a single Union again."[13]

The Northern victories to which Darwin alluded were mainly in the west, though there was also the success in March at Hampton Roads, Virginia, when the Confederate ironclad, the former USS *Merrimack*, now renamed the CSS *Virginia*, was forced to halt its attack on the Union's wooden fleet after destroying two ships and damaging several others. It was stopped by the arrival of the USS *Monitor*, with its entirely metal hull of a revolutionary design by John Ericsson. The ships fought each other to a standstill, but the *Merrimack* retreated to its haven, never to fight again while ships of the *Monitor* design would soon be produced in large numbers, helping to capture Confederate coastal positions and tighten the blockade. Without Lincoln's personal involvement, the *Monitor* might never have been built. He also played a role—less subtle and perhaps less effective—in the land victories that had taken place between January and April.

Especially after the *Trent* affair, Lincoln was mindful that the threat of some foreign intervention increased as time passed without clear indications that the North was capable of victory. Although Lincoln cultivated the image of a delegator who left affairs in the hands of those more capable, over the winter he lost patience with his generals. He had previously commanded nothing larger than a company of Illinois militia, yet all his life, Lincoln had accomplished what he was not supposed to be able to achieve, and now, having survived for the moment the threat of an additional war with Britain, Lincoln wanted victories that would allay that threat and crush the rebellion. He moved beyond testing weapons to reading military science, giving "himself, night and day, to the study of the military situation," according to his secretaries and later biographers John G. Nicolay and John Hay. "He read a large number of strategical works, . . . held long conferences with eminent generals and admirals, and astonished them by the extent of his special knowledge and the keen intelligence of his questions."[14]

Early in 1862, Lincoln borrowed from the Library of Congress a copy of *Elements of Military Art and Science* (1846) by Henry W. Halleck. Later nicknamed (not always kindly) "Old Brains," Halleck was currently Lincoln's fourth-highest-ranking general. Six months later, Lincoln made him general-in-chief of all the armies, at which point Halleck proved he was good with administration and offering advice but not with decision making. From Halleck's *Elements*, Lincoln may have learned a fair amount of military science—or that military science did not amount to much.[15]

At present, Halleck was one of several army and naval officers passing the buck rather than arranging for the speedy delivery of a flotilla of craft specially designed to carry mortars so huge they could not really be transported by land, though they proved decisive in reducing Confederate strongholds along rivers and estuaries. On 10 January, Lincoln began firing telegrams in several directions, and when no one acted, he went to the Navy Bureau of Ordnance and told Lieutenant Henry Wise to "put it through. . . . Now I am going to devote a part of every day to these mortars and I won't leave off until it fairly rains bombs." By the end of the month, Wise wrote that the president "is evidently a practical man, understands precisely what he wants, and is not turned aside when he has his work before him."[16]

In January, while promoting Captain John A. Dahlgren at the Navy's Ordnance Office, Lincoln decided he must get rid of General James W. Ripley, the army's chief of ordnance (which proved difficult), but he did succeed in replacing

Simon Cameron as secretary of war with Edwin M. Stanton—a man who six years earlier had grievously insulted Lincoln during a patent trial in Cincinnati, Ohio, but also a man Lincoln believed, rightly as it turned out, could do the job. By the end of January, Lincoln and Stanton composed the "President's General War Order No 1," calling for "a general movement" of all the land and naval forces of the Union "against the insurgent forces," to commence on 22 February, George Washington's birthday. Although this has been characterized as "little more than high-flown persiflage" and "less an order . . . than a distress signal," it indicated, according to historian James M. McPherson, that "Lincoln grasped sooner than many of his generals the strategic concept of 'concentration in time.'"[17] To two of his doubtful generals, Don C. Buell and Halleck, Lincoln tried to explain his

> general idea of this war to be that we have the *greater* numbers, and the enemy has the *greater* facility of concentrating forces upon points of collision; that we must fail, unless we can find some way of making *our* advantage an overmatch for *his*; and that this can only be done by menacing him with superior forces at *different* points, at the *same* time; so that we can safely attack, one, or both, if he makes no change; and if he *weakens* one to *strengthen* the other, forbear to attack the strengthened one, but seize, and hold the weakened one, gaining so much.[18]

Probably realizing that that particular order was unlikely to accomplish much, Lincoln soon issued "Special War Order No. 1" on 1 February. This was a specific plan for attacking a Confederate army at Manassas Junction, Virginia. General George McClellan, commander of the Army of the Potomac, argued in favor of his own plan: to send a Union army down Chesapeake Bay to land on the coast fifty miles east of Richmond, Virginia, in order to attack the Confederate capital from an "undefended" approach. Lincoln tried to build a case, sending McClellan specific questions, comparing the two plans' expenditures of time and money, the certainty and value of any victory, the likelihood of breaking the line of the enemy's communications or exposing Washington, D.C., to danger, and the provision of a line of retreat, if needed. McClellan never provided answers but only excuses about the conditions of roads and the size of the enemy's force between Washington and Richmond—estimates McClellan constantly exaggerated.[19]

Lincoln now made a desperate effort to outflank his own general by putting both plans to a council of McClellan's senior divisional commanders—a poor idea because most knew their careers depended more on their senior commander than on a likely one-term president. When his plan was voted down, Lincoln pressed McClellan at least to plan an operation to push the Confederates farther away from Washington before setting off on his Peninsula Campaign. McClellan ordered the construction of special boats to be floated up the Potomac River for a crossing near Harpers Ferry, Virginia. After much delay and cost, the operation was launched on 27 February but was "a damned fizzle," in Stanton's words, for the boats proved to be a few inches too wide to get through the locks on the river. "I am no engineer," a furious Lincoln told McClellan's chief of staff, "but it seems to me that if I wished to know whether a boat would go through a hole or a lock, common sense would teach me to go and measure it!"[20]

As March arrived and McClellan still showed no sign of movement, Lincoln took advice from other generals, read up on the Napoleonic "corps system," and then informed McClellan that he was going to reorganize the army into five corps and personally select their commanders. McClellan was incensed but still would not move. Lincoln made desperate efforts to replace McClellan, but the only candidate possibly acceptable to McClellan's staff, General Ethan Allen Hitchcock, refused to command the army in the field.

In April, McClellan finally began his Peninsula Campaign, proceeding with extreme caution. Lincoln was frustrated that McClellan did not take the opportunity once the army was in the vicinity of the naval base at Norfolk to capture the city and destroy the *Merrimack*. Lincoln decided to get closer to the action and took Chase and Stanton with him on a naval vessel. Stationed outside Norfolk in case the *Merrimack* attempted another foray was the *Monitor*. Lincoln paid an emotional visit to the vessel he had done so much to bring into existence. He then summoned several officers to help formulate a plan for capturing Norfolk. In some accounts, Lincoln actually walked along a moonlit beach in Confederate territory to see if it was suitable for an amphibious landing. The next day, Lincoln's plan was implemented, and he soon heard the satisfying explosion as the *Merrimack* was blown up.[21]

McClellan's slow advance toward Richmond ended badly as he was forced to retreat to Harrison's Landing near the end of June. Lincoln now had to determine whether McClellan should continue his ill-conceived Peninsula Campaign or withdraw the army to protect Washington from threats by Stonewall Jackson.

"It is surprising to me that you should have strength of mind to care for science, amidst the awful events daily occurring in your country," Darwin wrote gloomily to Gray in mid-June, assuming the failure in the peninsula was sapping Gray's optimism as it had Darwin's. "I daily look at the *Times* with almost as much interest as an American could do. When will peace come: it is dreadful to think of the desolation of large parts of your magnificent country; & all the speechless misery suffered by many."[22]

Gray admitted that prospects were "looking badly enough" and that "McClellan has clearly been over matched." Darwin avoided the subject in his next few letters, but Gray recurred to the martial topic at the end of July: "The South force us at length to do what it would have been more humane to have done from the first,—i.e. to act with vigor,—not to say *rigor*." Three more letters crossed before Darwin responded briefly in August: "Affairs seem to be getting with you more

& more terrible. What will the end be? It seems to us here far more fearful, than it apparently does to you."[23]

It would have interested Darwin that when Lincoln visited McClellan's peninsula headquarters early in August to consider the next course of action, his decision turned partly on an issue of natural science. Of McClellan's five corps commanders, three agreed with McClellan that the campaign should continue, but Lincoln was more convinced by another general who argued that the defeated army's morale was worsened by the area's malarial swamps causing illness that could soon reduce the army's manpower—he estimated by 20 percent. He recommended withdrawal, at least while summer lasted. Lincoln recognized that this West Point graduate, former member of General Winfield Scott's staff, and recently a successful corps commander, probably knew something about disease because his father was a prominent Massachusetts physician—who had named his son after a famous English doctor. General Erasmus Darwin Keyes's diagnosis of Lincoln was also perceptive: "There was not one of his most trusted warlike counsellors in the beginning of the war that equaled him in military sagacity."[24]

Lincoln ordered McClellan to return most of his force to the Washington area, where Lincoln casually arranged to place the troops under the command of General John Pope.

In April 1862, when Darwin thanked God "there is distinct ground broken on the Slavery question," he was reacting to several developments.[25] Between 6 March and 10 April, Congress passed legislation forbidding the military to return fugitive slaves forcibly to their rebel masters, abolished slavery within Washington, D.C., and approved a resolution supporting compensated emancipation (although it was a diluted version of what Lincoln had requested).

If Darwin thanked God rather than Abraham Lincoln, he was not alone because many Americans considered Lincoln too conservative with regard to slavery. Lincoln himself had to consider the majority, who still opposed any abolitionist action that might make it more difficult for the Southern states to return to the Union or more likely that blacks would move into Northern states. Most historians agree Lincoln walked this tightrope well, taking rational steps forward when it was politically possible and militarily useful to do so. But one of Lincoln's major policies regarding blacks has divided historians, many considering the rational Lincoln to have acted somewhat irrationally. The policy was colonization of blacks, either back to Africa or to the Caribbean or out west—basically out of the way of white people.

The British colony of Sierra Leone, which was begun in 1787 as a place to send blacks liberated during the American War of Independence (who otherwise might have remained in Canada or London), had also become a refuge for slaves liberated from slave ships by the Royal Navy. Darwin's Wedgwood relatives donated more than £70 in 1824 to support the colony, and his later professors in Cambridge, Henslow, and Whewell, made subscriptions of a guinea each.[26] Britain made no concerted effort to return to Africa the blacks emancipated in the British West Indies, four thousand miles from London. Even Britons as sensitized as Darwin could only imagine how twenty-six million white Americans felt about living in a country alongside four and a half million present or former slaves. Whether a white man can consider a black to be "a man and a brother" while also believing he must live elsewhere is a dilemma Darwin never had to confront.

17

The Rationality of Colonization

The literature on Lincoln and colonization is vast because the subject is peculiarly emotive. Scholars debate how far Lincoln raised himself above the average racism of his time and how early he took particular steps to fight slavery, but most agree that Lincoln was generally on the right side, moved in the right direction, and was ahead of the public opinion he helped to shape. But the policy of black colonization, even apart from Lincoln's involvement, is today viewed as "bad" practically and morally. Since it did not work, many conclude it could not work and that intelligent people should have recognized this at the time. As a moral issue, black colonization is glibly linked to the twentieth-century horrors of eugenics, "final solutions," *Lebensraum*, and "ethnic cleansing." To suggest colonization was anything but bad seems (however illogically) to imply that millions of African Americans today somehow have less right to be United States citizens than their white compatriots and that we might have avoided the racial integration to which we now aspire. Historians believing colonization to be doubly wrong—unable to achieve what it should not have attempted—struggle to explain why such an intelligent and good man as Abraham Lincoln supported it.

Historian Michael Vorenberg concisely states the logical extremes of possible explanations: "Those who tend to see Lincoln as a racist usually assume that he never gave up the idea of deporting all free blacks, while those who believe in Lincoln as a racial egalitarian typically assert that his racial views matured as he realized that colonization could not work and that he came to believe that blacks had a legitimate claim to remaining in the United States." Leaning toward the second view, Vorenberg argues that Lincoln never demonstrated real devotion to colonization for its own sake but found it politically useful, discarding it when it no longer served. Historian Gabor Boritt largely agrees, emphasizing "the contradiction and ambivalence [that] were the hallmarks of Lincoln's support for colonization." However, neither view—that Lincoln supported colonization as an ad hoc "political calculation" or as a "defense mechanism that psychologists call avoidance"—allows that he might have considered it a good idea per se.[1] Both historians perceived intellectual faltering, with Vorenberg suggesting Lincoln fused emancipation and colonization "even more tightly together in his mind, making it nearly impossible for him to believe that one could exist without the other" and with Gabor Boritt using a range of phrases suggesting Lincoln acted irrationally.[2] David Herbert Donald writes that colonization "was entirely rational—and wholly impracticable" yet emphasizes Lincoln's pursuit of a "fantasy."[3]

Colonization becomes a test of whether Lincoln based his policy choices on evidence and logic or genuinely failed to see the faults in colonization until he later "matured." I support the less-popular view that colonization *in the middle of the nineteenth century* had far more about it that was "good" than "bad" and that intelligent people like Lincoln were rational to support it as a feasible way to fight slavery and give justice to freedmen—and to reject it when circumstances radically changed.[4] Indeed, Lincoln may have hoped at one stage that increasing tolerance of blacks by the white majority might make colonization unnecessary, but ultimately his perception of the scale of white prejudice kept the policy alive.

One could construct long lists of prominent nineteenth-century Americans—white and black, North and South—who believed colonization offered justice to the Africans being returned homeward and would hasten the end of slavery or who denounced colonization as inhumane, impractical, and effectively proslavery. Several prominent abolitionists moved from the first view to the second. Some members of the new Republican Party opposed colonization, while many others considered it part of the party platform even before Lincoln gained the White House.[5]

Modern immigration patterns have created many multiracial societies, but in the early nineteenth century, most immigration involved Europeans going to the Americas, South Africa, New Zealand, and Australia, where, as Darwin witnessed during the *Beagle* voyage, they preferred some form of extermination of indigenous populations to any version of integration. Native Americans found themselves sharing their regions with immigrating Europeans and enslaved Africans. Whites constantly pushed the Indians aside, and there was no reason to imagine that the blacks, if ever freed, would be treated any better. Indeed, the very "success" of the U.S. government's "Indian removals" made moving blacks back to Africa seem feasible. Europeans came to America from racially homogeneous societies, and their descendants saw that nearly all countries comprised a single race. Removing Indians and blacks was a way toward greater homogeneity for Anglo-Americans—who had enough difficulty coping with Germans and Catholics.

Opponents of slavery could salve their consciences that colonization somehow addressed the problem when constitutional and economic factors barred other action. They could imagine Christianized blacks being returned to convert the Dark Continent or—more absurdly—that black colonists would spread whatever blessings of democracy they had come to admire while laboring in America.

Some Republicans promoted schemes to colonize freed slaves into tropical areas in the Western Hemisphere, reducing transport costs, providing access to new resources (perhaps cotton grown by paid labor), extending American influence, perhaps countering British influence in the isthmus where someday a canal might be built. Opponents of colonization dismissed all this but rarely on the grounds that colonization itself was not feasible.

The most obvious reason for supporting colonization then is rarely mentioned today: simple justice. Blacks had been brought to America against their will, transported in the worst conceivable conditions, with millions dying along the way from disease or desperate suicide. Such crimes could have no redress, but at least the surviving remnant could, in theory, be restored to their homeland. Of course, the practical difficulty increased over time as the "remnant" steadily increased, despite the slave trade's abolition in 1808.

Most whites assumed black slaves *wanted* to leave America. The colonization movement began shortly after the slave trade ceased, when most blacks were considered "Africans" even though more and more were American born with no direct memory, or even a parent's stories, of African life. Only slave owners defending their treatment of blacks ever argued that conditions in Africa could be worse than being enslaved in the south or subjected to gross indignities and civil disabilities throughout the north. Finally, polygenists such as Louis Agassiz had recently pronounced that blacks were separately created in Africa by God, designed for some "tropical" environment that was only approximated in a few southern states, and were otherwise doomed to ultimate extinction according to natural laws. Science seemed to confirm what recent history indicated globally: that differing races simply could not live together, and one must be destroyed, enslaved, or removed by the other.

No white person, north or south, would trade places with a black, and most dismissed those articulate blacks who denounced colonization, such as Frederick Douglass, as a tiny, untypical faction—which in many respects they were. The slaves' contribution to America's great prosperity was acknowledged less than as the contribution of dumb cattle, and few whites perceived that a growing number of blacks were unwilling to leave the homeland they had helped create. (Later, most whites were amazed when thousands of African Americans showed themselves willing to stay among their oppressors and even to don uniforms and fight for the freedom that America was meant to represent.)

Some whites who recognized that blacks might not willingly depart argued for forced deportation. There were many such within the Republican Party and even inside Lincoln's cabinet, but Lincoln himself always maintained that colonization must be voluntary. Forced deportation would involve a larger bureaucracy and targets more difficult to meet, as well as personal anguish, while a voluntary program allowed for a more flexible system that might take on a life of its own. Opponents of colonization might prove unable to dissuade those wishing to leave, while those arguing for forced deportation might feel differently later about neighbors who made a conscious choice to remain. In terms of improving race relations, different "benefits" might come from achieving complete colonization or merely advocating a partial colonization.

Ethical issues aside, large-scale colonization was never going to be easy and grew more difficult over time. Changing circumstances could make it seem less worth the costs, and during certain phases in his presidency, Lincoln curtailed his promotion of the policy. None of that makes his long-standing support for colonization an irrational act.

Scholars, including those quoted earlier, tend to suggest that Lincoln's interest in colonization was first evident in 1852, when he delivered the eulogy for Henry Clay and praised the concept of "restoring a captive people to their long-lost father-land."[6] But Clay had supported the American Colonization Society (ACS) from its founding in 1816, and it is not surprising that Lincoln and many colleagues showed an interest long before 1852. Charles R. Matheny (whose son was later Lincoln's "best man") and John T. Stuart (whose law practice Lincoln joined in 1837) were, respectively, president and vice-president of the Sangamon County Colonization Society, organized in August 1833 in Springfield as an auxiliary to the Illinois State Colonization Society (ISCS). Stuart and Dan Stone (the state legislator who cosigned Lincoln's 1837 protest against slavery) participated in a lyceum debate in 1833 on whether the national government should "appropriate funds from the treasury in aid of the Colonization society." In 1839, Porter Clay, Henry's brother and an ACS agent, delivered a lecture in Springfield, and Reverend Charles Dresser (who later performed the service at Lincoln's wedding) presided over a first annual meeting of the revived local organization. Stuart, Dr. John Todd (Mary's uncle), and other Whig supporters were on the governing committee. By then, the ISCS had about 150 members, twenty of whom paid an annual donation of $10 each to help fund the transport and settlement in Africa of twelve emancipated slaves.[7]

Lincoln possibly numbered among those 150 members and was presumably among the four hundred guests who attended a 3 January 1845 party at the home of his brother-in-law Ninian Edwards, apparently following a meeting held in the state house to re-form the ISCS. Lincoln's friend Orville Browning was elected vice-president of the new board of managers arranged for copies of the ACS journal, *The African Repository*, to be "sent gratuitously to every Clergyman in the State, who is willing to receive it."[8]

The first annual report of the ISCS included a statement that was later quoted by an ACS leader during a visit to London in 1849 when he gave testimony before a select committee of the House of Lords. It included statistics comparing the costs of purchasing four thousand miles of the West African coastline (an ACS aspiration to close down the illegal slave trade) with the costs of maintaining naval squadrons from the United States and the United Kingdom.[9] Although there is no evidence Lincoln helped to produce these statistics, one can imagine his interest in learning how large sums appropriated for military purposes might have been better used more imaginatively to combat slavery—a point he would later make during the Civil War.

Congressman Lincoln presumably attended on 18 January 1848 the annual ACS meeting held in the House of Representatives and addressed by Henry Clay.[10] In April, while Lincoln was in Washington, a thirty-five-year-old African American in Springfield named Samuel S. Ball temporarily left his barbershop and his wife and six children in order to investigate conditions in the ACS's colony in Liberia. Upon returning, he made a favorable report to the Colored Baptist Association, and probably only the heavy expense prevented him from taking his family to Liberia. In 1851, Ball actually drafted a bill for the Illinois legislature proposing financial support for free blacks wishing to migrate to Liberia, but it never got out of committee. Ball died the following year of typhoid fever.[11]

Although Lincoln used Springfield's other black barber, he must have known Ball, probably read his report, and may have hoped his attitude was typical. However, Lincoln must also have known that other black neighbors opposed colonization, perhaps increasingly as time passed. He must have been moved in 1858 by the newspaper report of a statement produced by Springfield blacks who declared, "We have been unable to ascertain that any intelligent man of color either desires to remove to Africa, or requires aid for such an enterprise." Although obviously aimed against those still sharing Ball's views, this statement firmly asserted, "We have no desire to exchange the broad prairies, fertile soil, healthful climate and Christian civilization of Illinois, for the dangerous navigation of the wide ocean, the tangled forests, savage beasts, heathen people and miasmatic shores of Africa." Lincoln could hardly contest the peroration: "We take [the] Declaration as the Gospel of freedom; we believe in its great truth, 'that all men are created equal.'"[12]

Five years earlier, in 1853, it was advertised that Lincoln was going to talk on "Colonization" at the First Presbyterian Church, which Mary had recently joined and whose preacher, Reverend James Smith, was on the board of the ISCS. Five months later, Lincoln and Browning were scheduled to speak at the ISCS's annual meeting, but illness in the family prevented Lincoln.[13] But in October 1854, Lincoln made an important statement about colonization in his famous Peoria speech as he campaigned against Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Act.

> If all earthly power were given me, I should not know what to do, as to the existing institution [of slavery]. My first impulse would be to free all the slaves, and send them to Liberia,—to their own native land. But a moment's reflection would convince me, that whatever of high hope, (as I think there is) there may be in this, in the long run, its sudden execution is impossible. If they were all landed there in a day, they would all perish in the next ten days; and there are

> not surplus shipping and surplus money enough in the world to carry them there in many times ten days.[14]

This was Lincoln's courtroom style, conceding numerous points in order to win one, admitting short-term difficulties but allowing the "high hope" for colonization in some "long run." His rejection of less-likely alternatives ("keeping them among us as underlings?" or "make them politically and socially, our equals?") simply recognized his audience's feelings, which may or may not accord "with justice and sound judgement." He concluded with vague support for an equally long-run strategy, "gradual emancipation."

Lincoln was able to address the next ISCS meeting in January 1855, and fortunately notes survive, filling both sides of one page, that Lincoln probably wrote while planning this speech.[15] First, he listed eight dates, beginning with 1434 (when a Portuguese captain "seizes a few African lads"—the event he later linked to "the invention of negroes") and ending with 1776, which for Lincoln marked the close of the approved development of slavery. Before tracing the story of the disapproval of slavery, Lincoln paused to make the point that in 1776, "there were about 600,000 slaves in the colonies; and there are now in the U.S. about 3¼ millions"—highlighting that delay only made colonization more difficult.[16] Lincoln might have pointed out that the ACS's early plans had included colonizing high proportions of women of childbearing age to slow the growth of the problem.[17] Lincoln's notes then listed seven antislavery landmarks, from a protest by a Catholic priest in 1543, through those by Quakers before the Revolution and Congress's subsequent actions prohibiting slavery in the Northwest and outlawing the slave trade. He added, "1776–1800: Slavery abolished in all the northern states."

Next, Lincoln jotted down with emphasis: "*All the while*—Individual conscience at work." Moving from the individual to the collective, he noted, "1816—Colonization Society is organized." Then Lincoln divided the discussion into "direct objects" and "collateral objects," apparently distinguishing between actually *attaining* colonization and the possible benefits of simply working *toward* it. Of three "collateral" benefits, the first was the "suppression of the Slave trade," which continued despite being outlawed in 1808. Since then, an average of thirteen thousand to fifteen thousand Africans were smuggled into the United States annually, when the colonizationists' concept of buying up African coastline might have reduced that figure. The other two collateral benefits were "commerce" and "civilization and religion": broad canvases on which Lincoln might have painted pleasant images appealing to his audience's self-interest, sense of superiority, and religious zeal.[18]

Under "present prospects of success," Lincoln was likely to stress that if the federal government helped cover the costs of colonization, these could be spread over a century, not straining a budget that had shown annual surpluses in the

1850s as high as $15 million. Moreover, the government merely needed to get the ball rolling until enough blacks had become really successful in Liberia, experiencing genuine rights and prosperity, so that they might, like German and Irish immigrants, financially assist relatives to enjoy the same opportunity. Lincoln might have mentioned those Germans and Irish as being among the 600,000 immigrants to the United States in the decade before 1840 and 1.7 million in the decade during which he was speaking: all migrations involving no costs to a government that, on the other hand, had willingly spent close to $100 million in the 1830s to move 46,000 Indians west of the Mississippi River.[19]

For many historians, the starting and ending point in judging the viability of colonization is the single and oft-repeated fact that between 1820 and 1860, the ACS managed to send fewer than twelve thousand blacks to Liberia, as if no more blacks were willing to go. But the figure ignores colonists aided by separate state societies and the thirty thousand blacks who escaped to Canada in the antebellum period.[20] Hundreds of thousands of blacks had been brought to America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and large numbers had also left, many with British help during the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812.[21]

A large proportion of the ACS's limited funds went toward purchasing land in Africa, hiring vessels, and providing supplies, but between 1830 and 1850, Brazilian and Cuban slaveholders imported forty thousand new slaves every year, at an annual cost of $4 million, a sum the U.S. government could easily have supplied annually to transport forty thousand freedmen from America to Africa.[22] Even after the slave trade to America was outlawed, some Americans paid large sums to smuggle Africans across the Atlantic Ocean, and when they advocated reopening the slave trade, they did not worry—and their opponents had no fond hopes—that the costs or availability of transport would impede traffic in that direction.

Lincoln probably acknowledged that the ACS had made no headway against the sheer growth of the slave population, but he could also point out that the ACS, after seriously faltering in the mid-1830s under withering attacks from radical abolitionists, had become more active since 1850, as blacks felt increasing pressure from the Fugitive Slave Act and from the deepening intolerance fostered by scientific racism.By January 1857, Lincoln was elected one of the ISCS's eleven managers.[23] Five months later, while campaigning for Douglas's Senate seat, Lincoln used colonization to deflect Douglas's charge that by asserting that blacks were equally human, he was somehow encouraging amalgamation. At the end of a long speech, Lincoln stressed that "the separation of the races is the only perfect preventive of amalgamation." He admitted that colonization did not appear in the Republican Party platform but asserted that "a very large proportion" of Republicans were for it (though he knew many were dead against it) and that the party's opposition to the extension of slavery was also "favorable to that separation."

> Such separation, if ever effected at all, must be effected by colonization; and no political party, as such, is now doing anything directly for colonization. . . . The enterprise is a difficult one; but "when there is a will there is a way;" and what colonization needs most is a hearty will. Will springs from the two elements of moral sense and self-interest. Let us be brought to believe it is morally right, and, at the same time, favorable to, or, at least, not against, our interest, to transfer the African to his native clime, and we shall find a way to do it, however great the task may be.[24]

There were sufficient qualifications here to avoid offending any Republicans who opposed colonization, whether they believed blacks should be accorded civil rights instead or simply thought colonization impractical. Lincoln obviously considered colonization more plausible than the idea that whites would grant blacks civil rights.

In the 1858 Lincoln-Douglas debates, Lincoln did no more than quote from that section of his earlier Peoria Speech, for he found better ways to parry Douglas's "amalgamation" swipe: besides, colonization had more vocal opponents among Republicans than among Democrats. Later, when Lincoln sought support outside of Illinois, there was little to be gained from mentioning colonization, and the issue was sidelined as Lincoln maneuvered to win the White House, becoming the first occupant who had deeply considered and favored colonization.

Lincoln's first presidential effort to promote colonization was the Chiriqui Project, although for a long time, this scheme had nothing to do with colonization. Ambrose W. Thompson owned a vast tract of land in Central America that he had nearly, but not quite, been able to sell to the Buchanan administration. According to Thompson, the land offered the perfect route for a new transisthmian railroad or even a canal, the perfect location for naval stations, and a perfect source of coal supplies for the navy. Thompson first wrote to Lincoln shortly after his inauguration, giving advice about saving the Union but not mentioning the Chiriqui land. It was a month later and to Secretary Gideon Welles that Thompson first mentioned his scheme, presumably emphasizing naval stations and coal.[25] Welles dismissed Thompson as a pure speculator, and there is no sign that Lincoln took any interest at this time, concentrating instead on defeating the rebel forces.

As the war lengthened, the problem of dealing with the vast number of slaves fleeing to Union lines gave Thompson a new angle to exploit. Sometime before August, he printed a pamphlet that added to the list of potential uses of the Chiriqui land "a home for the Negro Race, now in the United States, and the only true place for their colonization."[26] It was no coincidence that Congress had been debating, and on 6 August 1861 passed, the first Confiscation Act, which declared that masters who used slaves in the service of the Confederacy thereby forfeited their property rights in the slaves, thus legalizing what General Benjamin F. Butler and others had already done by refusing to return fugitives to owners they decided were rebels. Lincoln was not pleased with Congress's handling of this delicate topic and made known to Butler his ambiguous desire to be guided by this law in disloyal states while respecting all existing rights in all states.[27]

Lincoln asked his bother-in-law, Ninian Edwards, to investigate Thompson's Chiriqui proposals. The choice of Edwards probably had less to do with his former involvement in the ISCS than with the fact that he was unemployed and would presumably carry out this task diligently to earn a more permanent position.[28] However, Edwards's eventual eight-page report was too uncritical generally, and its single sentence about colonization added nothing to what was in the printed proposals.[29]

The day before Edwards submitted his report to Lincoln, Thompson tried to buy Welles's support by offering to supply coal at half the current price.[30] In like manner, Edwards's report emphasized the value of Chiriqui's coal by referring to an earlier report by government geologist Dr. John Evans "that the coal is inexhaustible in quantity, while the analysis of it by Dr. Charles T. Jackson—a well known geologist of Boston, proves its quality to be of the best kind, and highly desirable for steam purposes." This was based on Evans's *final* report to Congress (before Lincoln took office): his preliminary report had been doubtful enough to cause him to send a coal sample for analysis to Jackson, a suspiciously poor choice because Jackson was notoriously unstable and went mad a few years later.[31]

Thompson's pamphlet had boasted that according to "Dr. Evans, the Geologist, . . . the best Coal for Steam Navigation, exists at and near the Atlantic harbors of the Chiriqui Lagoon." Lincoln, knowing a good deal about geology, may have wondered whether it was "the best Coal" of all possible types or only in this region and whether the Chiriqui's other coal measures were far worse. Edwards had suggested the "immense saving" to the government if it utilized this new source for coal, but Lincoln probably knew that Thompson was not above bribing the impecunious Edwards.

At some point, the Chiriqui file included a two-page "Memorandum" criticizing both pamphlet and report and giving figures indicating Chiriqui coal would be more than twice as expensive as current sources, adding, "The anaylasis [*sic*] of a small portion of coal by a chemist for practical purposes is not sufficient. Its usefulness depends upon its being generally free from impurities. Has the quantity or quality of this coal been spoken of other than in general terms [?]"[32] Who requested or composed this memorandum is unknown. It may have been added to the file before Welles returned it to Lincoln with a frosty comment about not having "the time necessary to investigate the subject of the proposed Chiriqui contract." After a two-month gap in the documentary evidence, Lincoln sent Welles's letter to Interior Secretary Caleb Smith, asking whether the draft contract was legal "and ought to be made."[33]

The file expanded with various materials from Frank Blair Sr., a founder of the Republican Party, magnate in the Border State of Missouri, and father of Lincoln's postmaster general, Montgomery Blair. The elder Blair, who strongly believed in colonization, pushed Lincoln to close the deal. Blair suggested an associate with mining experience who could investigate the geological claims, adding that he could be accompanied to the Chiriqui lands by Thompson's son, an army officer who was willing "to open the mines immediately and provide coal for the Navy, at a dollar less per ton than the existing price now paid. This is certainly the best earnest that can be given in regard to this most essential matter."[34]

The senior Blair also sent to Lincoln a printed "Memorandum of Proposals" presumably produced by Thompson, incorporating suggestions from Blair.[35] Of nine items listed as benefits for the government, only one related to colonization, clarifying that five hundred thousand acres would be set aside for colonization "by free negroes who have been residents of the United States"; the Chiriqui Company would not charge for those acres as it would be grateful for the labor supply. However, three more items were handwritten in: the tenth ensuring that the company could not overcharge for transportation and subsistence costs of colonists; the eleventh giving the government an option to buy another five hundred thousand acres at $1.25 per acre; and the twelfth clarifying that the colonists would be paid "fair wages" while working first on railroad construction and then in mining and in erecting works useful for convenience or protection. These additions were farsighted, but the handwriting is not Lincoln's, and the ideas probably originated with the Blairs, who also prepared three draft letters for Lincoln to send out over his own name.[36] The first, addressed to Caleb Smith, made the politically astute suggestion that funds allocated in an 1819 law to send to Liberia Africans freed by the navy in anti-slave-trade operations be reapplied to pay for "some of the unoccupied lands of Central America" and "the removal of negroes from this country." The second was to order Welles to transport the mining expert and the younger Thompson to Chiriqui, and the third asked the secretary of war to expedite the younger Thompson's temporary secondment.[37] There is no evidence that Lincoln sent any such letters.

Lincoln passed the Chiriqui file to the secretary of the treasury. Although Salmon P. Chase's support would be helpful because he had strong links with radical Republicans who opposed colonization, Lincoln had good reasons other than colonization to ask the treasury head to review the file. Chase avoided taking a position and suggested waiting until Congress resumed in three weeks' time.[38]

At this point, the Chiriqui contract was on hold. Lincoln had given no sign of any interest in Chiriqui's alleged colonization potential: all the links to colonization were in the writings of the Blairs or of Thompson, who probably planted Ninian Edwards's slight reference to colonization. The Blairs were genuinely keen, but their effort to expedite matters and Chase's to stall both point to likely opposition in Congress when it resumed in early December. In the end, Lincoln may have agreed with Chase that it was better to involve Congress. And, of course, all through December, Lincoln was dealing with the *Trent* affair.

Lincoln's first public statement as president in favor of colonization came in his first annual message to Congress on 3 December 1861. To deal with the influx of refugee slaves, Lincoln suggested Congress appropriate funds for colonizing these people but also suggested these funds could also be used for blacks who were already free. Lincoln used the idea apparently suggested by the Blairs about reapplying the 1819 appropriation more broadly, and he argued that there was no constitutional obstacle to purchasing territory for colonies. Opposing forced deportation, Lincoln declared that "colored people already in the United States" might be eligible "so far as individuals may desire." Also, while many assumed blacks would emigrate to the established independent black republics, Liberia or Haiti, Lincoln broadened this to "some place, or places, in a climate congenial to them."[39]

As Congress got under way, Republicans more radical than Lincoln almost immediately proposed bills to abolish slavery outright—which had no chance of passage—while Lincoln expended great effort trying to convince Border State representatives to start the process of voluntary and gradual emancipation on a state level, offering compensation from federal funds for citizens who thus surrendered their "property." If just one state took the first step, other slave states still in the Union might do the same. Lincoln argued that federal compensation did not undermine any state's control over the decision whether or how to emancipate and that "gradual" systems need not be complete for thirty years—permitting slavery to exist into the 1890s, which sounds more incredible to us than it did to Americans who had doubted they would live to see slavery ended.

As mentioned in the last chapter, in March Congress passed a resolution offering federal compensation for voluntary emancipation of slaves, abolished slavery in Washington, D.C., and appropriated $1 million to compensate owners. Lincoln was bothered that this act lacked the element of local consent, and he would have preferred a Border State to take the lead on emancipation rather than the federal government. However, the act also appropriated $100,000 for the president to spend "to aid in the colonization" of "free persons of African descent now residing in said District." The maximum expenditure of $100 per colonist was sufficient for transport costs and some initial support. The law mentioned "Hayti or Liberia" but also any "other country beyond the limits of the United States." So Chiriqui was not ruled out.

Signing the bill into law, Lincoln informed Congress that despite other misgivings, he was "gratified that the two principles of compensation and colonization are both recognized and practically applied in the act."[40] He was also pleased that a new treaty with Britain committed the United States to give full support for the final suppression of the Atlantic slave trade, thus terminating the source of supply.[41] At the same time, Congress authorized diplomatic relations with Haiti and Liberia, a useful step for advancing colonization, although even colonization's opponents supported this sign of treating black nations as equals.

All this energized colonization efforts by Lincoln's administration. Various proposals to accept some colonists came in from foreign governments other than Haiti and Liberia, especially some Central American states. The Chiriqui project was resurrected, and on 22 April, Secretary Chase sent a solicitor's report Lincoln had requested on the Chiriqui contract's validity; the report was favorable and said the region was well suited for black colonists. Interior Secretary Smith wrote a few days later to Thompson asking the terms under which the Chiriqui Company would take on the job of colonizing freed blacks, and some effort was made to link the company with the New York Colonization Society.[42]

In May 1862, Smith responded to some presidential query by reporting that the Chiriqui contract offered "good coal at a cheap rate" and a chance to begin colonization, which in turn would give the United States "an influence as would most probably secure to us the absolute control of the country."[43] Smith also recommended that Lincoln appoint the Reverend James Mitchell to run the colonization program. Lincoln already knew and trusted Mitchell as a former colonization agent in Indiana. By 18 May, Mitchell sent Lincoln a copy of a twenty-eight-page circular about the need for colonization, printed at the Government Printing Office.[44]

Secretary of State William H. Seward also sent information to Lincoln, though it is unclear whether he was carrying out instructions or trying to convince Lincoln to abandon the Chiriqui plan. One note from Seward's office mentioned that Marcelino Hurtado, commissioner from New Grenada (the site of Chiriqui), was pleased to accept an invitation to dinner at the White House, and in a second note, dated the following day and presumably carried by Hurtado, Seward himself wrote that Hurtado "visits you for the purpose of imparting information which it is understood you desire, in regard to a certain region of that country."[45] Also, sometime prior to 28 May, someone—probably Seward and presumably with Lincoln's approval—gave to Lincoln's erstwhile scientific adviser Joseph Henry of the Smithsonian what Henry described as "an elaborated paper on the subject [of Chiriqui coal] from . . . the Interior Department in which all this testimony in favor of the existence of good coal was convincingly set forth." On 28 May, Henry wrote to Philadelphia geologist J. Peter Lesley, a coal expert, asking "on behalf of the President and the secretary of state" for a confidential opinion about the coal "in which Mr Thompson of your city is so much interested." Henry explained that the proposed Chiriqui contract involved coal "for the use of the navy in connection with a plan of establishing a colony of negroes." He added that he was "somewhat suspicious" and "must be true to myself and the government."[46]

Within two days, Lesley promised to look into the matter, but his eventual report apparently arrived after Henry himself wrote a preliminary one. Thompson learned about the consultation with Henry, who soon received "a direct offer from *St. Ambrose* of a share in the speculation if I would make a favorable report." Henry did no such thing, and his preliminary report "stated that from the age of the geological formation of the rocks of the Isthmus, of which there was sufficient evidence in the Smith[sonian] Inst[itute], there could be no real coal in that locality."[47] That report is not extant, and perhaps the attempted bribery caused Henry to wish it kept confidential. It is not clear whether the report reached Lincoln. If Seward was the recipient, he had no reason not to show it to Lincoln, and Henry might as easily have conveyed his opinions in one of his occasional meetings with Lincoln.

Meanwhile in July, Congress's Second Confiscation Act quintupled the appropriation for colonizing freedmen to $500,000. Although Lincoln was disturbed by aspects of the act—such as a tendency to assert federal power to emancipate slaves, which Lincoln feared would make rebel states even less likely to surrender—the law helpfully gave the president the authority to

> make provision for the transportation, colonization, and settlement, in some tropical country beyond the limits of the United States, of such persons of the African race, made free by the provisions of this act, as may be willing to emigrate, having first obtained the consent of the government of said country to their protection and settlement within the same, with all the rights and privileges of freemen.[48]

Shortly before signing this act, Lincoln revealed to Seward and Welles on 13 July that he was considering an executive action on emancipation, and a week later, he raised the matter with the whole cabinet. This was apparently the first time the whole cabinet discussed colonization, but the issue was sidelined by the more important topic of Lincoln's first draft of the Emancipation Proclamation.

In August, a new draft contract drawn up by the Interior Department proposed that the Chiriqui Company handle colonization but that no money be laid out for coal until a further inspection determined "the productiveness of the mines, and the value of the same for steam purposes."[49] This suggests Lincoln was indeed aware of Joseph Henry's negative stance in his preliminary report and did not ignore it as Henry later suggested.

On 14 August 1862, Lincoln held two meetings in the White House that both related to colonization, but the second of them has a wider importance that requires close inspection before continuing the story of Lincoln's colonization policy.

18

Colonization and Emancipation

On 14 August 1862, Lincoln met with William McLain, the ACS treasurer, and Joseph J. Roberts, the visiting president of Liberia. Both men gave Lincoln a glowing report about Liberia's condition and prospects. But transportation costs were probably inclining Lincoln toward a location where commercial shipping was expanding, as was the case with the Caribbean and Central America but not with Africa, a view expressed already in Caleb Smith's report of 9 May. Apparently, McLain and Roberts were both annoyed that Lincoln praised Liberia to their faces but then an hour later promoted Central America rather than Liberia in a landmark address on colonization.[1]

The address was historic partly because the audience was a small deputation of free African Americans brought to Lincoln by the Reverend James Mitchell: the first time a group of blacks were in the White House to meet with a president rather than to cook and clean for him. Knowing the event would cause some stir, Lincoln took care to avoid having falsehoods spread about how he treated and addressed his guests. No official text was preserved or released, but Lincoln's comments were hardly off-the-cuff, and it appears that the event was covered by a single Associated Press reporter—who no doubt behaved in order to obtain similar exclusives in future. His version is what appeared in all the newspapers and has come down to us.[2]

The reporter mentioned first that the "Committee of colored men" was introduced by Mitchell and that its chairman "remarked that they were there by invitation to hear what the Executive had to say to them"—so, not petitioners seeking favors. Lincoln began by mentioning Congress's appropriations to aid colonization to some country by "the people, or a portion of them, of African descent." The word "portion" accorded with Lincoln's notion of a voluntary colonization and caused Lincoln to raise the obvious question: why should *any* of them "leave this country?" His answer was aimed also at that larger audience for whom the reporter's pencil was scratching.

"You and we are different races. We have between us a broader difference than exists between almost any other two races," Lincoln said, expressing a common view of human races with which both Louis Agassiz and Charles Darwin could agree, if for different reasons. Far from ranking races according to abilities, Lincoln spoke only of the "difference" causing "disadvantages" that applied to both races: "Whether it is right or wrong I need not discuss, but this physical difference is a great disadvantage to us both, as I think your race suffer very greatly, many of them by living among us, while ours suffer from your presence." Discussing mutual "disadvantages" suggested a balance; explaining their real cause—racial intolerance by the white majority—would upset that balance. "In a word we suffer on each side. If this is admitted, it affords a reason at least why we should be separated," Lincoln said. The ethical, as well as practical, issue was not about race but about slavery:

> Your race are suffering, in my judgment, the greatest wrong inflicted on any people. But even when you cease to be slaves, you are yet far removed from being placed on an equality with the white race. You are cut off from many of the advantages which the other race enjoy. The aspiration of men is to enjoy equality with the best when free, but on this broad continent, not a single man of your race is made the equal of a single man of ours. Go where you are treated the best, and the ban is still upon you.
>
> I do not propose to discuss this, but to present it as a fact with which we have to deal. I cannot alter it if I would. It is a fact, about which we all think and feel alike, I and you.

Lincoln went on to note that the present war was one of the evils caused by having two races on one continent. He acknowledged that free blacks like themselves were not inclined "to go out of the country," but he suggested that actual slaves would hardly hesitate if colonization were the condition for obtaining freedom. In view of that connection between colonization and future emancipation, Lincoln argued that for the men before him to maintain they "have nothing to do with the idea of going to a foreign country . . . is (I speak in no unkind sense) an extremely selfish view of the case." He now urged his guests to "give a start" that "would open a wide door for many to be made free."[3]

Patronizing as much of this sounds to modern ears, in fact Lincoln avoided any expression of actual denigration on racial grounds. In arguing why free blacks should start the process, Lincoln stated that unfree blacks "whose intellects are clouded by Slavery" would provide "very poor materials to start with." No suggestion that blacks are *naturally* less intelligent; indeed, Lincoln said that the men before him were "intelligent colored men" as "capable of thinking" as any white man, unlike slaves "who have been systematically oppressed."[4]

Lincoln spoke of certain hardships as he mentioned Liberia and his recent chat with its president, but after explaining away some of Liberia's perceived disadvantages, Lincoln suggested blacks might prefer to colonize somewhere "within reach of the country of your nativity"—avoiding the phrase he dared not use: "your country." Lincoln revealed that he was thinking about Central America, which was nearer, "on a great line of travel," possessed natural resources, and was advantageous "especially because of the similarity of climate with your native land—thus being suited to your physical condition." That last phrase was superbly ambiguous. Most readers would probably infer that Lincoln was referring to Africa, though he never said so; in fact only once does a cognate word appear in the address, in an introductory phrase about people "of African descent." Most of the delegation before Lincoln were presumably "native" to the United States and indeed to southern states whose climate was at least more like that of Central America than that of New England or Illinois. But, again, Lincoln avoided direct reference to the fact that the members of the delegation were Americans. And his reference to being physiologically suited to a particular climate was vaguely acceptable to both polygenists and monogenists, whether they explained that harmony as resulting from God's design for creation, some degradation following creation, or some undesigned modification through natural selection.[5]

Lincoln continued his description of a potential colony: "The particular place I have in view is to be a great highway from the Atlantic or Caribbean Sea to the Pacific Ocean," which could certainly refer to the Chiriqui lands, not named. There was "evidence of very rich coal mines," Lincoln added, lawyer-like, not mentioning the counterevidence he knew about. "A certain amount of coal is valuable in any country," he continued, "and there may be more than enough for the wants of the country"—meaning the area being colonized (though perhaps Joseph Henry subsequently misinterpreted "the country" to mean the United States). "Why I attach so much importance to coal is, it will afford an opportunity to the inhabitants for immediate employment till they get ready to settle permanently in their homes." Lincoln said nothing about providing the navy with cheap coal, presumably because he understood the Chiriqui coal might only be good enough for the "wants" of the colony itself by creating some immediate, if short-term, employment. Lincoln repeated the point: "if something is started so that you can get your daily bread as soon as you reach there, it is a great advantage. Coal land is the best thing I know of with which to commence an enterprise."[6]

Knowing these men were aware of the Chiriqui scheme, Lincoln sought to allay understandable concerns. "We have been mistaken all our lives if we do not know whites as well as blacks look to their self-interest. . . . I shall, if I get a sufficient number of you engaged, have provisions made that you shall not be wronged." Lincoln was reassuringly frank: "I am not sure you will succeed. The Government may lose the money, but we cannot succeed unless we try; but we think, with care, we can succeed." Lincoln optimistically suggested that Central Americans "have no objections" to "your colored race" but also spoke vaguely of "protection"—causing some Central American diplomats, reading the next day's newspapers, to wonder how invasive U.S. "protection" might prove to be.[7]

Lincoln ended his address with a call to action, even if only on a small scale. "Could I get a hundred tolerably intelligent men, with their wives and children, to 'cut their own fodder,' so to speak? Can I have fifty? If I could find twenty-five able-bodied men, with a mixture of women and children, good things in the family relation, I think I could make a successful commencement." Lincoln was emphasizing that the delegation members need not feel overwhelmed by the task he was setting them.[8] "I want you to let me know whether this can be done or not. This is the practical part of my wish to see you." The AP reporter finished with, "The above is merely given as the substance of the President's remarks"—a disclaimer less important to the reporter than to Lincoln, who might deny any particular statement.[9]

Whether the men Lincoln addressed were able to arouse much interest for colonization among free blacks—and the evidence is mixed—Mitchell and Ambrose W. Thompson were having success with recruitment, and the latter soon informed Lincoln that he had enough would-be colonists to make a start as soon as a vessel could be made ready.[10] A week after Lincoln addressed the black deputation, Joseph Henry wrote to fellow scientist Alexander Dallas Bache, expressing his surprise that Lincoln "believed in the humbug coal mines of the Isthmus" and explaining the background to the preliminary report he had made earlier. He told Bache that he "afterwards"—sometime between early June and mid-August—"received a letter from Peter Lesley condemning the whole affair as a swindling speculation, and asserting that the general character of the material found in that region was an inferior kind of lignite." Henry then added, somewhat confusingly, "After having communicated these facts cautiously but clearly in my report, and much more fully to Mr. Seward privately I was much surprised to learn from a speech of the President that he still believed in the phantom."[11] Lincoln apparently did not see Lesley's report until *after* speaking to the black delegation, but he probably *had* seen Henry's preliminary report and at least heard more about Henry's final report through William H. Seward, which is why Lincoln's references to the coal were restrained—though so subtly that Henry missed the point.

Around this time, Lincoln appointed Kansas Senator Samuel C. Pomeroy as a higher-level colonization agent. Despite unsavory aspects in Pomeroy's personal history, he had some experience as a "colonizer" (in Kansas in 1854) and, more important, he was an associate of Salmon P. Chase, whose opposition to colonization might thus be partly neutralized. Pomeroy was to travel to Chiriqui with Thompson to ensure all was well before authorizing the allocation of certain funds to Thompson. Before 25 August, Pomeroy had printed up a pamphlet, publicized in some newspapers, urging free blacks to apply for the colonization adventure.[12]

At this point, Joseph Henry was approached again. On 5 September, he addressed a letter to Seward's son and secretary, Frederick, enclosing an extract of Lesley's report on the Chiriqui coal. The extract carries no date, and Henry's letter merely describes the author as a “gentleman who has been extensively engaged in geological surveys and has published a work of much merit on coal,” adding that “the letter was received after I had written and presented my Report,” which had been written “before I had time to fortify my opinion by reference to authorities and hence I spoke very cautiously.” Further enquiry had “confirmed my assertion that the geological formation of the District is not that of the true coal measures but that of the tertiary deposit in which only *lignite* is found.” He hoped no contract would be signed to purchase the Chiriqui land “until it has been thoroughly examined by persons of known capacity and integrity.” He accepted that further examination might alter the situation, but previous reports had so far “failed to convince me.”[13]

Henry’s letter accompanying the extract was sent to Frederick Seward (signed “very truly your friend & servant”), which suggests his father, the secretary of state, was gathering ammunition to kill off the Chiriqui plan. While a senator, the elder Seward had participated in earlier debates about the contract, which perhaps made him doubt the earlier coal reports and Thompson’s integrity. Now Seward was concerned that by late August the Chiriqui project was upsetting U.S. relations with Latin America.

Historian Michael Vorenberg suggests that Lincoln “seemed to be making some hasty and short-sighted decisions,” as when “he touted the rich coal deposits of Chiriqui, but then chose to ignore Henry’s dismal report.” But Lincoln knew the coal’s quality was controversial, and he was not going to be tied down either by Thompson’s favorable reports or by negative ones brought in by Frederick Seward. Lincoln now ensured that Thompson would receive no money until Pomeroy took the responsibility to say the coal deposits were suitable. Thompson later said that Lincoln, who signed the contract on 11 September, wrote portions of it himself. The following day, Lincoln instructed Interior Secretary Smith to oversee the project and pay for it out of the funds Congress had appropriated two months earlier. Soon five hundred colonists were reported ready to embark, and on 15 September, Lincoln approved Pomeroy’s request to be allowed to advance Thompson limited sums to cover immediate costs.[14]

Then the Chiriqui project once again stalled as Robert E. Lee caused a crisis by deciding to invade the North.

From the moment on 12 September when Lincoln learned that Lee had crossed the Potomac River into Maryland, he was eager for General George McClellan to trap and crush the Confederate forces.[15] McClellan managed to win the bloody Battle of Antietam on 17 September, but Lincoln ached for further news that Lee’s army had been destroyed before it could recross the Potomac. The president was bitterly disappointed when McClellan failed in this, but Lincoln decided Antietam was enough of a victory to justify issuing the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation on 22 September.

Lincoln had discussed the concept with his cabinet in July, after several developments convinced Lincoln that he could and must take this step. The collapse of the Peninsula Campaign at the beginning of July renewed the risk of European intervention, recognizing the Confederacy. The passage of the Second Confiscation Act later in July suggested emancipation would receive more support than opposition in Congress. Lincoln was bitterly disappointed by the Border States' failure to create momentum for the most constitutional approach: gradual emancipation initiated by state governments, with compensation supplied by the federal government. And people who had never been abolitionists were calling for measures that would weaken the Confederates' grip on that enslaved labor force, whose exploitation helped sustain the South's military operations.[16]

The majority of the cabinet had supported the president's proposal, but Lincoln heeded Seward's advice that if the plan were announced then, just after McClellan had been out-generalled in the Peninsula Campaign, the emancipation of slaves might seem an act of desperation. Lincoln agreed to delay an announcement, which in any case risked driving some Border States into the Confederacy and some Union soldiers into dropping the weapons they had willingly carried for defending the Union but not for ending slavery. Now, in September, Lee's invasion raised the possibility that the war could suddenly end with a great Northern victory, removing the military justification for the Emancipation Proclamation and casting a different light on all issues connected with colonization. But Lee's eventual escape meant the war would continue, along with the problems of financing it, recruiting more troops, and somehow preventing foreign intervention. It was necessary to announce the proclamation, which would emancipate slaves only in rebel-held territory and would not go into effect until 1 January 1863, thus giving rebellious states three months to return to the Union if they wished to preserve slavery.

As Lincoln probably expected, no rebel politicians dared propose the destruction of the Confederacy in order to save slavery. But as the hundred days passed until the actual promulgation of the emancipation, Lincoln turned his attention back to colonization. In cabinet meetings on 24–26 September, some members were lukewarm in general while others called for forced deportations—which Lincoln always rejected. No doubt, many cabinet members doubted Thompson's claims about the quality of the coal, although Joseph Henry's recent report was not specifically mentioned in the accounts. A central concern was whether the colonization should be protected through specific treaties with the countries concerned or whether the colonists should simply emigrate as individuals. Gideon Welles pushed the latter approach and thought he had support from Secretary Seward, who expressed concern about the negative reactions from Latin American governments. Lincoln still considered treaties necessary, even though this would bring the issue before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, whose chairman, Senator Charles Sumner, disliked colonization.[17]

On 27 September, Pomeroy addressed a meeting of blacks in Washington, but his language—like that in his 25 August pamphlet and, indeed, like Lincoln's address to the delegation of blacks in the White House—added to the uneasiness of Latin American diplomats. The U.S. government naturally desired to reassure colonists that they were not simply being dumped into some new form of slavery, yet Latin American governments, which had earlier welcomed the idea of colonists aiding agricultural development, increasingly protested against any notion of further land sales to or ongoing interference by their expansive northern neighbor. Seward sent out a circular on 30 September to representatives of various European powers—less likely than vulnerable Latin American states to feel threatened—to see if any of their colonies in the Western Hemisphere might welcome freed blacks, under terms protecting the colonists.[18]

Meanwhile, the government found a vessel to transport the first set of colonists ready to depart for Chiriqui, but on 7 October, according to Welles, the cabinet was reluctant "to press the subject of negro emigration to Chiriqui . . . against the wishes and remonstrances of the States of Central America." Later that day, Pomeroy was informed through the Department of the Interior that the operation was "temporarily suspended" by presidential order. Pomeroy was angry, later telling Lincoln's friend Orville Browning that over thirteen thousand free blacks had already formally applied for colonization—an assertion neither doubted at the time nor since disproved.[19]

The cabinet's unease was about Chiriqui and not about colonization itself, and Lincoln felt able to address the topic a few weeks later in his second annual message to Congress on 1 December. After noting the expressions of interest received from "many free Americans of African descent" as well as "other parties, at home and abroad—some from interested motives, others upon patriotic considerations, and still others influenced by philanthropic sentiments," Lincoln admitted that "several of the Spanish-American republics have protested against the sending of such colonies to their respective territories." Lincoln stressed that he still hoped to attain international agreements agreeable to the Senate, but at present, "Liberia and Hayti are, as yet, the only countries to which colonists of African descent from here, could go with certainty of being received and adopted as citizens." He regretted that blacks "contemplating colonization, do not seem so willing to migrate to those countries, as to some others, nor so willing as I think their interest demands. I believe, however, opinion among them, in this respect, is improving; and that, ere long, there will be an augmented, and considerable migration to both these countries, from the United States."[20]

While Lincoln still advocated a protected, financed, and voluntary form of colonization, he was preoccupied as the final signing of the Emancipation Proclamation approached. Near the end of his December message to Congress, Lincoln proposed three constitutional amendments: first, that states should receive compensation if they abolished slavery any time between the present and the year 1900; second, that all slaveholders who had not been disloyal but had lost slaves "by the chances of war" should receive compensation and that their slaves be declared forever free; and, third, that "Congress may appropriate money, and otherwise provide, for colonizing free colored persons, with their own consent, at any place or places without the United States." Such amendments, if ratified, would be harder to reverse than similar legislation, and they could add incentive for rebel states to surrender and for slave owners to accept emancipation, while also safeguarding freed blacks against forced deportation. Lincoln was planning for the time when he could no longer direct these policies, either because victory ended his use of "war powers" or because he failed to win reelection. He was trying to bind Congress to certain options.[21]

In discussing his third proposed amendment, Lincoln embarked on a curious argument. "I cannot make it better known than it already is, that I strongly favor colonization. And yet I wish to say there is an objection urged against free colored persons remaining in the country, which is largely imaginary, if not sometimes malicious." Lincoln argued that emancipating blacks did not make them more likely to take jobs away from whites or lower the value of labor, so these were not valid objections to letting freedmen remain in the United States, while any degree of colonization "even to a limited extent" made it "mathematically certain" that the wages of white labor would be "enhanced." Lincoln was acquainting the public with the idea that colonization need not be all or nothing: the country would benefit from any departures yet not suffer from any refusals to emigrate. There was no reason, Lincoln argued, to believe emancipated blacks would "swarm forth" and cover the north as well as the south; and, even if they did, Lincoln offered statistics showing that the average proportions of free blacks to whites that might result already existed in some areas without causing serious difficulties for either race.[22]

Lincoln's primary goal remained the restoration of the Union, but he now recognized that the most economic and least-bloody way to achieve that goal was through emancipation, achieved through constitutional means, allowing for individual state consent, offering a gradual rather than a sudden alteration in the condition of blacks, providing the lubrication of financial compensation, and offering colonization to any blacks desiring it. To those whites who strongly favored or opposed black colonization, he offered a funded program that was nevertheless voluntary as well as reassurances that no disasters would follow if colonization were only partial. Lincoln finished his recommendation by eloquently declaring:

> In *giving* freedom to the *slave*, we *assure* freedom to the *free*—honorable alike in what we give, and what we preserve. We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best, hope of earth. Other means may succeed; this could not fail. The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just—a way which, if followed, the world will forever applaud, and God must forever bless.[23]

Lincoln had no delusions about the practicability of colonization, but its political value had been greater when abolition had seemed a more-remote possibility and intolerance of blacks had seemed to be growing. If Lincoln's sole interest in colonization had been political, now was the time—four weeks before he signed a document to free several million blacks in the South—to offer colonization as a panacea for racist America's worst fears. Yet, even while proposing that colonization be protected constitutionally for blacks who chose it, Lincoln was preparing white Americans for a future that could include black Americans. Also, Lincoln was planning but had not yet announced a development that could do more to make whites accept that blacks were their fellow human beings than any of his own arguments or statistics, or any pleas from radical abolitionists, or any religious doctrine that everyone was descended from Adam, or any scientific theories about mankind's common evolutionary heritage. Lincoln understood that the attitudes of white Americans—including himself—were about to be affected radically by the scarcely imaginable sight of blacks serving in uniform.

Lincoln had made no mention of it in the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation in September or in his message to Congress in December. Yet, in the final proclamation of 1 January, Lincoln declared that freed slaves "of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service."[24] When Lincoln reached this important decision is unknown. Genuine difficulties with recruitment of white Northerners for the ongoing slaughter played a major role, as did the urgings of various idealists wishing to prove that blacks could and would fight for the freedom of their race.

Lincoln had previously had good reason to ignore calls for the arming of African Americans, which smacked of John Brown's 1859 attempt to foment a slave insurrection, alarming not only rebels but also Border State slaveholders. In July 1862, Congress had authorized the president to employ "as many persons of African descent as he may deem necessary and proper," specifying that they may be used for "any military or naval service for which they may be found competent," but Lincoln was used to Congress moving too precipitously on such delicate matters. However, Lincoln began to adapt his own thinking. Near the beginning August, Lincoln turned down an offer of "two colored regiments" from a deputation from Indiana, reportedly saying that "he was not prepared to go the length of enlisting negroes as soldiers" and "that to arm the negroes would turn 50,000 bayonets from the loyal Border States against us that were for us." However, by the end of August, Lincoln allowed Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton to authorize a Union commander operating in the Carolinas to "arm, uniform, equip, and receive into the service" as many local volunteers "of African descent" as he saw fit.[25]

Lincoln was waiting for popular feeling to catch up with the lead offered by Congress's act in July. In September, he reportedly said, "If we were to arm [blacks], I fear that in a few weeks the arms would be in the hands of the rebels," which suggested lack of confidence in the suitability of former slaves for military service. Ten days before announcing the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln again mentioned his concern that fifty thousand white soldiers from the Border States might abandon the army (whether or not he armed blacks), yet he also expressed his hope that opinions were changing and that of those fifty thousand white soldiers: "I do not think they all would [leave the army]—not so many indeed as a year ago, or as six months ago—not so many to-day as yesterday. Every day increases their Union feeling."[26]

In November, Senator Sumner had given the president a pamphlet by George Livermore entitled *An Historical Research: Opinions of the Founders of the Republic on Negroes as Slaves, as Citizens, and as Soldiers*, which, Sumner reported, "interested President Lincoln much." Spurred by Congress's action, by positive reactions to the preliminary proclamation, or by Livermore's pamphlet, sometime between September and the last day of 1862 Lincoln added to the final Emancipation Proclamation his provision for black recruitment. When Lincoln signed the final draft of the Emancipation Proclamation, he sent the pen to Livermore. A North Carolina editor sneered that the circus owner P. T. Barnum, should have received the pen "which was employed to affix the name of Gorilla to the most infamous document that ever emanated from any civilized government." Browning recorded in his diary various opinions he heard at that time, including the view that the recruitment of blacks would cause a hundred thousand whites or more to leave the army. But Lincoln became increasingly assertive about the rightness of his decision. In March 1863, he wrote to the governor of Tennessee, "The colored population is the great *available* and yet *unavailed* of, force for restoring the Union. The bare sight of fifty thousand armed, and drilled black soldiers on the banks of the Mississippi, would end the rebellion at once."[27]

Lincoln soon felt encouraged—and hoped others would as well—by reports of large numbers of blacks enlisting and performing well. In April, he wrote to General David Hunter, glad "to see the accounts of your colored force" and that "the enemy are driving at them fiercely, as is to be expected. It is important to the enemy that such a force shall *not* take shape, and grow, and thrive, in the South; and in precisely the same proportion, it is important to us that it *shall*."[28] Black troops distinguished themselves in engagements in May in Louisiana, in June near Vicksburg, Mississippi, and in July near Charleston, South Carolina. By August, Lincoln trumpeted the black troops' patriotism in a letter he asked his long-time Republican colleague James C. Conkling to read to an important meeting in Springfield, addressing in particular those who opposed his policies. He stressed that some of the military commanders felt that using colored troops inflicted "the heaviest blow yet dealt to the rebellion" and that at least one victory could not have been achieved "but for the aid of black soldiers." His tone became more severe:

> You say you will not fight to free negroes. Some of them seem willing to fight for you. . . . [When the war is over], there will be some black men who can remember that, with silent tongue, and clenched teeth, and steady eye, and well-poised bayonet, they have helped mankind on to this great consummation; while, I fear, there will be some white ones, unable to forget that, with malignant heart, and deceitful speech, they have strove to hinder it.[29]

With that single vivid image of a determined black soldier, Lincoln broke completely with over a century of tradition, going back to Linnaeus, of classifying "negroes" as "indolent," "negligent," and "docile."

After closing down the Chiriqui scheme in October 1862, Lincoln had backed another project early in 1863 that actually sent some colonists to an island near Haiti, Ile á Vache, but this was so mismanaged by private contractors that the scheme had to be abandoned and the colonists rescued.[30] Although this was not the end of Lincoln's interest in colonization, its political use to promote emancipation was becoming obsolete, and there was hope that white intolerance of blacks would be lessened by the latter's splendid service in the army. Nearly a year after Lincoln praised that service in his Springfield letter, Congress voted on 2 July 1864 to rescind all the appropriations for colonization, and Lincoln made no objection. His secretary John Hay with that vote in mind wrote in his diary, "The President has sloughed of that idea of colonization"—though that may have been wishful thinking on Hay's part.[31]

In August 1863, one year after receiving a delegation of relatively unknown black leaders in the White House, Lincoln received the most famous black leader in America, Frederick Douglass. "There was not the slightest shadow of embarrassment from the first moment," Douglass later wrote. The president received him "just as you have seen one gentleman receive another. . . . In his company I was never in any way reminded of my humble origin, or of my unpopular color."[32] If blacks were to remain in the country, then they could only enjoy their new freedom if whites treated them as equals. For a century and a half, Lincoln has set millions of Americans an example they have found difficult to follow.

19

Societies

Late in the summer of 1862, as Lincoln awaited the opportune moment to announce the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, Darwin followed the war news in the London *Times* while also waiting expectantly for Thomas Huxley and Charles Lyell to publish their respective researches about man.[1] Darwin was growing impatient with the *Times*'s pro-Southern slant, but he could always find the Yankee view in Asa Gray's letters. On the very day the Emancipation Proclamation was first announced, 22 September, Gray was writing to Darwin about the war's slow progress: "We find it a far tougher job than we supposed. But we have no more notion of giving it up than—the English nation would have, under a similar case. For my part, I would fight till ⅘ of our property and half our men were destroyed before I would give up!—and I think that is the general opinion."[2]

Darwin first mentioned the preliminary proclamation in his next letter and was clearly not impressed. "If I could believe that your President's proclamation would have any effect, it would make a great alteration in my wishes. . . . But slavery seems to me to grow a more hopeless curse." Darwin also complained about the *Times*'s American correspondent (no longer William Howard Russell) who "has not a shade of feeling against slavery" while telling Gray it was incredible "that you all seem to believe that you can annex the South; whilst on this side of the Atlantic, it is the almost universal opinion that this is utterly impossible."[3]

In a subsequent letter, Gray said, "The President's Emancipation proclamation [was] working well on the whole. Our Courage does not fail, and I think will not. . . . You don't see, as you would if here—the total impossibility of coming to any terms of peace with the South, based on their independence. Before that can be they or *we* must be thoroughly beaten." At least they agreed about Lincoln's decision to dismiss General McClellan: Gray "rejoiced," and Darwin called it "great news."[4] Although saving his harshest remarks about "the Yankees" for Joseph Dalton Hooker, who was bound to agree, Darwin always saw the central issue as slavery, which "draws me one day one way & another day another way."

Responding to Hooker's attempt to use natural selection to explain why the Americans had so far failed "to develop any settled Govt. at all," Darwin said, "What a new idea of Struggle for existence being necessary to try & purge a government! I daresay it is very true." The huge casualties in the North's defeat at Fredericksburg, Virginia, on 13 December upset Darwin, and the day after the Emancipation Proclamation had been signed by Lincoln, Darwin commented to Gray, "When will peace come! But then Slavery, I know not what to wish." A few days later, Darwin passed one of Gray's letters to Hooker, commented with a note, "It is marvellous to see Asa Gray so cock-sure about the doom of Slavery."[5]

Darwin recognized that the proclamation only emancipated slaves in rebel-held territory and was not a constitutional amendment or even a law. "Well, your President has issued his fiat against Slavery—God grant it may have some effect," he wrote Gray. "I fear it is true that very many English do not now *really* care about Slavery; I heard some old sensible people saying here the same thing; & they accounted for it (& such a contrast it is to what I remember in my Boyhood) by the present generation never having seen or heard much about Slavery. . . . [The war] is a cruel evil to the whole world; I hope that you may prove right & good come out of it."[6]

Meanwhile, what seemed like good news soon turned sour for Darwin. "Hurrah," he said to Huxley, "the Monkey Book has come." This was Huxley's *Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature*, which Hooker decided was a "coarse-looking little book[:] not fit, as somebody said to me, for a gentleman's table." Darwin, however, told Huxley, "I have just finished with very great interest 'Man's Place.'" After further praise, Darwin asserted that he had "no criticisms; nor is it likely that I could have." Yet he did: Huxley "could have added some interesting matter on the character or disposition of the young Ourangs . . . [and] might have enlarged a little on the later embryological changes in man & on his rudimentary structure—tail as compared with tail of higher monkeys intermaxillary bone, false ribs & I daresay other points—such as muscles of ears &c &c." After tempering this with more praise, Darwin made reference to the recent publication of Lyell's long-awaited *Geological Evidences of the Antiquity of Man*: "I am fearfully disappointed at Lyell's excessive caution in expressing any judgment on Species or origin of man."[7]

Although Darwin had swiftly informed Gray that "Lyell's Book on Man . . . quotes you at end with gusto," Darwin was upset that although Lyell accepted "almost fully the modification of species by variation & selection," he seemed "afraid to say so. . . . The public may well say, if such a man dare not or will not speak out his mind, how can we who are ignorant, form even a guess on [the] subject." To Hooker, Darwin complained of Lyell's "timidity. . . . I wish to Heaven he had said not a word on [the] subject."[8]

The problem was not only that Lyell would not commit himself fully on natural selection but especially, as Adrian Desmond and James Moore suggest, that Lyell persisted in maintaining that divine intervention may be necessary to explain the "leap" to the higher forms of human intellect. "To say that such leaps constitute no interruption to the ordinary course of nature is more than we are warranted in affirming," said Lyell, before compounding the error (in Darwin's eyes) by implying that these "leaps" could become transmissible by inheritance, and therefore "we may possibly discern in such leaps the origin of the superiority of certain races of mankind."[9] That sentence, Darwin told Lyell frankly, "makes me groan. . . . [A]nyone might argue . . . that you were far from believing that man was descended from any animal." Lyell's views seemed to throw a lifeline to the devotees of Agassiz. A few days later, Darwin wrote to Lyell that he wished "that your state of belief could have permitted you to say boldly & distinctly out that species were not separately created."[10]

According to biographer Janet Browne, "Despite all their friendly connections, Darwin never really forgave [Lyell] for betraying his hopes." While Darwin found fault with Huxley's and Lyell's work, their reception by critics showed there were still dangers for those who appeared to undermine Genesis. The *Athenaeum* took aim: "Lyell's object is to make man old, Huxley's to degrade him."[11] Whether Darwin felt relief at not being the target or frustration that others had not done the subject justice, he did not rush in to place his own views before the public, yet his fascination continued.

In 1862, Dr. James Hunt, honorary secretary of the Ethnological Society of London (ESL), offered a paper "On Ethno-Climatology; or the Acclimatization of Man," presenting statistics to demonstrate that the various races of man were so distinct that they could not long survive outside the geographical zone where they had originated. Although Hunt did not cite Agassiz, who held a similar view, he did quote Dr. Josiah Nott of Mobile, Alabama. Criticized for being cavalier in his use of statistics, Hunt seceded from the ESL along with some others who had various grievances and formed the Anthropological Society of London (ASL). Hunt issued honorary memberships to many prominent researchers, including Darwin and Huxley, and began publishing the *Anthropological Review.* Although initially many supporters of Darwin contributed articles, they were unlikely to admire Hunt's introductory essay for the first volume. "Whether [Man] has risen from an ape or descended from a perfect man, . . . the Races of Europe have now much in their mental and moral nature which the races of Africa have not got." Hunt said it was ". . . a gross calumny . . . against the American School of Anthropology" to suggest "their interest in keeping up slavery induced the scientific men of that country to advocate a distinct origin for the African race."[12]

While Hunt made Nott an honorary foreign member of the new ASL, the *Anthropological Review* became a vehicle for polygenist writings, including a review attacking Lyell's *Antiquity of Man* for dealing with "theories of progression and development . . . [which have] nothing to do with the antiquity of man" and condemning Lyell for not referencing that "great national American work *The Types of Mankind*."[13] That review was written by "a jackal of Owen's by the name of C. Carter Blake," as Huxley described him after Blake also attacked Huxley's work. Huxley returned his "Diploma of Honorary Fellowship" and called Hunt's ASL a "nest of imposters." Other "Darwinians," like Edward B. Tylor, resigned their honorary memberships; George Rolleston called Hunt an "ignorant charlatan"; Alfred Russel Wallace referred to the ASL as "that *bête noire*." Hunt in turn described the ESL as "a sort of Darwinian club." To a foreign colleague, Darwin described himself as "not an active, only a honorary member of the [ASL]," but he often found articles in the *Review* worth reading.[14]

While some maintained joint memberships, generally the "Ethnologicals" were more inclined toward monogenism, the unity of man, and were leaning toward species-change through natural selection. The "Anthropologicals" tended toward polygenism and were, if not overtly proslavery, at least pro-Confederacy. Of course, many other Englishmen favored Southern independence, and any Southerners reading ASL publications would likely approve. The ASL was not bankrolled by the Confederacy, but Richmond did directly fund two members of its council, one of whom made occasional payments to two more members. That leader was a young man who had become the Confederacy's best propagandist in Europe, Henry Hotze.[15]

Born in Zürich in 1834, Hotze, while still a boy, immigrated to America—not many years after his fellow countryman Louis Agassiz.[16] Although their meeting is not recorded, it probably occurred when Agassiz visited Mobile, Alabama, in the spring of 1853. Dr. Josiah Nott then persuaded Agassiz to write his prefatory essay for *Types of Mankind* and in the following year persuaded young Hotze, then tutoring on a plantation near Mobile, to assist with another publication supporting scientific racism. Because, like Agassiz, Hotze had developed an affinity for the Southern states and a strong sense of the inferiority of blacks, he was willing to translate Arthur de Gobineau's recently published *Essai sur l'inégalité des Races Humaines.* Hotze (or Nott) reduced Gobineau's four volumes to one, omitting portions considered counterproductive for an American audience but adding a hundred-page "Analytical Introduction." The volume began with a dedication "to the Statesmen of America" and ended with an appendix by Nott on "the questions of unity or plurality of species." There is no sign that Lincoln, let alone Darwin, ever read the book. Nevertheless, Nott had managed, as he had with Agassiz's earlier preface, to give his racist doctrines a gloss of European support that impressed some reviewers.[17]

Hotze subsequently used his linguistic skills as secretary to the U.S. Minister to Brussels and later gained valuable experience working for the *Mobile Register*. When war broke out, Hotze served briefly in an Alabama regiment before coming to the attention of officials in Richmond, Virginia, who sent him to Europe to assist with funding Confederate agents and purchasing arms. Hotze then proposed a plan for improving the Confederacy's image in Europe and obtained a commission and a small budget. With ability, charm, and ample supplies of bourbon and cigars, Hotze placed pro-Southern articles in various London journals before starting his own weekly, *The Index*.[18]

Another Confederate agent in London who served on the Anthropological Society's council was Albert Taylor Bledsoe. Many members of the Anthropological Society knew Darwin personally, but Bledsoe was the only one who could say he had once been an intimate friend of Abraham Lincoln. Earlier (in chapter 4), we noted Bledsoe's disillusionment when he decided in 1873 that Lincoln had never been honest with him about his religious opinions when they had been friends in Springfield. But already, when Lincoln became president in 1861, Bledsoe had decided his old friend was criminally deluded to think he had any right to declare the secession a rebellion. When the war broke out, Bledsoe left the faculty of the University of Virginia and accepted from his old West Point colleague Jefferson Davis a commission in the Confederate army. Soon Davis made him an assistant secretary of war before sending him on a special mission to London late in 1862. Here Bledsoe did research for a two-volume work justifying the secession while also doing his best to promote the Southern cause by collaborating with Hotze, who developed a stable of journalists who wrote for *The Index* as well as other journals. Hotze made sure that important opinion-makers in London saw their work.[19]

The London *Times* needed little encouragement in becoming more pro-South, suggesting shortly after the Emancipation Proclamation that there was some validity to the biblical arguments for slavery, a common view in America but rarely expressed in England. It caused a storm in Darwin's house. "*The Times* is getting more detestable,—but that is too weak a word,—than ever," he moaned to Gray. "My good wife wishes to give it up; but I tell her that is a pitch of heroism, to which only a woman is equal." Hotze also played the religious card, printing an "Address of the Confederate Clergy to the World" in *The Index* and arranging for it to be stitched into a quarter of a million copies of popular British quarterlies. However, a backlash caused Hotze to shift from revelation to anthropology. In August 1863, Hotze reported his success to Richmond:

> A new scientific society composed of prominent names has been formed in London which has set itself the task of exposing the heresies that have gained currency in science and politics—of the equality of the races of men. The society is an offshoot or secession from the celebrated Ethnological Society. The president, in writing to offer me a seat in the council, said: "You should and must take a strong interest in our objects, for in us is your only hope that the negro's plan in nature will ever be scientifically ascertained and fearlessly explained."[20]

Hunt's phrase "the negro's plan in nature" echoed Huxley's *Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature,* and in August, Hunt delivered a paper to the British Association for the Advancement of Science on "The Negro's Place in Nature." Hunt subsequently boasted that "my statement of the simple facts was received with . . . loud hisses," but Hotze—on the ASL's governing council since July—soon printed it in *The Index*. Simulating fairness, Hotze also reprinted exchanges between Hunt and Huxley that had appeared in another new journal in which Huxley chastised Hunt for quoting the "nonsense" written by American Dr. John H. Van Evrie. Darwin must have been aware of all this and probably shared a colleague's view of Hunt: "I dare say the brute is paid by Confederates to lie as he does."[21]

During his feuds with the "Ethnologicals," Hunt occasionally invoked the name of Agassiz, but at that time, Agassiz was occupied with his own feuds in America, about which Darwin learned snippets from Agassiz's main opponent, Asa Gray.[22]

Above a marble fireplace in the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in Washington, D.C., hangs a painting that depicts Abraham Lincoln signing the academy's charter on 3 March 1863. Lincoln is in the center among a group of scientists including Alexander Dallas Bache (head of the U.S. Coastal Survey and the academy's first president), Joseph Henry (Lincoln's friend and head of the Smithsonian), Admiral Charles Henry Davis (the highest-ranking scientist in the military forces), and Benjamin Apthorp Gould and Benjamin Peirce (both mathematicians at the Harvard Observatory and working for the Coastal Survey). Immediately to Lincoln's left is Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts, who secured Congress's approval for the charter, and in the privileged position on Lincoln's right is Louis Agassiz. It was not until 1924 that the artist Albert Herter was commissioned to depict the scene, which never actually took place.

By 1863, Lincoln was personally acquainted with half of these figures, but he had probably not yet met Agassiz, although in March 1862, Agassiz addressed a letter to him requesting federal support for Albert Bierstadt, a young artist planning an expedition to the far west. Agassiz sent the artist to his friend Senator Charles Sumner, along with a note asking Sumner to read the "few lines" Agassiz had written for Bierstadt to take to the president. "If you approve of it," Agassiz wrote, "please tell him how and when he can best present himself at the White House." The "few lines" are:

> Dear Sir,
>
> In these days of trial of the nation, every thing which manifests intellectual activity and life is important, especially in reference to the estimation in which we are to be held abroad. A party of artists and scientific men, headed by W. A. Bierstadt, prepare to go among the Rocky Mtns this summer, to paint and collect specimens. It has occurred to me that it would not be

> improper to make an appeal to you, in their behalf, asking the patronage of the country for an expedition which is altogether intended to advance our knowledge of a region thus far little visited.
>
> With highest regard, Yours very truly, Louis Agassiz

The evidence suggests that Agassiz's letter never got beyond Sumner.[23] However, Agassiz employed the same argument—that in perilous times, it was good for the country to display its intellectual vitality—in February 1863 when he wrote to Wilson, Massachusetts's other senator, seeking his support for the creation of a National Academy of Sciences "as an evidence to go before the civilized world at large of the intellectual activity displayed even in these days of our public troubles . . . [which] would tell strongly in our favor, wherever learning is duly appreciated."[24]

A letter Agassiz wrote on the same day to Joseph Henry of the Smithsonian did not mention this lobbying with Wilson. Agassiz knew well that Henry opposed any effort to create such an academy at this time since Henry had discussed the issue a month earlier with Bache and Davis (who, along with Henry and some Harvard professors such as Agassiz, were members of the scientific clique called the "Lazzaroni," mentioned earlier). Henry, Bache, and Davis were all eager to see a more coordinated effort by scientists to help the war effort, but Henry's experience with the political establishment made him argue that Congress would neither support a body that might appear elitist nor adequately fund conferences and publications, that bitterness might arise between those scientists enrolled and those not, and that there was "great danger" that such a body's purposes of might be "perverted to the advancement of personal interest or to the support of the partizan politics."[25]

It was widely known that Agassiz longed to supplant the older American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), which he considered too decentralized and unprofessional, with a European-style academy: setting the agenda for scientific research and education nationally, chartered and funded by the national government, with membership deemed a high honor.[26] True, the AAAS provided no scientific support for the war effort while President Lincoln dealt with inventors and tested weapons; nevertheless, three of the scientists depicted in the 1924 painting, Henry, Bache, and Davis, provided increasingly valuable service to the government. Henry had already offered advice on such matters as the balloon trials and the Chiriqui coal deposits, Bache headed a committee providing technical advice for the blockade system, and Davis had served on that committee as well as the Ironclad Board. Henry, believing Bache and Davis had accepted his arguments against pushing for an academy right now, worked with both men to propose a simpler commission to advise the government on scientific matters. The navy was more open to the proposal than the army, and by 11 February 1863, Secretary Gideon Welles had approved the Permanent Commission of the Navy Department, comprising Henry, Bache, and Davis.[27]

The commission first met on 20 February and over the next two and a half years evaluated three hundred proposals for inventions and devices. The commission did no research but provided far better expertise on technological matters than could be offered by the harried president—who in the previous month alone had involved himself with Diller's gunpowder, the gauge for the transcontinental railroad, an electric detonating system, and what John Dahlgren called "some inflammable humbug." Shortly before the commission's first meeting, Lincoln was still pushing the army and navy to cooperate more, requesting that Edwin M. Stanton and Welles "appoint an officer from each of your Departments, for the purpose of testing the incendiary shell, & incendiary fluid, of A. Berney, and reporting to me whether it would be proper to introduce the shell, or the fluid, in some other form, one or both, into the Military or Naval service." Meanwhile on 19 February, Lincoln arranged to raise Davis as well as Dahlgren to the rank of rear admiral.[28]

To Lincoln, the Permanent Commission may have seemed impressive; to Agassiz, it was a distraction. The day before Henry joined Davis and Bache for the first commission meeting, Agassiz met with Davis and Bache at the latter's house, without Henry but with two other Lazzaroni, Peirce and Gould, and with Agassiz's friend, Senator Wilson. Wilson had recently obtained for Agassiz a seat on the Smithsonian Board of Regents, Agassiz's ostensible reason for being in Washington at this time. The group meeting at Bache's house not only wrote a charter for the National Academy of Sciences but also drew up a list of the fifty "founding" members. Someone may have argued that this would avoid delay, and Agassiz was happy to pontificate on who would be on the list.[29]

By the following day, when Henry first heard about this meeting, Senator Wilson was already introducing the charter as a bill for Congress's approval. Henry later told Agassiz he had made no immediate fuss because he never believed the bill would *be* approved.[30] However, a certain amount of lobbying may even have targeted Lincoln, though the evidence, in a letter Davis wrote, is frustratingly ambiguous: "I am looking for Agassiz to come here and be introduced to Admiral Foote, and then to go with me to the Capitol to see Mr. Grimes about the Academy bill. I go to the President's once more, and I hope for the last time, this morning."[31] With or without Lincoln's support, Wilson arranged for the bill to reach its final vote on the session's last day, 3 March 1863, avoiding debate by saying the list of fifty names need not detain Congress and no appropriations were involved. Lincoln, busily signing last-minute bills until 11 P.M., made the National Academy of Sciences a legal entity before the day ended. Whether Lincoln was then aware of how the bill originated, he might easily have learned the background later from Dahlgren or even Henry himself.

Naturally, Henry and Gray found themselves listed among the fifty "incorporators." Henry magnanimously declared support for the new organization, while Gray wrote to him that the "list on the whole is good . . . my being in is the only thing that troubles me." Captain Dahlgren was the first to resign his membership for reasons unknown, and it was a blow to lose a technician so important in the military and so close to the president. When the American Academy of Arts and Sciences met in Boston in May and elected Gray president, Peirce claimed this was done by "opponents . . . to show their hatred" of the NAS.[32]

Gray's letters to Darwin and Hooker did not mention the NAS fuss directly but contained amusing phrases about hoping "to torment Agassiz delightfully" at some meeting in Boston, doubting Agassiz "will ever be of any more direct use in nat. history," mentioning that "Agassiz and his small clique" were working against Gray, and saying he would "tease Agassiz, if I could see him, only he is of late so cross and sore. He has been digging various pits for me, but has fallen himself into [them] . . . However, I am good-natured; and only laugh at him." Agassiz was also digging holes for Darwin by frenetically accumulating samples for his museum, even enlisting the services of the federal government through Davis, Bache, and Henry. His purpose was partly revealed to a friend with contacts in Europe: "Spain alone might give us the materials to solve the question of transmutation *versus* creation."[33]

When Gray felt Darwin needed distraction from his illness, he entertained him with tales of Agassiz's increasing isolation. "It is amusing to see how *worried* Agassiz is. . . . By the way, now that you are in for 'reading of the very lightest sort' let some one read to you Agassiz on *Glaciers* in the *Atlantic* Mag. for November. It will not strain your brain." Gray also thought little of Agassiz's latest book, *Methods of Study in Natural History*, which stated that one of his purposes was to record his "earnest protest against the transmutation theory." There was little to discuss when Agassiz presented a lightweight paper "On Individuality among Animals, with Reference to the Question of Varieties and Species" at the new NAS's first proper session in Washington in January 1864.[34]

Just over half of the fifty "incorporators" attended, fewer presented papers, and of the four papers concerning natural science, three were by Agassiz. Few natural scientists were then interested in the NAS, and Gray had yet to attend a meeting.[35] Secretary Salmon P. Chase hosted a reception for the academicians, outdone two nights later by Secretary William H. Seward's soirée on 7 January, which was also attended, according to Welles's diary, by "the Cabinet, heads of foreign missions, the learned gentlemen and the committees on foreign relations of the two houses" as well as "a goodly number of ladies, Agassiz, Silliman, Professors Story and Caswell, etc., etc." Welles would have noted if Lincoln had been present. The next day, 8 January, Seward sent a formal letter to assure the members of the academy "that, with the authority of the President, I shall be happy to avail myself of the assistance" offered by the academy.[36] The NAS members also received that day an invitation, at rather short notice, to a one o'clock White House reception of which there is no record except that it happened.[37] Assuming Agassiz was among the twenty-two members who answered that day's roll call and attended the brief reception, it is unlikely that Lincoln used the occasion to converse individually with him.

Another ambiguous report of a possible encounter between Lincoln and Agassiz comes from an acerbic entry in Count Adam von Gurowski's diary for 13 January 1864, the day after the final session of the NAS:

> The President, the Cabinet, and the dignitaries run after the lectures on the Glacial Period. That is the fashion. Oh! those men have already enough of a glacial period in their brains. What innocent sheep to listen to this old rehash, which an academician serves to them as being the latest and newest dish. How one class of dignitaries is humbugged by that other class, the dignitaries of a sham academy![38]

According to Henry, Agassiz had lingered in Washington after the NAS conference ended to give "a very interesting course of three lectures on the subject of glaciers" in the institute's lecture room, "crowded to overflowing every night."[39] Gurowski's splenetic reference to politicians chasing after a particular "academician" is not solid evidence that the president actually attended any particular lecture by Agassiz. Gurowski himself attended few, if any, and may have merely assumed (if his diary is to be taken literally) Lincoln's presence. When Lincoln undoubtedly held a conversation with Agassiz a year later, the president reportedly said that he had never met the scientist before. If true, it was not for want of opportunities.

20

Mill Workers and Freedmen

The American Civil War affected the global economy and the lives of the thousands of Britons with some connection to the economic, political, or social development of the United States. Few had more concerns and personal contacts than Darwin. Letters from Americans such as Asa Gray occasionally mentioned relatives or students wounded or killed in the war, and Darwin presumably knew that Thomas Huxley's sister had moved to Nashville, Tennessee, where her surgeon husband worked in Confederate hospitals, assisted by their fifteen-year-old son, a nephew Huxley had never seen. Darwin no doubt agreed with the view Huxley expressed to his sister in 1864 that "slavery means, for the white man, bad political economy; bad social morality; bad internal political organisation, and a bad influence upon free labour and freedom all over the world." However, Darwin could never have written, as Huxley did, that "I have not the smallest sentimental sympathy with the negro; don't believe in him at all, in short. . . . [It is] for the sake of the white man, therefore, for your children and grand-children, directly, and for mine, indirectly, I wish to see [slavery] ended."[1] Darwin possessed ample sympathy for "the negro," and his concerns about the war went beyond second-hand contact with combatants. In Britain, there were also casualties, many of them fatal: the victims of the Lancashire "Cotton Famine." Any newspaper reader knew of their deepening plight as the Union blockade of Southern ports became effective, but Darwin also had a personal link to a former mill owner, William Rathbone Greg.

In their student days in Edinburgh, Greg had been a notable freethinker in the Plinian Society, later gaining renown for an unorthodox book, *The Creed of Christendom* (1851), positively reviewed by George Eliot, admired by the "Westminster set," and purchased for the shelves of the Lincoln-Herndon law office. Greg's father had pioneered the cotton textile industry, founding a mill in 1784 that was one of the first to import large amounts of American cotton. W. R. Greg himself gave up direct interest in running the mills a decade before the American Civil War wrought havoc in the industry. Greg's son Percy Greg was one of the

London journalists that Henry Hotze paid out of his Confederate funds to write pro-South propaganda for *The Index*. Shortly after the war, W. R. Greg wrote an article criticizing bourgeois civilization for social measures that allowed weaker members of society to survive and overpopulate, and later still, in *The Descent of Man*, Darwin cited some of Greg's ideas without actually embracing them.[2] But back in 1862, Darwin on at least three occasions donated to a relief fund for the Lancashire cotton workers who were being crushed in a "struggle for survival" not of their own making, and, considering the attitudes W. R. Greg displayed then and later, it is unlikely that he felt as keenly as Darwin did about the victims of the Lancashire "cotton famine."[3]

"We are sorry that you suffer in England," Gray told Darwin, "but you must blame the rebels for it, not us, and your Manchester people should have looked earlier to India for cotton." Darwin was pleased to reply: "We in north England seem tiding over our difficulty far better than anyone ever ventured to hope. The subscriptions have been gigantic."[4] Darwin wrote that on the day after Lincoln signed the final draft of the Emancipation Proclamation. At the same time, America's ambassador in London sent to Washington a document received from the mayor of Manchester. A great crowd had assembled in the city's Free-Trade Hall on 31 December to welcome the New Year and also the new era that Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation heralded. The lengthy "Address to the President," which the mayor forwarded, had been "agreed upon at a public meeting of the working men and others of this city" and includes the following heartfelt expressions:

> Since we have discerned . . . that the victory of the free North, in the war which has so sorely distressed us as well as afflicted you, will strike off the fetters of the slave, you have attracted our warm and earnest sympathy. We joyfully honor you, as the President, and the Congress with you, for many decisive steps toward practically exemplifying your belief in the words of your great founders: "All men are created free and equal."[5]

Lincoln was moved to make a formal yet emotional reply "To the workingmen of Manchester," part of which reads:

> I know and deeply deplore the sufferings which the workingmen at Manchester and in all Europe are called to endure in this crisis. . . . Under these circumstances, I cannot but regard your decisive utterance upon the question as an instance of sublime Christian heroism which has not been surpassed in any age or in any country. . . . I hail this interchange of sentiment, therefore, as an augury that, whatever else may happen, whatever misfortune may befall your country or my own, the peace and friendship which now exist between the two nations will be, as it shall be my desire to make them, perpetual.[6]

Today, not far from Manchester's Free-Trade Hall stands a remarkable statue of Abraham Lincoln sculpted by Pennsylvanian George Grey Barnard, whose depiction of Lincoln's rough-hewn features and slouching stance caused much controversy. A later casting, commissioned as a gift to Britain during the First World War, ended up not in Parliament Square, London, as originally intended but in Manchester. On the plinth is inscribed a large excerpt from Lincoln's finely hewn letter to his working-class friends in Manchester, who suffered uncomplainingly to see slave labor ended.

Lincoln's decision to recruit blacks for military service led to investigations into the condition and capabilities of blacks that resulted in the accumulation of an exceptional body of anthropological data. Although Lincoln was not closely involved, Darwin certainly made use of some of this material, which had a long-lasting influence on anthropologists and sociologists. Three different bodies were involved in these investigations—the U.S. Sanitary Commission, the Provost-Marshal General's Bureau, and the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission (AFIC)—all technically under the authority of the executive branch and overseen by Secretary Edwin M. Stanton, although the Sanitary Commission was actually a body of private citizens, and the AFIC worked closely with congressional committees.

Shortly after Fort Sumter, Lincoln received a proposal for the creation of a Sanitary Commission to offer medical and hygiene aid to troops beyond that provided by army medical services. On 13 June 1861, Lincoln signed into existence the commission whose membership included one of the nation's leading scientists, Alexander Dallas Bache of the Coastal Survey; Samuel Gridley Howe, a renowned Boston philanthropist and reformer; and Frederick Law Olmsted, whose books about the South had been so admired by Darwin and Herndon. As general secretary for the organization, Olmsted often liaised with the president.

Olmsted, who "had always been fascinated by statistics," instituted within the Sanitary Commission a Bureau of Vital Statistics to tabulate reports from the sanitary inspectors regarding mortality and sickness of volunteers. However, in September 1863, Olmsted resigned from the commission for several reasons, one possibly being a change in policy on the collection of statistics.[7]

According to a commission member, "early in 1863 a new class of examinations was undertaken . . . [to create] the most important contribution of observations ever made in furtherance of 'anthropology'" because the statistics could be used to compare white soldiers and the large number of "persons of African descent" now being enlisted in the army. This could provide far better data about human variation than Dr. Samuel G. Morton's six hundred mislabeled and mismeasured skulls gathering dust in Philadelphia. After Olmsted's departure, data collection was directed by Harvard astronomer and mathematician Benjamin Apthorp Gould, who initially reported—almost contemptuously—"No examinations of negro troops seem to have been made yet, and the importance of such inspections needs no comment."[8]

Gould, who had helped Louis Agassiz create the NAS a few months earlier, later reported that because he was working outside his field, he consulted with "friends whose pursuits are of an anthropological or physiological nature," listing Agassiz first among those who "aided with useful counsel."[9] Agassiz's influence can be seen throughout Gould's published report, but that report did not appear until 1869, so we will first examine another important wartime investigation of black people on which Agassiz also left a mark.

On 16 March 1863, Secretary of War Stanton commissioned a study that was not primarily anthropological but intended "to investigate the condition of the colored population" recently emancipated and to recommend "what measures will best contribute to their protection and improvement, so that they may defend and support themselves; and also, how they can be most usefully employed in the service of the Government for the suppression of the rebellion."[10] The American Freedman's Inquiry Commission comprised Robert Dale Owen of Indiana, Colonel James McKaye of New York, and Samuel Gridley Howe of Massachusetts. All were active abolitionists and may have been suggested to Stanton by Senator Charles Sumner, who had especially close links with fellow Bostonian Howe, a founder of the Republican Party, who also served with the Sanitary Commission.[11] Lincoln knew all three as well, and one historian has described McKaye as "Lincoln's eyes and ears concerning the Negro in the South."[12]

The three commissioners worked expeditiously, consulting widely and visiting the Carolinas, Florida, Louisiana, and even Canada for evidence about freedmen's conditions. Military men were interviewed about the loyalty, abilities, and needs of this transformed population. A preliminary report was issued within three months, and a final report eleven months later. These encouraged Stanton to proceed with black recruitment and also made recommendations that, according to historian John G. Sproat, later served as a "blueprint" for radical reconstruction.

After the preliminary report was published, Howe decided to consult with his friend Agassiz since the AFIC investigation "requires consideration of political, physiological, & ethnological principles" about which "I feel my own incompetency." Howe asked directly whether blacks and mulattoes, with no further additions from Africa, "will be a *persistent* race in this country," whether amalgamation was likely to become "more general" after abolition, and whether "the mulatto is *unfertile* [*sic*], bearing but few children, & those mainly lymphatic & scrofulous." If the black race was likely to grow, Howe suggested it would be futile to "resist it"; but if the "natural tendencies are to the diffusion, & final disappearance" of blacks, "then our policy should be modified accordingly."[13]

Agassiz replied in four letters dated 9, 10, 11, and 15 August, and his main themes were the gulf between the white and black races, the dire effects of amalgamation, and the policies needed to control both. He began with the declaration that if the black race was in decline, "a wise policy" would be to accelerate emigration and assist the decay. He mentioned both "the prevalent theory of the Unity of Mankind" and "the theory of a multiple origin of mankind," saying that whichever was true, some "races" are limited in their geographic range. However, he readily admitted that both Africans and Europeans had demonstrated they could flourish in America, and although blacks in the northern states would die out, those moving to "the warmer parts of our States" would flourish.[14]

With black numbers likely to increase, "the welfare of our own race" required that we avoid "the combination in one social organisation of two races more widely different from one another than all the other races." Agassiz felt blacks should be allowed "legal equality," but "social equality" was "a natural impossibility," according to evidence from antiquity as well as more recent European contacts with blacks in Africa. Agassiz conditionally prophesied, "With a free black population enjoying identical rights with the whites, [the Southern] States will sooner or later become Negro States with a comparatively small white population. This is inevitable . . . [under] the laws of nature." Rather than allow a black majority effectively to "extend the area of Africa," we should "do for the blacks all that humanity, the most active charity & the most disinterested Christian devotion may require of us . . . [without allowing] them to become an insuperable obstacle to our own progress." The principle underlying policy should be: "No man has a right to what he is unfit to use"—almost a quotation from Stephen A. Douglas's speeches.[15]

Agassiz referred dismissively to "contemporaries . . . who in their youth advocated the wildest plans for social reform. . . . All one-sided doctrines are doomed to disappointment . . . [and] there is no more one-sided doctrine concerning human nature, than the idea that all men are equal, in the sense of being equally capable of fostering human progeny & advancing civilization generally." Whether Agassiz had Lincoln in mind, he effectively reversed a famous statement Lincoln made eight months earlier: "But unless we are prudent now, we run simply the risk of losing our own liberties in the effort of securing to another race more than what it is now capable of maintaining."[16]

When later publishing these letters, Mrs. Agassiz omitted some of her husband's statements about amalgamation that might have offended Southern friends. For example, referring to the "production of half-breeds," Agassiz suggested that "the sense of abhorrence against slavery which has led to the agitation culminating in our civil war, has been chiefly and unconsciously fostered by the recognition of our own type in the offspring of Southern gentlemen, moving among us as negroes, which they are not." Agassiz argued that there should be different policies regarding "half-breeds" and "the pure black," aiding the latter toward "the fullest development of all its capabilities" while sparing no efforts "to check that [amalgamation] which is abhorrent to our better nature." Mrs. Agassiz also omitted her husband's rather prurient explanation for why this amalgamation—"abhorrent . . . unnatural . . . [and] most repugnant to my feelings"—nevertheless abounded in the South: he blamed "the family negress" for seeking the "advantages" gained by gratifying the "sexual desires . . . in the young men of the South," who then "gradually . . . seek more 'spicy partners,' as I have heard the full blacks called by fast young men."[17]

In his reply of 18 August, Howe asserted that he was no advocate of amalgamation but declared that it was slavery itself that had "impaired the purity and lowered the equality of the national blood." He accepted the distinction between "a vigorous black race" and "a feeble mulatto breed" and that some of both groups "have drifted northward, right in the teeth of thermal laws," so that they now dwell "where they would never live by natural election [*sic*]." With slavery's termination and thanks to "natural laws, . . . the colored population will disappear from the Northern and Middle States, if not from the Continent." In accepting the points pronounced by Agassiz, "it will be the duty of the statesman to favor by wise measures the operation of these laws, and the purification and elevation of the national blood."[18]

Although Howe agreed that "mulattoism is hybridism, . . . unnatural and undesirable," he added that "we should grant to every human being all the rights we claim for ourselves, and bear in mind the cases of individual excellence of colored people." In a postscript omitted by Mrs. Agassiz, Howe added rather optimistically, "Whatever may be the conclusion with regard to mulattoes, you will agree with me I trust in regard to the excellent qualities inherent in the ~~Afric~~ [*sic*] negroes."[19]

The final AFIC report quoted numerous witnesses by name but not Agassiz, even though several points made in the final chapter, "The Future in the United States of the African Race," were paraphrased from Agassiz's letters to Howe.[20] However, while repeating Agassiz's view that amalgamation was "a physical evil injurious to both" races and "ought to be discouraged by public opinion," the commission believed "it is beyond the legitimate reach of legislation." And while Agassiz's views were unchanged since 1850, the final report stressed, "The whites have changed, and are still rapidly changing, their opinion of the negro. And the negro, in his new condition as freedman, is himself, to some extent, a changed being. No one circumstance has tended so much to these results as the display of manhood in negro soldiers." The report ignored Agassiz's distinctions between legal and social rights and instead recommended strongly that the rebel states should be allowed back into the union *after* they changed their constitutions to secure "equal rights" for freedmen. It also went beyond the operation of the "natural laws" by urging the government to support the process of leasing to blacks in the insurrectionary districts properties that had been abandoned by rebels.[21]

Lincoln must have read the AFIC reports with great interest. He had already indicated a desire to see some confiscated lands made available to former slaves under Union protection in the Carolinas and Louisiana, and he personally wrote to Owen and McKaye a letter of introduction for an army chaplain who later became a leader in the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands.[22] Lincoln also sent McKaye to Louisiana in February 1864 to investigate whether blacks might be granted the vote when Louisiana produced its new constitution before rejoining the Union. McKaye reportedly assured an assembly of blacks that the president was concerned for their welfare and had sent him "to inquire into their condition and to ascertain their wishes."[23] McKaye may have caused the military governor, General Nathaniel P. Banks, to express his new view in favor of "such extension of suffrage as will meet the demands of the age," and Lincoln suggested to Michael Hahn, the new governor-elect, that Louisiana might let "some of the colored people" have the vote, "for instance, the very intelligent and those who have fought valiantly in our ranks." McKaye also urged Sumner to treat the disposition of freedmen and of the abandoned lands together, a topic McKaye may have discussed with Lincoln after returning from the Carolinas in the summer of 1863.[24]

McKaye recounted a meeting during which he related to Lincoln (in dialect, which he thought would amuse Lincoln) a discussion he overheard among some recently liberated Carolina slaves who were concerned whether "Massa Linkum" knew of their plight and could guarantee their freedom. One elderly "praise leader" dismissed their fears:

> "Brederin," said he, "you don't know nosen' what you'se talkin' 'bout. Now, you just listen to me. Massa Linkum, he ebery whar. He know ebery ting." Then, solemnly looking up, he added: "He walk de earf like de Lord!" . . . Mr. Lincoln was very much affected by this account. He did not smile, as another might have done, but got up from his chair and walked in silence two or three times across the floor. As he resumed his seat, he said, very impressively, "It is a momentous thing to be the instrument, under Providence, of the liberation of a race!"[25]

The Emancipator, six months after signing the proclamation, was pleased that European governments were now less inclined to aid the South, abolitionists had modified their criticisms, no slave insurrections or mutinies by white soldiers had occurred, and the Union army was swelling with black recruits. The AFIC's final report was hopeful that attitudes of both blacks and whites were changing, and evidence of a change in whites' attitude—but also of the need for much more—was provided at the end of that year when Lincoln became the first president in over thirty years to be reelected in what proved to be the most racist election in American history.

21

Testing Hopes and Hoaxes

Some time after learning that a black man had equated him with Jesus, Lincoln also learned of General Robert E. Lee's second coming—a second invasion of the North. It was a further desperate gamble by Lee, still hoping for some sort of "Saratoga," the colonial victory in 1777 that helped convince the French to support the Americans' War of Independence. But Lee failed at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, in July 1863, and at the same moment Vicksburg, Mississippi, fell to General Ulysses S. Grant, finally opening the Mississippi River and splitting the Confederacy. The South should have surrendered soon after these major defeats; however, once again, Lee's army was allowed to escape back into Virginia, infuriating Lincoln even more than the similar blunder after Antietam. Lincoln wrote an angry letter to General George G. Meade and then wisely decided not to send it, but the next day, he apparently told a secretary, "If I had gone up there, I could have whipped them myself."[1]

Military strategy might be another science that Lincoln felt he could master, but he also recognized the unique complexity of war and had a government to run. A defeated general could be replaced; a defeated president would lose all authority. So Lincoln tested further generals, searching for a victor, until he decided, eight months after Vicksburg, to make Grant lieutenant general in charge of the entire war. Grant later passed the test by securing total victory.

The Union army itself tested and gradually disproved the Southern hypothesis that one rebel was worth two Yankees, and now African Americans—no longer born on some other continent—were being tested to see if they would enlist in sufficient numbers, fight as well as white men, and demoralize the South into submission while inspiring the North into tolerance.

Lincoln himself would soon face the test of reelection. He had not yielded to secession, or despaired after numerous military setbacks, or let financial or constitutional obstacles impede the struggle, or allowed the Confederacy to gain the foreign recognition that would have ensured its independence, but he had also failed after three years to crush the rebellion.

Lincoln knew there was a larger test than all of these and made it the central point of his Gettysburg Address. Lincoln concisely described how a great civil war was testing a nation that, unlike other nations, was itself an experiment. A government based on the principle that "all men are created equal" had been brought into existence, but could it "long endure"? Few nations had even tried the experiment: Britain had achieved a mixed constitution and equality before the law, but only a tiny fraction of Britons possessed the right to vote, while the French had more than once proclaimed *egalité* but were again ruled by an emperor. The American "proposition" of equality was a promise it had yet to keep while slavery stood in denial. Yet, the promise was there and was now in the process of being fulfilled—if the whole experiment was not ruined by disunion. Elites in Europe hoped the United States would fail, lest the experiment be extended. Lincoln knew it would be the world's loss, and not just America's, if government "of the people"—not of kings, nobles, or a dominant race—perished from the Earth.

Gettysburg and Vicksburg indicated that the hypothesis had not been disproven, yet. But democracy would undergo further tests and still does.

"You in London were daily awaiting & expecting the capture of Washington . . . [with] a good-deal of little-concealed joy," wrote Gray with unconcealed joy after events disproved the pessimistic prophecies that had appeared in British newspapers when Lee began his bold invasion. "Oh foolish people! When will you see that there is only one end to all this:—and that the North never dreams of any other,—the complete putting down of the rebellion . . . attended with the annihilation of slavery."[2] Darwin replied promptly:

> How profoundly interesting American news is. . . . Do not hate poor old England too much. Anyhow she is the mother of fine children all over the world. I declare no man could have tried to wish more sincerely for the north than I have done. My reason tells me that perhaps it would be best,—of course best if it would end Slavery, but I cannot pump up enthusiasm. The boasting of your newspapers & of your little men, & the abuse of England, and the treatment of the free coloured population, and the not freeing Maryland slaves stops all my enthusiasm. If all the States were like New England the case would be different. I find a man cannot hope by intention. You will think me a wretched outcast. Farewell & do not hate me much.[3]

Gray volleyed back, blaming the press on both sides of the Atlantic for stirring up ill feeling, before addressing Darwin's prime interest: "[S]ome day . . . you will see that I was a fairly good prophet.—that the South might have *delayed* the abolition of slavery by giving up early in the conflict, but that every month of continued resistance hastened and ensured the downfall of slavery. That is now *doomed*, and sure near to rapid death, quick in some places—slower in others, but sure." Acknowledging Darwin's concern not only for freedmen in the South but also for those still enslaved in the Border States and still abused elsewhere in the North, Gray responded with a less than brilliant prophecy: "Ill usage of *negroes*—who make such good soldiers—will soon be unheard of"—wishful thinking that may have been shared by Lincoln.[4]

"Homely, honest, ungainly Lincoln is the *representative man* of the country." Like Gray, growing numbers of Americans increasingly valued the determination and intelligence of the president, despite his supposed lack of certain graces.[5] Lincoln might be reelected in nine months—easily if the war could be won by then, less so if not. However, his Democratic opponents attacked Lincoln not only for his failure to win the war but also for the Emancipation Proclamation, which, according to the scaremongers, would lead to widespread amalgamation. With abolition nearly a dead issue, the Democrats ranted instead about "racial purity." And as if the word "amalgamation" had been devalued by overuse, a new word was coined and doled out freely by Democratic politicians and newspapers.

Miscegenation: The Theory of the Blending of the Races, Applied to the American White Man and Negro was the title of a pamphlet that appeared in New York shortly before Christmas 1863. The anonymous but skillful author appeared to be an abolitionist—though that term was becoming obsolete, and the author took for granted that slavery was doomed. He concentrated on arguing *against* the fear of amalgamation. While the AFIC reports assured readers that "thermal lines" would prevent freed blacks from moving northward and cause those in the North to move southward, *Miscegenation* provided a freshly coined word and an opposite spin for amalgamation: race mixing should not be feared but embraced.

Miscegenation declared that both science and religion proved that "all the tribes which inhabit the earth were originally derived from one type," extensively quoted such monogenist authorities as "Dr. John W. Draper of New York University" (a well-known Darwinian), and proclaimed the "physiological equality of the white and colored races." The anonymous author asserted that "mixed races are much superior, mentally, physically, and morally, to those pure or unmixed," so the admixture of the blood of blacks would actually improve American blood. A natural attraction between whites and blacks explained rape on plantations and why radical abolitionists tended to have fair hair. It was now, said the author, the Republican Party's duty to promote miscegenation.[6]

Gift copies of *Miscegenation* were posted—along with a respectful letter inviting their opinions—to prominent antislavery speakers and writers such as sisters Sarah Grimké and Angelina Grimké, Lucretia Mott, Wendell Phillips, Theodore D. Weld, and possibly New York *Tribune* editor Horace Greeley. Prominent Republicans such as William H. Seward and Charles Sumner also reportedly received complimentary copies.[7]

Some of the antislavery press favorably reviewed the pamphlet, and on 8 February, Darwin might have read a dispatch by the London *Times*'s New York correspondent that "the advanced spirits" of the Republican Party were promoting a new doctrine that the black was "in many important respects the superior of the whites," and if whites do not "amalgamate," they will die out in America. The correspondent dismissed *Miscegenation* as something "for the study of such Yankee girls as have exhausted the sensational novels," yet he perceptively suggested that the author's unctuous style "might almost make one suspect him of being a *mauvais farceur*."[8]

The Democratic press naturally used *Miscegenation* as a stick for beating Republicans. Samuel S. Cox, a rabid Democratic congressman, not unreasonably questioned the science behind *Miscegenation* but then went beyond the worst polygenist to assert that the "mulatto does not live; he does not recreate his kind; he is a monster," adding, contradictorily, that mulattoes "scarcely survive beyond one generation." Curiously, Cox also quoted from two or three letters that had been written by the antislavery recipients of gratis copies of *Miscegenation*. These letters—offering qualified praise and written in all innocence—had been sent, as recommended, to "The author of *Miscegenation*" at the publisher's address. Cox's access to them casts doubt on his denials of any knowledge of the authorship of the pamphlet. Shortly afterward, Dr. John H. Van Evrie attacked Cox for condemning "miscegenation" but not emancipation: "the mixing of blood follows the mixing of 'freedom.'"[9]

Journalists David Goodman Croly and George Wakeman of the Democratic organ the *New York World* are the actual authors of *Miscegenation*, a fact not revealed for decades.[10] The *World* cleverly delayed commenting until there was a bandwagon to board. Greeley's pro-Republican *Tribune* defensively suggested the discussion merited a more seriously scientific approach and two days later set an example by publishing a report from London about Thomas Huxley's recent lecture that had lacerated James Hunt's paper "On the Negro's Place in Nature" for its utter lack of scientific credibility.[11]

Having apparently read the *Times*'s account of *Miscegenation*, Huxley first dismissed "the fanatical abolitionists [who] do not scruple to affirm that the negro is the equal of the white man—nay, some go so far as to tell us that the American stock would be the better for the infusion of a little black blood." Hunt's paper, of course, took the entirely opposite view, and Huxley stormed, "Nothing, indeed, can surpass its scandalous absurdity, except the reasoning by which it is supported." After reading several quotations, Huxley concluded, "And this is put before the unsuspecting public, without comment or qualification, as the verdict of science touching 'The Negro's Place in Nature!'"[12]

Count Adam von Gurowski, the Washington insider and diarist, was evidently familiar with the scientific controversies. His *Diary* not only discusses "the newly-invented sacramental word . . . *miscegenation* . . . [that] agitates the press and some would-be savants in Congress" but also echoed Huxley by asserting that if the slaveholders' brains were "dissected, their *cerebella* would be found to have less convolutions than those of the negro." The count's little rant noted that "the newly made Academicians come not to the rescue of science! Poor souls, still entangled in Blumenbach, and under the leadership of an Agassiz, wailing against Darwin." Whether Darwin ever read *Miscegenation*, he would know all about it from numerous reviews, including a scathing one in Hunt's *Anthropological Review a*nd from the attention the subject received in the weekly journal that Huxley edited, the *Reader*.[13]

Back in New York, Van Evrie seized the moment to turn Hunt's *Negro's Place in Nature* into a pamphlet and also to publish a book, *Subgenation: The Theory of the Normal Relation of the Races; an Answer to "Miscegenation."* Supposedly anonymous, this was actually just a new edition of Van Evrie's 1861 diatribe, *Negroes and Negro "Slavery": The First an Inferior Race; the Latter Its Normal Condition*, updated with topical references to Lincoln's "Miscegenation Proclamation" and a quotation in which Agassiz supposedly demolished the "great luminary of the single race theory" James C. Prichard. Van Evrie, literally capitalizing on the debate while promoting a Democratic victory in the upcoming election, advertised the sale of printed cartoons such as "Miscegenation, or the Millennium of Abolitionism" and campaign pamphlets such as "The Miscegenation Record of the Republican Party." Another pamphlet, possibly unconnected to Van Evrie, appeared in September entitled "Miscegenation and the Republican Party" and includes excerpts from some of the letters that Croly and Wakeman, the authors of *Miscegenation*, had harvested from unsuspecting antislavery leaders.[14]

Lincoln had also received a copy of *Miscegenation* along with a polite letter asking permission to dedicate a new work, *Melaleukation*, to the president.[15] Other Republican officials who received copies of *Miscegenation* had made no response, and Senator Sumner reportedly suspected a hoax from the start. Lincoln was too canny to take the bait, and his only reported comment on the affair came months later when someone asked if he was in favor of miscegenation. Punning in several directions, Lincoln quipped, "That's a democratic mode of producing good Union men, & I don't propose to infringe on the patent."[16]

A well-informed New York correspondent for the London *Morning Herald* sent a dispatch late in October—when its information could not possibly bounce back to America before the election—exposing *Miscegenation* as a hoax. That he was probably in league with the authors is suggested by his respect for their anonymity and knowledge that a free copy had been sent to Lincoln who had so far proved himself "shrewd enough to say nothing on the unsavoury subject."[17]

The Democrats, shifting from defending slavery to advocating white supremacy, caricatured Lincoln as "Abraham Africanus I" and (with a nod to the evolution debate) "the original ourang-outang," while Lincoln's swarthy complexion was attributed to some African blood in his genealogy.[18] The political effect of all this was small. Lincoln picked up only a third of the votes cast in New York City but won the state overall and would still have been reelected without it.[19] The hoax merely indicated that ignorance about the nature of species and hybridity did not prevent anyone from hanging his preexisting views on whatever supposedly scientific evidence was at hand. Allegedly scientific discourse was still reflecting rather than supplanting prejudice. This demonstration of ignorance and racism failed to remove Lincoln from office, yet it may have dampened his hope that white Americans were steadily becoming more tolerant of black Americans.

On 12 April 1864, Darwin wrote to Agassiz for the first time since publishing *On the Origin of Species* nearly five years earlier. The present letter thanked Agassiz for sending his *Methods of Study in Natural History* "with some other publications," as Darwin vaguely expressed it. He found something positive to say, though not about the publication itself: "I thank you sincerely for the above present. I know well how strongly you are opposed to nearly everything I have written & it gratifies me deeply that you have not for this cause taken . . . a personal dislike to me." To the distinguished entomologist B. D. Walsh, Darwin confessed that he "only skimmed" Agassiz's *Methods* and "thought it a very poor Book." Darwin also told Walsh, who had written a paper calling Agassiz's review of *The Origin* an "absurdity," that he was "delighted at the manner in which you have bearded this lion in his den."[20]

When Asa Gray urged Darwin to "set [Alfred Russel] Wallace upon . . . *Methods of Study* (forsooth)," Darwin passed the comment verbatim to Wallace, adding, "So Asa Gray seems to think much of your powers of reviewing & I mention this as it assuredly is *laudari a laudato*." Darwin was always keen to praise Wallace, who was so modest about his own abilities, which Darwin rated highly. Their mutually respectful relationship had grown warmer since Wallace's return from Malaysia in 1862. To Darwin's invitation, Wallace immediately responded that Agassiz "seems so utterly wrong . . . that it would be a very long & wearisome task to answer him." Wallace mentioned being lately stimulated by reading Herbert Spencer, who "appears to me as far ahead of John Stuart Mill as J. S. M. is of the rest of the world, and I may add as Darwin is of Agassiz."[21]

Spencer's influence possibly contributed to Wallace's sudden interest in the topic so dear to Darwin and, more recently, to Charles Lyell and Huxley: the origins of man. In May 1864, while the miscegenation controversy flared on both sides of the Atlantic, Wallace sent to Darwin a paper on "The Origin of Human Races and the Antiquity of Man Deduced from the Theory of 'Natural Selection.'" He told Darwin that he wanted to explain "the vast mental & cranial differences between man & the apes combined with such small structural differences in other parts of the body" and "the diversity of human races combined with man's almost perfect stability of form during all historical epochs." Along the way, Wallace also developed the point made earlier by Gray: that monogenism and polygenism could be combined "by means of Mr. Darwin's celebrated theory of 'Natural Selection.'"[22] Wallace argued that the existing human races originated from a "single homogeneous race" inhabiting some tropical region and still lacking the faculty of speech or higher reason: yet, man had enough "reason" to give him advantages over other species, allowing him to multiply and spread to different environments. Through the process of "natural selection," those different environments caused infinitesimally small changes (over not thousands but millions of years) resulting in the "specific modifications which still distinguish the chief races of mankind." Those racial characteristics became fixed because *then* these races all developed that "higher reason" that allowed them to control their environment, which in turn prevented natural selection from causing any further changes in man's physical forms. However, natural selection *did* continue to act—and differentially—on the brain because a "hardier . . . more social race" developed in temperate zones while regions with a more "perennial supply of vegetable food"—thus reducing the need to "prepare for the rigours of winter"—prevented the development of "an indigenous inter-tropical civilisation."

Invoking the subtitle of *On the Origin of Species*, Wallace argued that the "great law of 'the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life'" leads to the "inevitable extinction of all those low and mentally underdeveloped populations with which Europeans come in contact." Wallace listed Red Indians, Tasmanians, Australians and New Zealanders, who will eventually "die out"—not mentioning Africans even though the logic of his argument would include them. The difference between polygenists and monogenists, Wallace concluded, rested solely in the fact that polygenists defined man by his possession of "higher faculties," while monogenists emphasized "form and structure." Wallace implied that agreeing on some criteria might resolve some disputes and also looked forward to a time when the species of man would once again become a "homogeneous race" as the continuing effects of natural selection on intellect meant that eventually "no individual . . . will be inferior to the noblest specimens of existing humanity."[23] Wallace did not speculate whether this new homogeneity would result from making love or making war, that is, through miscegenation or extermination. Darwin was impressed. "The great leading idea is quite new to me, viz that during late ages the mind will have been modified more than the body; yet I had got as far as to see with you that the struggle between the races of man depended entirely on intellectual & *moral* qualities." However, "I am not sure that I go with you on all minor points. . . . I rather differ on the rank under classificatory point of view which you assign to man: I do not think any character simply in excess ought ever to be used for the higher divisions." Darwin felt that difference in intellect even between man and ape was one of degree rather than kind, and the degree was far less between races of man. Darwin preferred to look at non-mental variables: "With respect to the differences of race, a conjecture has occurred to me that much may be due to the correlation of complexion (& consequently Hair) with constitution. Assume that a dusky individual best escaped miasma & you will readily see what I mean." Darwin mentioned that he had persuaded the British army's medical department to send a survey to surgeons in the tropics to collect information on correlations between racial characteristics and resistance to disease—at the very time when the Sanitary Commission and military doctors in the United States were collecting anthropometric data from soldiers in the Union army. "I dare say I shall never get any returns," Darwin predicted correctly. Returning to the question of how human variations became long-lasting (though perhaps not permanent) races, Darwin thought intellect and morality less important than another factor. "I suspect that a sort of sexual selection has been the most powerful means of changing the races of man. I can shew that the different races have a widely different standard of beauty. Among savages the most powerful men will have the pick of the women & they will generally leave the most descendants."[24]

Sexual selection was extremely important to Darwin but too complex to describe in a letter. Just recovering from a prolonged period of illness, Darwin may have doubted he would ever have the energy and time to pursue this important work. And Wallace's approach, however faulty at present, was far closer to his own than Lyell's or Huxley's. Darwin suddenly tried to pass his work onto Wallace's shoulders: "I have collected a few notes on man but I do not suppose I shall ever use them. Do you intend to follow out your views, & if so would you like at some future time to have my few references & notes?"[25]

Wallace replied immediately, grateful for Darwin's "flattering remarks" and "critical observations" but skeptical about sexual selection and politely evading Darwin's offer: "I may possibly some day go a little more into this subject, & if I do will accept the kind offer of your notes." Wallace added that another writing project would occupy him for "a long time." After a fortnight, Darwin replied briefly, "merely to thank you & just to say that probably you are right on all the points you touch on except as I think about sexual selection which I will not give up." His offer was quietly shelved: "I doubt whether my notes would be of any use to you, & as far as I remember they are chiefly on sexual selection."[26]

Wallace and Darwin continued their stimulating correspondence and debated "sexual selection" for years, but after that summer of 1864, there was no further suggestion of direct collaboration. While Darwin could believe Wallace would do a better job than Huxley or Lyell in applying natural selection to man, another self-professed "Darwinian" felt he was doing exactly that. Karl Vogt was a distinguished botanist whose *Vorlesungen über den Menschen* (1863) had so enthusiastically espoused natural selection that he became known as the Darwin of Germany. However, the real Darwin was alarmed that Vogt's "Darwinism" seemed to support a form of polygenism by theorizing that at least three different types of ape evolved into as many types of man. Darwin did not, and did not wish to, believe this. The English translation of Vogt's work, *Lectures on Man*, was published in 1864 by the odious James Hunt of the ASL, and Darwin noted in the margin of his copy: "gives Agassiz blunders on first coming in of various classes."[27]

By the end of 1864, Darwin could see that Vogt, Huxley, and Lyell were far behind Wallace, but any lingering hope that Wallace would adopt his ideas more fully was dispelled when Wallace began to embrace a view that was simply anathema to Darwin—and also rejected as irrational by Lincoln. Wallace was about to become a believer in spiritualism, only three or four years after Mary Lincoln began holding séances in the White House.

22

Spiritual Forces

The belief in unseen forces controlling changes in the environment is the essence of primitive religion. The slow development of rationalism eroded its edges, replacing magic with logic. The pace of change accelerated: gravity was explained, and magnetism harnessed into electricity and eventually telegraphy. This, along with the Atlantic steam packets and improvements in printing processes, allowed any interesting development among one civilized people to become quickly known to all the rest. Mesmerism and hypnotism—still parlor games or lyceum demonstrations—seemed the next mysteries to be explained. By the mid-nineteenth century, these trends advanced a movement that was partly an extension of and partly a reaction against modern science. "Modern spiritualism" either negated science or represented its next step. The gullible were exploited, while the skeptical scrutinized "mediums" just as they would self-styled magicians, assuming any powers at work were natural and explicable. Lincoln and Darwin are alleged to have joined other skeptics investigating that quintessential spiritualist manifestation, the séance; however, the evidence that they fully participated is (appropriately) lacking in substance.

Modern spiritualism has no agreed starting point, though many say it began in upstate New York in 1848. One evangelist called this region "the burned over district" after concluding that the fires of Methodism, passing through earlier, left too few nonconverts to provide further "fuel." Actually, the "burning-over" cleared space for all sorts of new growths during the decades preceding the Civil War, including Shakers, Millerites, Mormons, Charles Grandison Finney's revivalism, and the first women's rights convention, held in Seneca Falls in 1848. Also in that year, two young daughters of John Fox of Hydesville, Margaret, thirteen, and Kate, eleven, began their association with a sort of "spiritual telegraph": the "knocks" and "raps" supposedly produced by departed spirits seeking to communicate with this world. News of the phenomena spread rapidly among neighbors and reached an older, married sister living in Rochester, who now came to help turn her siblings' gift into a career.[1]

From the start, the Fox sisters' noisy manifestations from the spirit world differed from the inspirations or revelations bestowed on palm readers and crystal-ball gazers. The rappings, knockings, and inexplicably moving objects brought about through the medium of the sisters were more open to public investigation and objective measurement than, say, the phrenological relationship between bumps on one's head and one's intellectual and moral qualities. The more open activities of the sisters allowed supporters to emphasize natural law rather than the supernatural, external facts rather than a state of mind, and an expanding knowledge rather than some revelation.[2] In any case, the sisters ignited a flame of interest in spiritualism and soon had many imitators, some bringing comfort to many who were bereaved but found little solace in orthodoxy, and others—more obviously charlatans—requiring payment in advance and working in darkened parlors.

The Fox sisters were repeatedly investigated. The "Rochester Rappers" gave demonstrations in New York City that won over Horace Greeley's New York *Tribune*, yet three distinguished doctors at the University of Buffalo reported in February 1851 that the knocks and raps were caused by toe-joint cracking. Other mediums were investigated in Pennsylvania when a prominent university chemist, Dr. Robert Hare, set out in 1853 to discredit them but ended up a convert. He published his results in 1855 but failed to convince his state legislature to fund further research and was howled down at a meeting of the AAAS in 1854. In that year, thirteen thousand citizens asked Congress to institute serious investigations, but the legislators generally laughed before tabling their petition.[3]

To promote such investigations—or to sell newspapers—the Boston *Courier* in 1857 offered a $500 reward to any medium who could satisfy a panel of Harvard scientists, including Louis Agassiz. Kate Fox, by then nineteen years old, was one of those investigated, but the manifestations were poor, and Agassiz was uncooperative: refusing to sit in the circle, moving about, making desultory remarks, and, when some knocks were heard, saying he would soon explain their cause, which he never did. Instead of a promised written report, the panel issued a verdict more moralistic than scientific: "That any connection with spiritualistic circles, so called, corrupts the morals and degrades the intellect. [The panel members] therefore deem it their solemn duty to warn the community against this contaminating influence, which surely tends to lessen the truth of man and the purity of women."[4]

Most mainstream clergymen, feeling usurped, adopted the same tone of disapproval but, like most politicians and scientists, were simply ignored as the number of believers swelled into the millions. Other mediums quickly rivaled the Fox sisters, of whom the most prominent, Kate, was hardly seen between

1861 and 1866 when she served as the private medium for a recently bereaved New York banker who managed to have many reunions with his late wife during four hundred séances with Kate. He was later instrumental in sending Kate to England where her impact was significant.

Abraham Lincoln could hardly escape the spiritualist phenomenon so long as he read newspapers and reviews.[5] There were frequent reports in his admired *Annual of Scientific Discovery*, whose editor, David Ames Wells, once signed a statement attesting the mediumship of D. D. Home, a young man who often appeared with Kate Fox both in America and later in England.[6] The senator who introduced the spiritualist petition to an amused Congress in 1854 was Lincoln's old political rival James Shields, who made it clear he thought spiritualism a "delusion." Lincoln's friend Orville Browning went to a spiritualist in Illinois in 1855, finding her talk "intolerable twaddle," and a clairvoyant apparently operated in Springfield in the 1850s.[7] William H. Herndon, whose interest in the metaphysical extended to the paranormal, had purchased for his library several books that related to spiritualism and had been published before Lincoln left for Washington. These included detailed accounts of the Fox sisters; three volumes by "the seer of Poughkeepsie," Andrew Jackson Davis; a British compendium on *Occult Sciences*; and an influential study by skeptic-turned-believer Robert Dale Owen—the Indiana politician later appointed to the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission.[8] When Lincoln became president, spiritualists showered him with dozens of books and hundreds of letters.[9] He presided over a war that created hundreds of thousands of grieving relatives, an obvious market for clairvoyants who openly advertised in Washington newspapers. Among colleagues who may have embraced spiritualism were his commissioner of agriculture Isaac Newton, General Daniel Sickles, and Gideon Welles. Mrs. Welles, one of Mary Lincoln's few close friends, may have consulted a clairvoyant after her son died, perhaps influencing Mary to do the same after the death of eleven-year-old Willie in February 1862. Mary's black seamstress, Elizabeth Keckley, who sought out Washington's spiritualists after her only son was killed in the war, could also put Mary into contact with them.[10]

Mary certainly attended numerous séances during and after her Washington years, at least one and perhaps more occurring in the White House itself or in the Soldiers' Home where the Lincolns spent summer evenings. The most frequently cited source for Lincoln's own participation in a séance is unreliable, published by the medium Nettie Colburn (later Maynard) in 1891, after most who might have refuted her had died and a year before her own death.[11]

Lincoln almost certainly met Nettie herself, but the best evidence of this contradicts her account. Lincoln's friend Joshua Speed visited Washington and became acquainted with Nettie and her landlady, Mrs. Cosby, who prevailed on him to write them an introduction to the president. Speed wrote in a sly-dog tone, suggesting that "it will I am sure be some relief from the tedious round of office seekers to see two such agreeable ladies . . . both mediums & believers in spirits and . . . I am quite sure very choice spirits themselves. . . . Mrs Cosby says she is not a medium though I am quite sure she is or should be."[12] Whatever Speed expected Lincoln to read between these lines, they were written several months *after* Nettie, by her later account, had already performed in front of Lincoln at a séance in Georgetown in December 1862.

Mrs. Lincoln attended a séance at that place and period, according to Orville Browning: "Mrs. Lincoln told me she had been, the night before, with Old Isaac Newton, out to Georgetown, to see a Mrs. Laury, a spiritualist and she had made wonderful revelations to her about her little son Willy who died last winter, and also about things on the earth." The medium revealed that the cabinet "were all enemies of the President" and "would have to be dismissed."[13] Nettie Colburn is not mentioned, and if Mary had said that her husband had come along, Browning would have recorded it.

Whether Lincoln ever attended one of his wife's séances, he apparently took an interest in one of her mediums. Charles Colchester styled himself "Lord Colchester," being, he said, the illegitimate son of an English nobleman. He is mentioned in Nettie's book, but two sources more objective than Nettie's fail to sustain the conclusion that Lincoln was actually present at a Colchester séance.[14]

According to Lincoln's friend journalist Noah Brooks, Colchester came to Mary's notice while she was grieving over Willie. Mary told Brooks about Colchester's manifestations during one or more séances held at the Soldiers' Home, but Brooks declined her invitation to attend an "exhibition" of Colchester's powers at the White House. "Meanwhile," according to Brooks, he attended a Colchester séance at a private home in Washington, taking the opportunity to expose Colchester as a "swindler and a humbug" and threatening him with prison if he did not leave Washington immediately. How Brooks's account relates to two others written by astronomer Simon Newcomb is unclear since neither man specified dates, and only Brooks actually names Colchester.[15] Newcomb worked at Washington's Naval Observatory and was a colleague of the Smithsonian's director, Joseph Henry, about whom Newcomb later wrote a memoir. It was Henry's visceral dislike of spiritualism that had prevented Robert Hare from bringing the topic before the AAAS in 1854. Whenever spiritualists asked permission to use the Smithsonian's lecture room, Henry told them they must first "cause a table in my room, in open day, to rise into the air by a spiritual volition, without physical contact. . . . But in no case was this feat attempted in my presence." Newcomb's first anecdote stated that Henry "frequently" told the story about a spiritualist who "had held several séances with the President himself," while the later account only implied that Lincoln himself attended séances: "President Lincoln, . . . though not a believer in spiritualism, was from time to time deeply impressed by the extraordinary feats of spiritualistic performers, and naturally looked to Professor Henry for his views and advice on the subject. Quite early in his administration one of these men showed his wonderful powers to the President, who asked him to show Professor Henry his feats." Henry agreed to meet the spiritualist at the Smithsonian although Henry "generally avoided all contact with such men." When aural manifestations occurred, supposedly in different parts of the room, Henry declared that he did not know how the sounds were made but was certain they came not from the room but from the spiritualist's person. According to Newcomb's second anecdote, during a later train journey, Henry found himself conversing with an electrical instruments maker who, discovering he was addressing an expert, boasted of making for "spiritual mediums" the apparatus necessary for their "manifestations" and had, in fact, supplied the very man (still unnamed) that Henry had met at the Smithsonian.[16]

One assumes, though Newcomb did not say, that Henry reported this to Lincoln. Whether such information led to Brooks's confrontation with Colchester, both Brooks and Lincoln naturally aimed to protect Mary from charlatans, yet Lincoln probably did not wish to deprive his wife of any consolation she could find after Willie's death. As grief piled on grief, Mary continued to consult spiritualists, and the last photograph of Mary Lincoln was taken in 1872 by an exploitive "spirit photographer" in Boston who falsified a ghostly image of Lincoln resting his hands on her shoulders.[17] Lincoln, while still alive, sought no consolation in spiritualism but found distraction in the tremendous burden of his work. As a young man, Lincoln reportedly said he doubted there was any afterlife, and according to Dr. Phineas D. Gurley, whose church both he and Professor Henry attended in Washington, Lincoln expressed annoyance that people thought him interested in spiritualism: "A simple faith in God is good enough for me, and beyond that I do not concern myself very much."[18]

Lincoln's simple faith, which did not include dead people spiritually telegraphing the living, barely encompassed any communications between man and God. He invoked God's name in speeches and led the nation in a form of national prayer through proclamations—usually based on resolutions passed by earnest members of Congress. Lincoln sometimes requested prayers but also questioned their logic, especially since "the rebel soldiers are praying with a great deal more earnestness, I fear, than our own troops, and expecting God to favor their side," as Lincoln wrote in September 1862 in reply to a memorial from "Chicago Christians of all denominations" calling for the immediate emancipation of the slaves. Lincoln rather pointedly added that he received "opposite opinions and advice" from "religious men, who are equally certain that they represent the Divine will." He told these Chicago Christians—whose advice was no more helpful than that he constantly received from spiritualists—that he hoped "it will not be irreverent for me to say that if it is probable that God would reveal his will to others, on a point so connected with my duty, it might be supposed he would reveal it directly to me." Irreverent or not, Lincoln said, "It is my earnest desire to know the will of Providence in this matter. *And if I can learn what it is I will do it!*" (original emphasis). Then, Lincoln the empiricist described the only way forward: "I must study the plain physical facts of the case, ascertain what is possible and learn what appears to be wise and right."[19]

Lincoln showed no personal interest in spiritualism even though his own wife brought into the house what had become a national pastime. Spiritualism also became, like cotton and wheat, one of America's exports to Britain. Even the original "Rochester Rappers," the Fox sisters, made their way to London, to be investigated by scientists well known to Darwin. Indeed, spiritualism became a sore point between Darwin and a colleague he greatly admired.

During his twelve years in the tropics collecting specimens until 1862, Alfred Russel Wallace "heard occasionally of the strange phenomena said to be occurring in America and Europe under the general names of 'table-turning' and 'spirit-rapping.'" Having dabbled with mesmerism in his youth and now hearing of these new mysteries "which modern science ignored because it could not explain, I determined to seize the first opportunity on my return home to examine into these matters." Wallace later wrote that it was in July 1865 that he first witnessed "the phenomena of what is called Spiritualism, in the house of a friend—a sceptic, a man of science, and a lawyer, with none but members of his own family present."[20] Wallace began a serious and life-long study.

Darwin's first inkling probably came from Joseph Dalton Hooker in November: "Wallace has turned table turner I am told." Darwin wrote no reply as he was about to see Hooker in London, where he might also quiz Charles Lyell or Thomas Huxley about the rumor. In his next letter to Wallace, Darwin made no allusions and included more than his usual quota of praise for Wallace's latest scientific papers that not only "interested me, as everything that you write does" but also "will make many more converts among naturalists than long-winded books such as I shall write if I have strength." When Wallace next sent a letter five months later, he argued that Darwin should employ Spencer's phrase "survival of the fittest" in place of "natural selection," which implied too much "thought and direction" and was thus too easily misunderstood as "personifying Nature." Impressed by the argument, Darwin agreed to use Spencer's terminology in his next book. "Whether it will be rejected," Darwin joked, "must now depend on the 'survival of the fittest.'"[21]

Just weeks later, Wallace began publishing a series of articles entitled "The Scientific Aspect of the Supernatural" in an obscure journal. He also had a pamphlet printed for private distribution. One recipient, Huxley, responded, "I am neither shocked nor disposed to issue a commission of lunacy against you. It may be all true, for anything that I know to the contrary, but really I cannot get up interest in the subject." Darwin must have had difficulty believing that Wallace, having so recently and rationally warned against "personifying Nature," could be dabbling with spiritualism. The subject did not appear in their letters or, so it seems, in conversations over the next two years.[22]

Then in April 1869, Wallace forced the issue while reviewing new editions of two of Lyell's works. Wallace asserted that natural selection could explain most other developments but not that of human consciousness. The brain of "the lowest savages, such as Australians or the Andaman Islanders," was barely smaller or less complex than "that of the average members of our learned societies," yet the savages' actual "mental requirements" for their way of life "are very little above those of many animals." Natural selection should have provided the savage with a brain only slightly larger than an ape's, so why "was an organ developed far beyond the needs of its possessor?" Wallace concluded that "in the development of the human race, a Higher Intelligence has guided the same laws for nobler ends."[23]

Darwin could not abide such teleological arguments, whether Gray's insistence on "design" or Wallace's reliance on "a Higher Intelligence." He considered both essentially supernatural explanations that obstructed the search for genuine explanations. Forewarned by Wallace before the review appeared, Darwin worried, "I hope you have not murdered too completely your own and my child." After reading the review (and writing "No!" underlined three times in the margin beside the remarks on man), Darwin spluttered, "If you had not told me I should have thought that they had been added by someone else. As you expected, I differ grievously from you, and I am very sorry for it."[24]

Regarding "my 'unscientific' opinions as to Man," Wallace replied, "a few years back I should myself have looked at them as equally wild and uncalled for," but his views had been altered by the evidence he had seen of "forces and influences not yet recognised by science." Wallace listed three other men of science "who have all investigated the subject for years" and reached similar conclusions. He asked that Darwin suspend "judgment for a time till we exhibit some corroborative symptoms of insanity."[25]

It was bad enough that one of these three allies was Robert Chambers, the suspected author of *Vestiges*, but Darwin was annoyed further when Lyell, after receiving Darwin's lament about Wallace, blithely replied, "I rather hail Wallace's suggestion that there may be a Supreme Will and Power which may not abdicate its function of interference but may guide the forces and laws of Nature."[26]

"Modern spiritualism" had revolted Darwin ever since it crossed the Atlantic in the early 1850s. He once dismissed some hypothesis, saying it "makes me sick—it is like 'magnetism' turning a table."[27] Yet, while most of Darwin's colleagues shared his view, others, like Wallace, were showing interest. Dr. James M. Gully, Darwin's hydrotherapist, joined the Spiritual Athenaeum, a society founded in 1866 by the American medium D. D. Home, who had come to London a decade earlier. Francis Galton, anthropologist, later eugenicist, and Darwin's cousin, was by 1872 attending séances during which investigations of Home and Kate Fox were conducted by the eminent chemist and physicist William Crookes, with whom Wallace worked closely.[28]

Galton sent Darwin descriptions, assurances that Crookes was making a careful study, and even suggestions that his cousin take part in a séance himself: Darwin pleaded ill health.[29] When Lady Derby was "staggered" by an article by Crookes and insisted on an opinion, Darwin admitted being "much perplexed; . . . I cannot disbelieve Mr. Crooke's statement, nor can I believe in his result." Finding "consolation" in possible explanations of "nerve-force," Darwin hoped "that a number of men, such as Professor Stokes, will be induced to witness Mr. Crooke's experiments."[30]

Darwin's cousin and brother-in-law Hensleigh Wedgwood had recently begun attending séances with Wallace and later became vice president of the Society for Psychical Research. Eventually, he and Darwin's brother Erasmus coaxed Darwin to attend his first and last séance in January 1874 at "Ras's" house, next door to Wedgwood's London home. Erasmus, the arch skeptic Darwin had always respected, was either genuinely interested or simply playing host. He knew Charles was more likely to attend if Emma did, and both would be interested in meeting at least two of his guests, G. H. Lewes and George Eliot. Lewes dabbled in science and was a known critic of spiritualism, and the Darwins greatly admired Eliot's novels. Most of the other guests were close relatives, and Erasmus hired a medium and "spirit guide" for the occasion.[31]

Lewes refused to take seriously a medium who insisted on total darkness and, with George Eliot, left early, missing "the grand fun," as Darwin described it later to Hooker: "a medium . . . made the chairs, a flute, a bell, and candlestick, and fiery points jump about in my brother's dining room, in a manner that astounded every one, and took away all their breaths." Lewes and Eliot were not the only ones who missed all this: so did Darwin. He had found the room "so hot and tiring," he told Hooker, "that I went away before all these astounding miracles, or jugglery, took place." After escaping for some rest upstairs, "I came downstairs and saw all the chairs, etc., on the table, which had been lifted over the heads of those sitting round it." Admitting that it "passes my understanding . . . how the man could possibly do what was done," he clung to his own skepticism—despite a momentary lapse: "The Lord have mercy on us all, if we have to believe in such rubbish."[32]

Fortunately for Darwin, his wife, unlike Lincoln's, showed no enthusiasm for spiritualism beyond her orthodox belief in an afterlife. Emma spoke dismissively of her brother Hensleigh's "life among the spirits" but kept an open mind, unlike her husband who "quite made up his mind he *won't* believe it, he dislikes the thought of it so much." When asked if this was not a flaw in her husband's scientific method, Emma replied, "Yes, but he does not act up to his principles," adding, tongue in cheek, "Oh yes, he is a regular bigot."[33]

A few weeks later, another séance took place with the same medium, this time at Hensleigh's house and with Huxley present. Whatever happened did not undermine Hensleigh's conviction or weaken Huxley's disdain. Huxley sent Darwin a lengthy report more notable for sardonic humor than verifiable results, concluding, "Mr. Williams is a cheat and impostor." Darwin sighed, "Now to my mind an enormous weight of evidence would be requisite to make one believe in anything beyond mere trickery. . . . I am pleased to think that I declared to all my family, the day before yesterday, that the more I thought of all that I had heard happened . . . the more convinced I was it was all imposture."[34]

On this issue, Darwin was content to ignore some colleagues' serious investigations so long as other colleagues supported his view. He had not been so hidebound when studying transmutation, yet the common factor is that in order to overcome prejudice against species change, Darwin had to oppose all explanations not grounded on material or natural causes. He lacked incentive to investigate what he deemed trivial nonmaterialism: no spiritual force planned human racial diversity.

Wallace's supernatural explanation of human development had dismayed but also stimulated Darwin, who was "now writing and thinking much about Man." Wallace was delighted Darwin was "really going to bring out your book on Man." In 1858, Wallace had caused Darwin to start writing *On the Origin of Species*, mainly to establish his precedence. Now, eleven years later, Wallace's invocation of a "Higher Intelligence" was a kind of last straw for Darwin. Lyell's and Huxley's recent work on man was disappointing, while Vogt's and Wallace's seemed to hand victory to the special creationists of Agassiz's ilk. If Lyell could "hail" Wallace for allowing some "Supreme Will" to interfere with natural selection, then it might still be argued that God created men unequal.[35]

In January 1870, Wallace sent Darwin a volume of his collected essays including a revised version of "The Limits of Natural Selection as Applied to Man." Darwin heaped praise on most of the volume, "But I groan over Man—you write like a metamorphosed (in retrograde direction) naturalist, and you the author of the best paper that ever appeared in the *Anthropological Review*!"[36] Darwin now realized that the public might never see natural selection applied properly (as "sexual selection") to the issue of human races unless he did it himself.

Both Lincoln and Darwin instinctively turned to scientists (Joseph Henry and Thomas Huxley) to expose fraudulent mediums, even though they knew that other highly rational men—such as Robert Dale Owen and Alfred Russel Wallace—believed one could bring spiritualism under the umbrella of science. Lincoln and Darwin saw spiritualism as religious superstition having nothing to do with science and reason.

Wallace's argument that some "Higher Intelligence" influenced human evolution left Darwin unmoved, but Lincoln seemed to accept that God might play some role in the world, however remote and inscrutable. Lincoln once reportedly said, "Doesn't it strike you as queer that I, who couldn't cut the head off of a chicken, and who was sick at the sight of blood, should be cast into the middle of a great war, with blood flowing all about me . . . Doesn't it seem strange to you that I should be here?" Calling something "strange" and "queer" barely evokes divine influence, and yet at times, Lincoln seemed to accept even that: "It is a momentous thing to be the instrument, under Providence, of the liberation of a race!"[37]

Excellent scholars disagree about whether Lincoln's religious views changed during the Civil War. Lincoln's religious references were meant to rally people to a cause, while contemporaries' testimonies usually had some axe to grind, leaving scholars to take their pick. One source that at least can be said to have above-average value is Joshua Speed, Lincoln's intimate friend and a fellow skeptic from the 1830s. Speed saw Lincoln many times during the Civil War, and his brother was in the cabinet. Regarding Lincoln's possible religious transformation, Speed said in a lecture in the 1880s, "The only evidence I have of any change, was in the summer before he died." Speed entered a room and found Lincoln by a window reading the Bible. Speed said, "I am glad to see you so profitably engaged." "Yes," said Lincoln, "I am profitably engaged." "Well," said Speed, "If you have recovered from your skepticism, I am sorry to say I have not." Lincoln looked him in the face and, placing a hand on Speed's shoulder, said, "You are wrong Speed, take all of this book upon reason that you can, and the balance on faith, and you will live and die a happier and better man." Elsewhere in his lecture, Speed provided context for this "evidence." The same tension between "reason" and "faith" was present when, according to Speed, Lincoln "often said that the most ambitious man might live to see every hope fail; but no Christian could live to see his fail, because fulfillment could only come when life ended." And Speed said frankly that Lincoln "was cautious about expressing himself against public opinion when it did no good" and "very cautious never to give expression to any thought or sentiment that would grate harshly upon a Christian's ear."[38]

The horrendous strain of the war, which engraved itself on Lincoln's face, might indeed have influenced his religious views. Not referring specifically to religion, Lincoln's secretary John Hay wrote in 1890 that "it would be impossible to say when the change began; but he was in mind, body and nerves a very different man at the second inauguration from the one who had taken the oath in 1861."[39] In that brief but powerful Second Inaugural Address, Lincoln attempted, as the long war neared its end, to begin the healing by diminishing any sense of victory or defeat, dispelling self-righteousness and partisan blame, and, unexpectedly, undermining the view so prevalent around him: that God had obviously backed the North.

> Neither party expected for the war, the magnitude, or the duration, which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the *cause* of the conflict [i.e., slavery] might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each

> looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not that we be not judged.

That last sentence, echoing a line often used during his debates with Stephen A. Douglas, also delivered a moral judgment—just before Lincoln quoted scripture to say we should do no such thing. He continued, "The prayers of both could not be answered; that of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes." Thus, Lincoln again emphasized God's inscrutability—before scrutinizing God's will and offering this interpretation:

> If we shall suppose that American Slavery is one of those offences which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South, this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offence came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a Living God always ascribe to Him?

The numerous qualifications—"if we shall suppose" that events *might* accord with the nature of God as "always" described by "believers"—suggest Lincoln had not suddenly joining the latter. After doubting God had responded to either side's prayers, he went on to equate prayers with something he could at least feel: hope. The fact that the war still continued was better ascribed to divine will than presidential incompetence.

> Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue, until all the wealth piled by the bond-man's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord, are true and righteous altogether."

That God might be the source of justice does not remove the difficulty of discerning his will. Lincoln had his own view of what was "right" to do and encouraged his audience to hope this might be the same as God's view.

> With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.[40]

Lincoln was addressing a shattered nation and trying to give meaning to recent horrific events and purpose to an uncertain future; Darwin was merely corresponding with thoughtful men, many of whom, like Gray, Lyell, and Wallace, still believed that God had some immanent role in nature. Lincoln made no pretense of certainty ("as God gives us to see"), and, conversely, Darwin avoided pure atheism by likewise confessing ignorance and relying, as Lincoln did, on hope. "I feel most deeply that the whole subject is too profound for the human intellect," Darwin told Gray in one of their exchanges about design. "A dog might as well speculate on the mind of Newton. Let each man hope & believe what he can."[41]

23

Meeting Agassiz

In January 1865, reelected but still drafting his Second Inaugural Address, Lincoln had what was apparently his first and last face-to-face conversation with America's most famous scientist, Louis Agassiz.[1] Noah Brooks, the president's journalist friend, was one of two witnesses to the interview in the White House and the only one to describe it, in three slightly different accounts.[2] When the nation's chief executive met the nation's foremost scientist, Lincoln was in a good mood, with imminent military victory making the burdens of office more bearable. The normally ebullient Agassiz, however, bore the signs of recent depression and physical illness caused, indirectly, by Darwin.

Agassiz maniacally added specimens to his Museum of Comparative Zoology, as if possessing more than any other institution in the world would give his scientific views greater authority. He spoke of soon-to-be-acquired evidence that would prove natural selection false and separate creation true, yet the piles of specimens catalogued by assistants were hardly utilized by their master, and the few works he published contained nothing new.[3] He rejected natural selection but without offering rigorous argument in peer-reviewed journals, while the rehashed content of his popular lectures was rehashed again for *Atlantic Monthly*.

In July 1864, *Atlantic Monthly* published Agassiz's recent lecture "The Ice-Period in America," in which he asserted, "The glacier was God's great plough; and when the ice vanished from the face of the land, it left it prepared for the hand of the husbandman." When others pointed to evidence that rich vegetation also *preceded* the Ice Age, Agassiz declared, "The soil we have now over the temperate zone is a grain-growing soil" intended for man, as part of God's "purpose." The entomologist, B. D. Walsh, asked Darwin, "Do any European authorities uphold him in these views?" Darwin replied, "All the younger good naturalists, whom I know think of Agassiz as you do . . . & *no* geologist now agrees with Agassiz."[4]

In America, Agassiz's standing remained high with the public, but the scientific community was steadily abandoning him. More and more of his students rebelled, and in August 1864, Agassiz suffered a particular humiliation at the second biennial National Academy of Sciences (NAS) session—the first that Asa Gray attended—when a new member was elected that Agassiz had specifically opposed. Agassiz was furious; the heated debate was later expunged from the minutes; and on the train back from New Haven, Agassiz spoke so offensively to Gray that he formally broke relations. When Agassiz attacked Joseph Henry for supporting Gray, Henry calmly tried to show Agassiz how he was wrong and also urged him "to first take care of your health. . . . It is lamentable . . . how much time, mental activity, and bodily strength have been expended among us . . . in personal altercations, which might have been devoted to the discovery of new truths."[5]

Agassiz remained unwell and irritable through the fall and winter, but when he attended the next NAS session in Washington on 3–7 January 1865, he seemed chastened by the memory of the previous meeting, and all went smoothly. Agassiz stayed on for a meeting of Smithsonian regents on 9 January, when a new chancellor was elected: Salmon P. Chase, who was no longer secretary of the treasury. To Chase's surprise, Lincoln accepted his fourth offer to resign in June 1864 but then secured Chase's appointment as chief justice of the Supreme Court, replacing the deceased Roger B. Taney—who had also preceded Chase as chancellor of the Smithsonian.[6]

While lingering in Washington, Agassiz may have begun planning his next project, a trip to Brazil. In a letter dated 22 March, he wrote that "a few weeks ago"—so, perhaps in January—he was pondering how best to recover "after all the fatigue of the two last years. . . . I felt that I must have new scenes to give me new life." Agassiz's "attention was turned to the natural history" of Brazil, whose emperor, Dom Pedro II, had already shown him "many marks of kindness," such as ordering his subjects to gather rare fish for the great scientist, who, at the outset of his career, had done pioneering work on Brazil's fishes. Agassiz's recent public lectures had theorized that South America should offer evidence of a worldwide glacial destruction of organic life that, as he later told students in a lecture during the voyage to Rio, would demonstrate that the transmutation theory was "wholly without foundation in facts" for such a destruction would sever any evolutionary link and require a special creation of new life forms.[7]

By coincidence, Washington was just then buzzing with news that the U.S. Navy, while capturing a Confederate raider, had violated Brazilian neutrality. "Every one says we must make rightful *amende* to Brazil," Gray wrote Darwin about this miniature "*Trent* affair." Agassiz's old friend Senator Charles Sumner later appealed to him, "You are a naturalist; but you are a patriot also; . . . plead for our country, to the end that its rights may be understood," which Agassiz eventually did.[8]

Agassiz had visited Washington many times and perhaps even attended a White House reception but apparently had never before met the president individually. But now, he was brought to the White House by Samuel Hooper, a wealthy Boston businessman, a trustee for Agassiz's museum, and a Republican

Congressman then under consideration for Chase's vacated post. Perhaps, Hooper hoped Agassiz's fame and charm would somehow improve Hooper's chance of joining the cabinet, but Brooks's account implies that it was Lincoln's idea that he should meet Agassiz. With the war going well, the president may have felt he could indulge himself in other interests. In a recent statement to *Scientific American*, Lincoln promised to support the more practical aspects of science by doing "all in his power to encourage and to promote the progress of these arts by sanctioning all wise legislation in behalf of inventors."[9]

Agassiz's only "inventions," according to detractors, were his theories. What Lincoln knew about Agassiz or his detractors is impossible to gauge. Agassiz's widely known views on the human races had to be distasteful to Lincoln, who may have shared the disdain expressed by William H. Herndon in 1867 (quoted earlier): "We had no need of Agassiz out here to tell us what things meant."[10] Herndon was then referring to geology but certainly felt likewise about supernatural notions of special creation. Any of the three American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission (AFIC) commissioners could have told Lincoln about Agassiz's correspondence with Howe, and since, according to Gray, Henry admired Darwin's work, he may have explained to Lincoln the controversies dividing Darwin and Agassiz. Lincoln could also have learned from Henry about Agassiz's role in the sudden creation of the NAS, and the matter probably came up whenever Admiral John A. Dahlgren explained the reason (otherwise lost to history) why he was the first of the original fifty "incorporators" to resign from the academy back in May 1863.

Whoever instigated this meeting, the fourth person who was present, Noah Brooks, prefaced his earliest account with a revealing context:

> In his eagerness to acquire knowledge of common things [Lincoln] sometimes surprised his distinguished visitors by inquiries about matters that they were supposed to be acquainted with, and those who came to scrutinize went away with a vague sense of having been unconsciously pumped by the man whom they expected to pump. One Sunday evening last winter, while sitting alone with the President, the cards of Professor Agassiz and a friend were sent in.[11]

That preface hints at Lincoln's slyness as an interrogator, but another memory caused Brooks to preface his two later accounts of the interview differently—with an anecdote about Lincoln's reaction to the news just received that Edward Everett had died. Lincoln was somewhat acerbic about the man who had shared the platform at Gettysburg, mentioning his overrated oratorical style and fondness for "props." Of course, the news of Everett's death and the arrival of Agassiz were unconnected, and yet, Agassiz's style of lecturing was one of the conversation's topics that stuck in Brooks's memory.

Also in the later accounts, Brooks named Agassiz's friend and described the moment when the visitors' cards were brought to Lincoln: "'Agassiz!' exclaimed the president with great delight, 'I never met him yet, and Hooper promised to bring him up to-night.' I rose to go, when he said, 'Don't go, don't go. Sit down, and let us see what we can pick up that's new from this great man.'"[12] (Lincoln was perhaps being as ironic as Darwin when he, too, had described Agassiz as a "great man.") In Brooks's earliest account, not only was he told to stay and, as it were, join in but he was also "unconsciously pumped" (to use his own phrase) regarding his opinion of Agassiz:

> The President had never met Agassiz at that time, I believe, and said, "I would like to talk with that man; he is a good man, I do believe; don't you think so?" But one answer could be returned to the query, and soon after the visitors were shown in, the President first whispering, "Now sit still and see what we can pick up that's new."[13]

Whether "Honest Abe" believed Agassiz was entirely "a good man," it is likely he was fishing for Brooks's opinion or predisposing Brooks so he would not be aware of what Lincoln had in mind for this interview. In any case, Brooks seemed amazed by the conversation's blandness, as if he had expected conflict. "To my surprise, however, no questions were asked about the Old Silurian, the Glacial Theory, or the Great Snow-storm." In the later accounts, Brooks replaced that line with this: "The conversation, however, was not very learned. The President and the savant seemed like two boys who wanted to ask questions which appeared commonplace, but were not quite sure of each other. Each man was simplicity itself." Brooks found the mutual wariness puzzling. His earliest account gives a more detailed description of the way the conversation apparently opened:

> [I]ntroductions being over, the President said: "I never knew how to properly pronounce your name; won't you give me a little lesson at that, please?" Then he asked if it were of French or Swiss derivation, to which the Professor replied that it was partly of each. That led to a discussion of different languages, the President speaking of several words in different languages which had the same root as similar words in our own tongue; then he illustrated that by one or two anecdotes, one of which he borrowed from [Thomas] Hood's "Up the Rhine."[14]

While showing an innocent interest in his visitor and offering some humorous entertainment, Lincoln was also demonstrating a powerful memory and surprising interest in foreign languages. He was probably aware, even if Brooks was not, that philological evidence had been used by those wishing to demonstrate a common origin for mankind. Darwin knew the subject well: his cousin Hensleigh Wedgwood had written a book on it. And Agassiz had defended separate creation by attacking "The Reliability of Philological Evidence," the title of his essay for Nott and Gliddon's *Indigenous Races of the Earth* in 1857. Agassiz's philological views were often attacked in reviews Lincoln might have read.

Brooks recollected that the next subject discussed was lecturing. After quoting some humorous verse, the president "soon returned to his gentle cross-examination of Agassiz, and found out how the Professor studied, how he composed, and how he delivered his lectures; how he found different tastes in his audiences in different portions of the country." Although Brooks recognized this as "cross-examination," Lincoln was so indirect—perhaps to lull Agassiz's suspicions—that he lost Brooks's interest: the journalist dropped the last sentence in his later accounts. Yet, Lincoln possibly wished to hear from Agassiz's lips how his theories—especially those touching on the matter of race—had elicited different reactions in the North and in the South.

This point led to the only other topic that Brooks thought worth recording: Lincoln's allusion to his own brief career as a lecturer. Once again, the earliest account is the fullest.

> In passing, the President said that many years ago, when the custom of lecture-going was more common than since, he was induced to try his hand at composing a literary lecture—something which he thought entirely out of his line. The subject, he said, was not defined, but his purpose was to analyze inventions and discoveries—"to get at the bottom of things"—and to show when, where, how, and why such things were invented or discovered; and, so far as possible, to find where the first mention is made of some of our common things. The Bible, he said, he found to be the richest store-house for such knowledge; and he then gave one or two illustrations, which were new to his hearers.

Again, Lincoln demonstrated his amazing memory as well as his seemingly pious ability to quote the Bible at will, but he also revealed that he had thought deeply on the origins of things: whether mankind's origin slipped into the conversation is not recorded. While Brooks's earliest account concluded with the words, "The lecture was never finished, and was left among his loose papers at Springfield when he came to Washington," his second account added some pleasantry from the professor: "Agassiz begged that Lincoln would finish the lecture, sometime. Lincoln replied that he had the manuscript somewhere in his papers, 'and,' said he, 'when I get out of this place, I'll finish it up, perhaps, and get my friend B— to print it somewhere.'" For Brooks, more interested in Lincoln than in Agassiz, this reference to Lincoln's single lecture was fascinating news, but, again, Lincoln may have offered this tidbit mainly to encourage Agassiz to say more about his own lecturing or the concept of origins.[15]

Brooks gave two different versions of the interview's end. The first was written only weeks after Lincoln's death: "When afterward asked why he put such questions to his learned visitor he said, 'Why, what we got from him isn't printed in the books; the other things are.'" This was amplified in the 1878 version:

> When these two visitors had departed, Agassiz and Lincoln shaking hands with great warmth, the latter turned to me with a quizzical smile and said, "Well, I wasn't so badly scared, after all! were you?" He had evidently expected

> to be very much oppressed by the great man's learning. He admitted that he had cross-examined him on "things not in the books."

Even after revising it, Brooks did not consider this point—that Lincoln was not overly impressed by Agassiz's learning—worth keeping in any form in the last account written in 1895. To give Brooks his due, he did seem conscious of his own bewilderment but did not appreciate how fully Lincoln was familiar with writings by or about Agassiz, or why Lincoln wished to learn more than those works could tell, or why Agassiz may have been wary of being completely frank with the author of the Emancipation Proclamation. It was Lincoln at his most charming and disarming, no doubt raising many insignificant points to disguise the odd one of consequence. The two protagonists were no doubt more aware of what was happening during this conversation than the friendly journalist.[16]

Brooks did not mention Brazil, and perhaps Agassiz had not yet begun serious planning. However, within a few weeks, Agassiz made up his mind, and the semi-holiday turned into the major expedition Agassiz had always longed to conduct, especially after a philanthropist donated funds and a steamship company put a vessel at Agassiz's disposal. Secretary Gideon Welles provided a letter instructing naval officers to offer every assistance, and Secretary William H. Seward sent a similar message to the American consul in Rio de Janeiro.[17]

Agassiz's expedition left New York on 1 April 1865 and returned in August 1866, just in time for Agassiz to attend another NAS meeting and read a paper on "Traces of Glaciers under the Tropics." This and a new series of lectures promoted Agassiz's supposed discovery of evidence of a glaciation so severe that animals and plants that lived before could have no genetic link to those that came after: evidence that the transmutationists were mistaken.[18] Agassiz dismissed the fact that other researchers had already spent years in the Amazon without seeing any sign of former glaciation. A young geologist who accompanied the expedition, Charles F. Hartt, was troubled by Agassiz's interpretations but waited several years before admitting that the geological finds had never indicated glaciation.[19]

While Agassiz was still planning his journey to slave-ridden Brazil, Lincoln was busy trying to extirpate slavery forever in the United States. Knowing that the Emancipation Proclamation was only partial and, as a wartime measure, might easily be challenged in the courts after the war, Lincoln supported the congressional effort to abolish slavery constitutionally through the Thirteenth Amendment. When Congress approved the amendment on 31 January 1865, Lincoln insisted on signing the document, which required no signature.[20] The subsequent process of state ratification was complicated by controversies over whether states in rebellion could or should be part of the process and, if so, whether ratification would become a condition for their readmission to the Union or whether a speedy "reconstruction" of the Union would make it easier to achieve that ratification. Lincoln did not wish to coerce states, but he did try vaguely to link reconstruction and ratification in the hope they might accelerate each other—in order to end the war more quickly and destroy anyone's hope to preserve slavery. In a month's time, eighteen of the twenty-seven states needed for final ratification (if Southern states were counted) had approved. However, in March, only Vermont added itself to the list. It appeared that the remaining eight ratifications might not occur until the war itself was over.

On their second day out of New York, steaming toward Brazil, members of Agassiz's expedition were glancing westward and saw "a cloud of smoke, in the direction of Petersburg."[21] It was Ulysses S. Grant's final assault on Richmond, Virginia: a week later, Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox. As soon as Darwin read the news, he dashed off a letter to Gray: "I have not written for a long time . . . [and] I have nothing particular to say now, but the grand news of Richmond has stirred me up to write. I congratulate you, & I can do this honestly, as my reason has always urged & ordered me to be a hearty good wisher for the north, though I could not do so enthusiastically, as I felt we were so hated by you." He was glad he and others "who thought that you could not entirely subdue the South" had been proved wrong. Although Darwin had "always thought that the destruction of Slavery would be well worth a dozen years war," he also feared that "it will take many years before your country will shake down to its old routine."[22]

President Lincoln was endeavoring to hasten the time when the country could "shake down to its old routine." The war's end raised new opportunities as well as previously submerged problems. Losing the commander-in-chief's war powers would narrow Lincoln's options, and Congress was keen to assert authority over the process of "reconstruction."

Lincoln favored the most rapid reconstruction possible, on the basis of a plan he announced in December 1863. If the rebel states ended resistance, formed new governments that accepted emancipation, and elected new representatives to Congress, then other issues (punishment of Confederate officials, repudiation of Confederate debts, suffrage for blacks, and whether former rebel states should take part in ratifying the Thirteenth Amendment) could be sorted out later, through collaboration among Lincoln, Congress, and the restored state governments. However, many leading Republicans felt the new "reconstructed" governments must first grant at least some of the emancipated blacks the protection afforded by the right to vote *before* those states could be included in the ratification process or allowed back into the Union.At the time of Lee's surrender, it appeared that those wishing to exclude the rebel states from the ratification process would fail, but those insisting on black suffrage before any particular state was reconstructed were prevailing. A crucial moment had occurred in March, shortly before Lee's surrender, when Congress debated whether to accept Louisiana's new state constitution and to seat her newly elected representatives in Congress.

Louisiana had followed Lincoln's reconstruction plan and had even ratified the Thirteenth Amendment but had not granted voting rights to its black citizens, even though an exceptional proportion of them had been born free, owned property, and served in the Union armies. Lincoln had long urged that some Louisianan blacks, "the very intelligent and those who have fought valiantly in our ranks," ought to be considered for the suffrage, but he was not discouraged or greatly surprised by Louisiana's reluctance: most Northern states had never granted blacks the vote and remained unwilling to do so. However, many influential Republicans in Congress, eager to promote blacks' rights and Congress's control of Reconstruction, made a stand regarding Louisiana's failure. Key senators managed to "talk out" the time allotted for debating a bill for Louisiana's readmission to the Union so that it would have to be reintroduced later, and Congress meanwhile prevented Louisiana's elected representatives from taking their seats in Congress. This naturally cast doubt on the validity of Louisiana's ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment (and likewise on ratifications by Virginia and Arkansas). The whole matter would have to wait until the next session in December 1865. Thus, as of March, the various rebel states could not know for another seven months whether Congress would admit their representatives into the national legislature even if the citizens of those states ceased fighting, took the necessary oaths, and went so far as to approve the Thirteenth Amendment.

Lincoln could not know either, but during those seven months, he could try to move matters forward. In a speech on 11 April, only two days after Lee's surrender, Lincoln forcefully argued why it would be better to accept Louisiana into the Union without first compelling the state to approve black suffrage, and in his conclusion, he said, "What has been said of Louisiana will apply generally to other States."[23] Lincoln hoped to advance his plan for a swift reconstruction, prevent the emergence of guerilla warfare, clear the path for the Thirteenth Amendment, and provide both whites and blacks with ways to work out their problematic relations within the same country. To improve the situation, Lincoln had recently renewed his proposals regarding compensation, and there is even evidence—albeit controversial—that Lincoln also sought to revive interest in colonization.

Proposals for compensation to slave owners had previously faced opposition from both Northerners and Southerners, but Lincoln may have believed the war's end would change that. Allegedly, Lincoln made an offer of compensation for slave owners when he met with Confederate leaders (received only as private individuals) during the Hampton Roads conference in February, but when Lincoln then brought the subject before his cabinet, the idea of broad compensation was promptly rejected. Lincoln dropped the matter but might have brought it up again at a later date.

That Lincoln had "sloughed off" the policy of colonization eight months earlier was something expressed by his secretary John Hay, not by Lincoln himself. Back then, Lincoln had good reasons to ignore a potentially divisive issue during the run-up to his reelection. The earlier colonizing efforts—the Chiriqui project and the Ile à Vache experiment—had, by February 1864, come to naught for reasons that did not necessarily invalidate Lincoln's original purposes. Opponents of colonization felt that the Emancipation Proclamation and blacks' service in the military made colonization even more pointless. When Congress repealed the funds for colonization in July 1864, Hay saw that his boss raised no objection.

Lee's surrender changed the situation. The excellent service rendered by 180,000 black soldiers was about to end, but it was clear that white attitudes toward blacks were still extremely negative. The evidence was in the July 1863 Draft Riots in New York City, which resulted in the savage killing of an unknown number of blacks, in the vicious "miscegenation" campaign during the 1864 election, in the failure of numerous states—south *and* north—to approve black suffrage, and in the stalled effort to ratify the Thirteenth Amendment. If radical Republicans continued to obstruct reconstruction unless the former rebel states granted black suffrage and if those states refused to be blackmailed into doing so after already being defeated in war, then hope of swiftly restoring good relations between the states—and improving those between the races—was indeed faint.

Lincoln's reelection and the end of the war made it possible—and in some ways more pressing—to revive the plans for colonization. The huge blockade fleet could now provide the massive shipping that might be required. With or without the Thirteenth Amendment, emancipation was becoming a practical fact, shifting attention to the underlying problem of how the two races—and especially the defeated former masters and the energized former slaves—were to live together. Lincoln probably felt they would make a better job of it with the "safety valve" of colonization in place, so that blacks who found the continuing prejudice too oppressive could have a means to escape, while those who wished to stay could do so, knowing it was a choice they had made and that some whites might come to respect.

After the Chiriqui project was derailed (largely by opposition from Latin American countries) and even as the Ile à Vache venture was failing through speculators' corruption, Lincoln tried another approach. In June 1863, he discussed with a British official a project to facilitate black colonization to British Honduras, and the planning certainly remained active into 1864 and was perhaps halted only when Congress terminated funds in July. Lincoln asked his attorney general's opinion whether, despite Congress's action, the executive still had authority to pay the Reverend James Mitchell as colonization agent.[24]

The only other direct (but controversial) evidence that Lincoln persisted in contemplating colonization is the testimony of General Benjamin F. Butler, who many years later published two accounts of an interview he had with Lincoln in April 1865.[25] Inconsistencies and contradictions within Butler's two accounts have made historians wary, yet if one accepts that the accounts are not deliberate falsifications and that some interview of this type occurred, then Butler provides possible insights into Lincoln's thinking.

Returned from a visit to captured Richmond and under the spell of victory, Lincoln planned for a postwar future. He worried that rebel troops might carry on guerrilla warfare and also that over a hundred thousand blacks, many only recently freed, now possessed arms and had proved that they knew how to use them: if bitter, defeated, Southern whites tried to enforce their will, these freedmen might demonstrate further that their race was far from "indolent."[26]

Butler's accounts suggest both men saw some value in colonization, although Butler suggested Lincoln had impractical notions that Butler investigated at Lincoln's request, returning with "statistics and calculations" proving it was utterly impossible "to export all of the negroes" because "negro children will be born faster than your whole naval and merchant vessels . . . can carry them from the country."[27] It seems unlikely that Lincoln ever expected to colonize "all of the negroes," knowing well that many had no desire to leave. Perhaps, he gave Butler an improbable plan to mull over so the general could better it with some plan of his own, which was certainly Butler's response. The general's plan concentrated on one group of blacks: soldiers still under Lincoln's command while their enlistments lasted and capable of looking after themselves in a harsh foreign environment. They could even be given something useful to do: dig a canal through the Isthmus of Panama—an idea Lincoln had actually hinted at when he mentioned to the delegation of blacks in 1862 that the location he had in mind "is to be a great highway from the Atlantic or Caribbean Sea to the Pacific Ocean."[28]

Butler's credentials as an abolitionist and a friend to blacks—many of whom he had commanded during the war—made him a good choice politically to fend off opposition to any particular scheme, and the only plan that Butler was not likely to criticize was one he originated himself (or thought he had). Regarding Butler's hastily produced plan, Lincoln made no firmer commitment than to utter a homely phrase: "There is meat in that, General Butler, there is meat in that." He also told Butler to work on the matter further.[29]

For Lincoln, colonization still made some sense. That long history of racial oppression was unlikely to change into one of racial harmony anytime soon. Likewise, it was difficult to imagine how Congress could ever force *any* states to grant blacks suffrage except through some compulsion that would leave deep scars, especially in those recently vanquished. How blacks could be protected without that right to vote was impossible to foresee. Lincoln probably did not believe that blacks were likely soon to "become extinct" as a race or to drift naturally toward the more tropical states, and although he had spoken up for the humanity of blacks and more recently for their possible political rights, he knew that most of his fellow citizens did not share his views. Considering the history of race relations in America in the century that followed, we cannot say that Lincoln's pessimism about the situation was unfounded. The option of a partial colonization, although repulsive to many at the time and to most people today, may have seemed a less harmful course of action than many others then being advocated and later resulting in yet another century of intense suffering for African Americans.

On reading of the Confederacy's surrender, Darwin had written his hearty congratulations to Asa Gray on 19 April 1865, not knowing that Abraham Lincoln had been assassinated five days earlier. The tragic news did not reach London until 26 April. The following day, the London *Times* carried details of the murder, of Britain's shocked reactions, and of the House of Commons' address of sympathy to the American ambassador. Gray, probably in some shock himself, for he had come to adore Lincoln, possibly waited before replying to Darwin's letter until he had received information about the general reaction in Britain.

> I am too much *distracted* with work at this season to write letters on our affairs, and if I once begin, I should not know where to stop. You have always been sympathising and just, and I appreciate your hearty congratulations on the success of our just endeavors. You have since had much more to rejoice over, as well as to sorrow with us. But the noble manner in which our country has borne itself should give you real satisfaction. We appreciate too the good feeling of England in its hearty grief at the murder of Lincoln.[30]

Darwin apparently did not write again until early July, and that letter has not survived. His health had gone into another slump just about the time that Lincoln was killed. Less than a week after learning of Lincoln's death, Darwin received another shock: news that his old commander on the *Beagle*, Robert FitzRoy, who had subsequently denounced Darwin's scientific work as heretical, had slit his own throat. Darwin was "astounded . . . but I ought not to have been," he told Hooker, "for I remember once thinking it likely; poor fellow his mind was quite out of balance once during our voyage. . . . Twice he quarrelled bitterly with me, without any just provocation on my part."[31]

Darwin remembered, though three decades had passed, that the worst of those quarrels had concerned Darwin's antislavery views and had flared up shortly after the *Beagle* carried Darwin to the first slave territory he ever visited, Brazil. Darwin may have recently read in the *Times* some notice picked up from the American press announcing that Brazil was just now enjoying a visit by America's most famous scientist. Searching the interior jungles for nonexisting evidence of glacier action, Louis Agassiz was probably one of the last people from the civilized world to learn of the death of the man who had interrogated him so strangely four months earlier.[32]

24

The Descent of Man

While Lincoln had few health concerns and should have worried more about other threats to his life, Darwin's ill health caused him, when still in his thirties, to make provisions for an early demise. Yet Darwin died peacefully in his bed seventeen years after Lincoln's violent end at the age of fifty-six. It was six years after Lincoln's death that Darwin finally published the results of his thirty years' investigation into man's origins.

Before his death, Lincoln had given clear indications—albeit in a radically changing environment—of how he would tackle the complex problems of reconstructing the Union politically and working out the new status of freed African Americans, but he died before he could bring his plans to fruition. Lincoln certainly faced massive congressional opposition to his ideas, but he could hardly have botched reconstruction and future race relations as badly as those who took over those difficult challenges.

Lincoln's death probably damaged the effort to improve relations between whites and blacks, and inadvertently and to a lesser degree Darwin's work did the same—not because *The Descent of Man* altered the likely course of racial policies in post–Civil War America but because some of the vocabulary used in arguments about those policies came from *On the Origin of Species*, albeit in a mangled form. Many people extrapolated from *The Origin* what they thought were Darwin's views about the human races and never discovered their error by reading *The Descent* carefully. Throughout the seventeen years separating Lincoln's and Darwin's deaths, the United States developed Reconstruction policies that veered from the former's obvious intentions and ignored the latter's scientific evidence, with results harmful to that cause of mankind's unity and equality that both men had promoted. They would have been appalled that such harm could ever be part of their legacy.

"You see, slavery is *dead*, dead,—an absolute unanimity as to this," Asa Gray wrote to Darwin three months after the Civil War ended. "The Revolted States will behave as badly as they can, but they are so thoroughly whipped that they can't stir, hand or foot." Darwin responded, "We continue to be deeply interested on American affairs; indeed I care for nothing else in the *Times*. . . . How well I remember thinking that Slavery would flourish for centuries in your Southern States!"[1]

However much relief was expressed about slavery's end, it actually sharpened the debate about racial differences. In a short article in May 1865, Thomas Huxley summarized the new situation offhandedly—and insensitively to modern tastes. Employing a slang term for a black slave, Huxley asserted, "Quashie's plaintive inquiry, 'Am I not a man and a brother?' seems at last to have received its final reply." Yet, Huxley argued that the reply—emancipation—still left unanswered the question of racial equality. "It may be quite true that some negroes are better than some white men; but no rational man, cognisant of the facts, believes that the average negro is the equal, still less the superior, of the average white man." Now that the "disability" of slavery was removed and blacks could compete freely, Huxley considered it "incredible" to think "our dusky cousins" would be able "to compete successfully with [their] "bigger-brained" white rivals for "the highest places in the hierarchy of civilisation." While Huxley believed abolition helped both blacks and whites, the "doctrine of equal natural rights may be an illogical delusion; emancipation may convert the slave from a well-fed animal into a pauperised man."[2]

Although Huxley did not seriously think emancipation changed an animal into a man, he did still consider that black man to be a "dusky cousin" rather than a "brother." Huxley was much more willing than Darwin to assume that natural selection led to variations among human races that were not just superficial differences but also, in some vague sense, amounted to serious inequalities in ability. Yet, in a lecture he gave two weeks later, the only specific difference between blacks and whites that Huxley noted was blacks' greater immunity to yellow fever: "the differences between men are . . . so small" that mankind must have arisen from one primitive "stock," the term Huxley used here in preference to species, noting the limits of existing evidence and the fluidity of species under natural selection. However, these "stocks" were also variants that might eventually become separate species. Like Gray and Alfred Russel Wallace before him, Huxley argued that natural selection reconciled and combined "all that is good in the Monogenistic and Polygenistic schools." He rejected the view that hybrids between present-day races were infertile, while accepting that logically that barrier could arise in the future.[3]

Gray, Wallace, and now Huxley had all recognized that the terms of the monogenist-polygenist debate had been made obsolete by natural selection: there was not one creation of mankind or many separate creations of difference races but an ongoing process of change.[4] But for Darwin, the issue was not just about terminology but about *purpose*. It is somewhat ironic that Darwin, who could see no designing role for a creator in natural selection, probably was unable to recognize his own purposeful role in creating the theory of natural selection. However much he merely allowed the evidence to lead him toward the truth, the fact is that it led him where he had always wished to go. Darwin's purpose was still the same as that of the monogenists of his youth: to argue in favor of the unity of man but a unity derived not from God's action in the Garden of Eden but from competition for resources. In that competition, one primate, man, developed a modification toward greater intelligence, which allowed him to outlast less intelligent competitors.

Although Huxley had invoked "Darwinism" in those two 1865 articles, his views did not always represent Darwin's. Frequently corresponding with Huxley at this time, Darwin habitually commented on Huxley's publications, yet found nothing to praise in the first of these two articles, and told Huxley in a postscript that he had read the second "with much interest," adding circumspectly that he could "quite agree on all the points on which I could judge."[5]

The essential problem is that while Gray, Wallace, and now Huxley all suggested that natural selection ended the struggle between monogenism and polygenism, no victor was declared. Polygenists in Britain and America saw no reason to abandon all of their positions. In 1866—five years before Darwin published *The Descent of Man*—the pioneer of American polygenism, Dr. Josiah Nott, declared, "Lamarck, Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, Darwin and other naturalists, have contended for the gradual change or development of organic forms from physical causes, yet even this school requires millions of years for their theory, and would not controvert the facts and deductions I have laid down." Nott lacked Huxley's satisfaction at slavery's demise but agreed it meant the black and white races might "be left alone face to face" and "soon learn to understand each other, and come to proper terms under the law of necessity." Nott argued against federal interference in those relations, asserting that the two races each had their own "moral and physical laws" and that "all the power of the Freedmen's Bureau or 'gates of hell' cannot prevail against them" because "forms that have been permanent for several thousand years, must remain so at least during the lifetime of a nation." Three years earlier, the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission, like Huxley and Nott, had decided that once the manmade disabilities were removed, the Negro "will somewhere find, and will maintain, his own appropriate social position."[6]

Although slavery was dead in the United States, Darwin could still become aroused by racial injustice, such as a summary execution approved by the British governor of Jamaica, Edward Eyre, during agitations late in 1865. Huxley, declaring that "English law does not permit good persons, as such, to strangle bad persons, as such," joined the Jamaica Committee created by John Stuart Mill to bring Eyre to justice. Darwin donated £10 to the committee's fighting fund—just as he formerly contributed to abolition societies and cotton famine relief.[7]

Darwin did not need the incident of Governor Eyre to remind him that racism remained a poisonous issue, and he still intended to publish his evidence showing how natural selection applied to the origin of man and human races. However, further experiments, collection of data, revisions of earlier editions of the *Origins*, and especially ill health, caused continual delays. The fact that close colleagues fell short of properly explaining human origins was somewhat irrelevant: Darwin probably always knew he would have to explain the subtle application of sexual selection himself. Of course, *The Origin* did "say a few words" about sexual selection: it "depends, not on a struggle for existence, but on a struggle between the males for possession of the females; the result is not death to the unsuccessful competitor, but few or no offspring" and "that some little light can apparently be thrown on the origin of these [human racial] differences chiefly through sexual selection of a particular kind."[8]

A further, if relatively minor, goad for Darwin to press ahead with his explanation of racial differences was provided by the odious James Hunt. In August 1866, the *Times* reported on a paper delivered by Hunt to the British Association meeting in Nottingham that later appeared in Hunt's *Anthropological Review*. "At present," wrote the defender of Agassiz and more recently of Governor Eyre, " . . . we are quite unable to show the causes which produce the formation of the different races of which the different species of man is composed." Fighting a rearguard action against the surge in favor of the unity of man engendered by Darwinian thinking, Hunt expressed a "wish that, in consideration of the conflicting views held on this subject, Mr. Darwin himself may be induced to come forward, and tell us if the application of this theory leads to unity of origin as contended for by Professor Huxley."[9]

In early 1867, Darwin apologized to his publisher for the delays and the enormous size of the manuscript for what became *The Variation of Animals and Plants under Domestication*, adding that he was writing a concluding chapter on man but was unsure whether to include it. In the end, he decided against, so man did not appear in the two-volume work published in January 1868. However, Darwin mentioned in a footnote on the second page that Georges Pouchet in *The Plurality of the Human Race* (published by Hunt's Anthropological Society in 1864) had "insisted that variation under domestication throws no light on the natural modification of species" and had thus declared impossible what Darwin himself had not yet discussed with regard to man. "I cannot perceive the force of his arguments," Darwin commented, "or, to speak more accurately, of his assertions to this effect."[10]

While correcting the proof sheets of *Variation of Animals and Plants*, Darwin actively pursued another line of inquiry—first conceived nearly thirty years earlier—to argue in favor of the unity of human races. This new effort to support natural selection partly involved obtaining evidence from the same place where Agassiz had just spent over a year seeking evidence *against* natural selection, Brazil. As usual, Asa Gray kept Darwin informed of some of Agassiz's wilder claims, and Darwin agreed with Lyell "in thinking Agassiz glacier-mad."[11] But Darwin had a different issue in mind as he asked his own Brazilian contact, the brilliant naturalist Fritz Müller, to "make a *few* observations for me, in the course of some months, on Negroes, or possibly on native South Americans, though I care most about Negroes." He enclosed some specific questions, adding, "I am thinking of writing a little essay on the Origin of Mankind, as I have been taunted with concealing my opinions."[12] Darwin's hypothesis was that most expressions of emotion in humans were similar to those found in the higher primates and also common among all human races. Although Darwin did not publish *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* until 1872, he long believed that this line of research might provide better evidence for the common origin of man than much-disputed fossil skulls or philological ancestry.[13] In 1867, Darwin sent lists of questions about expressions to far-flung contacts in India, China, Borneo, Australia, Africa, South America, and, of course, the United States.

While Agassiz's colleague Benjamin Apthorp Gould was still collating the statistics on the physical measurements of white and black soldiers in America, Darwin was careful to exclude from his study "information in regard to the [former] negro slaves in America" that "would have been comparatively easy to have obtained" but "would have possessed little value" because "they have long associated with white men."[14]

Darwin was laboring over his "little essay on the Origin of Mankind" in 1868 when Agassiz published a book—written mostly by his wife, Elizabeth Cary Agassiz—about their travels in Brazil. Gray referred Darwin to a review that "laughs at [Agassiz] for his iterative refutations of *Darwinism*," but Darwin was not laughing when he told Hooker that anyone could observe "in Prof. & Mrs. Agassiz's Book on Brazil how excessively anxious he is to destroy me."[15]

However little Darwin found to admire in Agassiz's book, it was more than he would have found had he read another book published that year by an admirer of Agassiz. Dr. John Van Evrie's publishing house reissued for the third time his polygenist diatribe—now retitled *White Supremacy and Negro Subordination*. Van Evrie was tapping into a reaction by white Americans against the Radical Republicans' latest step: the Fourteenth Amendment, granting blacks civil rights in all states. This angered even Northerners in ways abolition had not, and the Democrats now assailed Republicans for failing to recognize the blacks' inherent inferiority. Without the "protection" of slavery, Van Evrie wrote, the freedmen's moral and physical deficiencies made it "absolutely certain that, as a class, they will become extinct . . . [in a century] no such social monstrosity as a 'free negro' will be found in America."[16] "Amalgamation," or more recently "miscegenation," remained as central to debates about racial policies as "hybridism" was to controversies over species change, and Darwin had just devoted a long section to it in *Variation of Animals and Plants*.[17] But in the following year, evidence was published supposedly proving that human “hybrids” were in fact so physically weakened (even if not made sterile) by their cross-breeding that perhaps they might become extinct at some future date. And the publisher was not the hate-mongering Van Evrie but the U.S. Sanitary Commission.

In 1869, the commission finally published Gould’s 613-page *Investigations in the Military and Anthropological Statistics of American Soldiers.* Appointed in June 1864 to complete the task initiated by Frederick Law Olmsted, Gould had been deeply influenced by his Harvard colleague Louis Agassiz, whose well-known views on the “natural divisions of mankind” had already been pressed on the American Freedmen’s Inquiry Commission.[18] Gould believed this was a unique opportunity to determine statistically “the [average or standard] type of humanity as well as the types of the several classes and races of man”—which made him eager to add as many blacks to the study as possible before they dispersed at the end of the war.[19] Haste added to the difficulty of conducting a study under wartime conditions while using new equipment and new techniques of measurement for which the inspectors had received only written instructions. Agassiz’s ethnological interests probably influenced Gould’s instruction to his inspectors to “state the race, unless Caucasian, (as African, Malay, etc.); or if of mixed races, and what [races]”—as if they would find any “Malays” in the Union army! The inspectors were also to estimate the soldiers’ “proportion of black blood, such as Full Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octroon,” and somehow assess their levels of intelligence as compared with “the ordinary white private soldier.” Gould regretted that eventually it proved impractical to distinguish between the “three or more distinct races of negroes . . . found in the Southern States”—distinctions about which most Northern whites knew nothing. Perhaps it was that arch taxonomist Agassiz who had asked Gould to collect data on blacks so detailed as to distinguish them not only by the eighth part of their blood but also by their origins in different regions of Africa. Nevertheless, Gould still assisted the debate about hybridization by tabulating the data in three categories, “whites,” “full blacks,” and “mixed race” (otherwise ignoring proportions).[20]

Gould had limited access to army records giving rank, nationality, and place and date of birth for over a million soldiers, and he had complete access to Olmsted’s eight thousand records offering physical measurements that were more complex. He now added to the questionnaire six new measurements more likely than hair type and skin color to indicate structural differences between the races and managed to apply the full range of measurements to another 10,876 white soldiers, 1,146 white sailors, 2,020 “full blacks,” and 863 “mixed race” (as well as 517 Indians, 291 “students,” 3 dwarves, and 2 “Australian children”).[21]

Gould clearly hoped to substantiate the polygenists’ view that blacks are inferior to whites and that mixed race “hybrids” were *not* intermediate but inferior to both. “The curious and important fact that the mulattoes, or men of mixed race, occupy so frequently in the scale of progression a place outside, rather than intermediate between, those races from the combination of which they have sprung, cannot fail to attract attention. The well-known phenomenon of their inferior vitality may stand, possibly, in some connection with the fact thus brought to light." In practice, whenever the statistics did not support this "well-known phenomenon," Gould either stated them without analysis, fudged them, or simply dumped them as flawed by some bias in the examiners.[22]

Although differences in black and white lung capacities were minute, Gould said they could not "fail to attract attention at first glance" but offered no explanation, minimized any "effect of climate and soil upon the blacks," and did not even consider that a background in slavery might play some role. Only one of the six new measurements showed significant differences between the races, the measure of the distance between fingertip and kneecap, employed "to expose, if possible, any ethnological difference or peculiarities in the relative proportions of arms, legs, and body, which might, in their combined influence, be more conspicuous than when severally considered; and the results seem to show its aptitude for this purpose." Gould stressed that this measurement "is, as would be anticipated by ethnologists, one which manifests the most striking contrast with the white race" and interpreted it as showing that the black was closer to "the anthropoid" in development. Because the "mixed races" measurement *was* intermediate and therefore did *not* support the notion of mulatto inferiority, Gould simply obfuscated: "for the mixed races the results . . . are variant and contradictory."[23]

Gould's high standing in the scientific community and the delayed publication of an even larger (and more unwieldy) report by the Provost Marshal-General's Bureau meant that Gould's findings became entrenched, influencing more than a generation of anthropologists, especially in the United States.[24] Gould's results would have become reference points whether or not Darwin gave them a wider publicity in his *Descent of Man*, which would be read by far more people than would ever see Gould's work.[25] Naturally, Darwin could not ignore this important study, but in fact he was extremely cautious about employing Gould's results.

Darwin's "Man book" was finally published in February 1871 as a two-volume work entitled *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*. The second part, on sexual selection, actually dealt mostly with animals and was larger than the first part that applied natural selection to man. Darwin chose to publish even though his important research on the expression of emotions was incomplete and therefore relegated to a later volume. *The Descent of Man* required a full discussion of sexual selection because, as he had told Wallace in 1864, it was "the most powerful means of changing the races of man."[26] Darwin now boldly stated, "We have thus far been baffled in all our attempts to account for the differences between the races of man; but there remains one important agency, namely Sexual Selection, which appears to have acted as powerfully on man, as on many other animals."[27]

Darwin narrowed the assumed gulf between men and animals, showing that "there is no fundamental difference between man and the higher mammals in their mental facilities."[28] After discussing more primitive links between men and animals—rudimentary forms and homologous structures—Darwin sought animal origins for abilities generally considered practically unique to man: memory, imagination, tools, language, sense of beauty, and even spirituality. The final chapter in the first part of *Descent* was "On the Races of Man."

Throughout the entire first edition, Darwin mentioned Gould's *Investigations* seven times (and only twice in the chapter on races). On three occasions, Darwin used Gould's data comparing leg length and arm length of soldiers and sailors to support his own view that the human species is "subject to much variability"—which had nothing to do with race but "proved that local influences of some kind act directly on stature." Darwin noted that Gould "endeavoured" to explain these variations in stature but reached only "negative results, namely, that they did not relate to climate, the elevation of the land, soil, nor even 'in any controlling degree' to the abundance or need of the comforts of life." Darwin thereupon cited four scholars whose studies *did* show that stature was controlled by the abundance or lack of those "comforts." Darwin's next four references did relate to race. Early in his chapter on race, Darwin asserted, "Even the most distinct races of man are much more like each other in form than would at first be supposed," but then conceded, "There is, however, no doubt that the various races, when carefully compared and measured, differ much from each other,—as in the texture of the hair, the relative proportions of all parts of the body, the capacity of the lungs, the form and capacity of the skull, and even in the convolutions of the brain."[29] Regarding "proportions" and "lungs," Darwin cited Gould's "vast number of measurements of Whites, Blacks, and Indians and particularly his chapter 'On the capacity of the lungs.'"

Darwin then raised the important topics of hybrids and the traditional definition of species while addressing Gould's polygenism. "The inferior vitality of mulattoes is spoken of in a trustworthy work [Gould] as a well-known phenomenon; but this is a different consideration from their lessened fertility; and can hardly be advanced as a proof of the specific distinctness of the parent races." Just before this reference, Darwin had already demolished the view that mulattoes were infertile, and right after it Darwin attacked the issue from the other end, pointing out that mules were true hybrids and sterile, yet were "notorious for long life and vigour."[30] Taken out of context, Darwin seemed to accept the "trustworthy" report that people of mixed race were "well-known" to have "inferiority vitality"; read in context, he did no such thing.

The final two references to Gould are in the second part of Darwin's work, on sexual selection, both relating to the variable of hairiness. After citing two

European sources supporting the view that "with negroes the beard is scanty or absent, and they have no whiskers; in both sexes the body is almost destitute of fine down," Darwin cited with surprise Gould's finding that "the pure negroes and their crossed offspring seem to have bodies almost as hairy as Europeans." Darwin used this as a possible example of a principle of reversion, "the truth of which," he asserted in a footnote, "I have elsewhere proved, [that] crossed races would be eminently liable to revert to the primordial hairy character of their early ape-like progenitors." Of course, "eminently liable" is far from a certainty, which is why Darwin expressed frustration that Gould's data did not distinguish between "pure blacks and mulattoes" in this particular measure of "pilosity."[31]

Since Gould was dealing with live soldiers and not dead men's skulls, he did not employ cranial measurements. Darwin raised the issue in chapter 2, accepting there was evidence for "the belief that there exists in man some close relation between the size of the brain and the development of the intellectual faculties." But Darwin deliberately circumscribed that "belief" by asserting in the preceding paragraph that "no one supposes that the intellect of any two animals or of any two men can be accurately gauged by the cubic contents of their skulls."[32] Rather than refer to Dr. Samuel G. Morton's famous collection, Darwin instead cited a very recent study by J. Barnard Davis, who dismissed Morton's work as unreliable, yet still arrived at figures showing that "Europeans" had the largest brains.[33] Davis drew no harsh conclusions about other races' inherent lack of intelligence, but Darwin must have read Davis's brief note in the *Anthropological Review*, pointing out that "Hindostanees" were said to have achieved a high civilization and rational religion *despite* being "a people who are distinguished among human races for the remarkable smallness of their brains."[34] Although Darwin quoted Davis's "careful measurements" of "mean internal capacity" in cubic inches for the skulls of Europeans (92.3), [Native] Americans (87.5), Asiatics (87.1), and [aboriginal] Australians (81.9), it is noteworthy that Davis had in fact also listed "African races" (86), but Darwin himself *chose not to mention that*.[35]

Darwin made use of Gould's and Davis's information without endorsing any racialist bias contained in it, and he was unconvinced by all those extra measurements of blacks added to Gould's study and expected (by consultants such as Agassiz) to prove the primordial and permanent distinctiveness of blacks and the "inferior vitality" supposedly inherited by mulattoes. Naturally, *The Descent of Man* challenged the views of Agassiz himself, though here Darwin's approach took an unexpected turn.

On the first page of *Descent*, Darwin managed to place Agassiz on an endangered-species list without even naming him. Instead, he quoted a recent statement—in French—by Karl Vogt that no one, at least in Europe, maintained any longer that special creation explained species development. Darwin added, "Of the older and honoured chiefs in natural science, many unfortunately are still opposed to evolution in every form."[36] Thus, Darwin used one European to undermine a former European and now famous "American." Quoting "the Darwin of Germany," who had long been a bitter enemy of Agassiz's, was bound to annoy.[37]

Despite such an opening, all of Darwin's further references to Agassiz were positively gentle. He began by citing the work in which Agassiz most recently, if not very prominently, published his arguments against natural selection by inserting them into an 1869 French translation of his earlier *Essay on Classification*.[38] However, Darwin did not then discuss Agassiz's arguments but wrote, "I agree with Agassiz that dogs possess something very like a conscience," while also quoting a passage regarding "les amours des limaçons" and "le double embrassement de ces hermaphrodites"—which may have added some allure to snail reproduction but was hardly controversial. Similarly, there were three pleasant references to Professor and Mrs. Agassiz's *Journey in Brazil* (1868), in one of which Darwin suggested that even Agassiz did not always place Caucasians and Negroes on the extreme ends of the racial hierarchy.[39]

Darwin's chapter on race mentioned Agassiz three times. First, in what seemed to be a concession, Darwin suggested that a hypothetical "naturalist . . . would be deeply impressed with the fact, first noticed by Agassiz, that the different races of man are distributed over the world in the same zoological provinces, as those inhabited by undoubtedly distinct species and genera of mammals." Darwin then gave numerous examples that undermined the very notion of zoological provinces. Next, he countered the polygenist view on hybridity by citing the naturalist John Bachman of South Carolina who "positively asserts that he has known mulatto families which have intermarried for several generations, and have continued on an average as fertile as either pure whites or pure blacks." And, of course, Darwin listed Agassiz among thirteen other naturalists who had individual notions of how many "species or races" mankind could be divided into: for Agassiz it was eight. Darwin also included two innocuous references to sexual selection among fish, Agassiz's specialty, sprinkled with phrases such as: "Professor Agassiz adds," "as I hear from Professor Agassiz," and "as I am informed by the kindness of Professor Agassiz."[40]

Clearly, something had changed in Darwin's view of Agassiz. The latter was mellowing after his return from Brazil where his discoveries, despite the trumpeting, failed to refute natural selection and simply added to his museum more barrels of specimens he would never properly study. The arguments Agassiz expressed in public lectures, popular journals, and a French translation of an older work, seemed increasingly old hat. In October 1866, Agassiz had ended the feud with Asa Gray by formally apologizing for using ungentlemanly language two years earlier.[41] While this did not stop Gray from sending uncomplimentary reports about Agassiz, it did mean that Darwin felt he could again submit technical questions to Agassiz through Gray (as he had done earlier through others).

Darwin must have been surprised in August 1868 when a letter arrived directly from Agassiz, who wrote that although "it is true that I am and have been from the beginning an uncompromising opponent of your views," this was no reason for Darwin to send scientific enquiries to him via Gray. He also acknowledged that he found Darwin's views "mischievous because they lead to a looseness of argumentation which it has been the aim of science to avoid," but he added, "There is nothing in these feelings against yourself, as you have done original researches" of great value. He hoped never to be guilty of "allowing my feeling to be the master of my judgement" and claimed never to have "expressed an unkind word concerning yourself." Whereupon, he provided Darwin with information about fish that Darwin happily included in *The Descent of Man*. In reply, Darwin explained that he had not approached him directly because he thought Agassiz "had formed so low an opinion" of his work. That Agassiz had now sent him valuable information directly was a pleasing sign of regard. "I have never for a moment doubted your kindness and generosity, and I hope you will not think it presumptuous in me to say that when we met many years ago I felt for you the warmest admiration."[42]

Darwin did not write to Asa Gray about this curious exchange because Gray and his wife were just then sailing to Europe for a yearlong tour. No doubt, the two men discussed Agassiz among a million other things when the Grays visited Down for a week in October 1868. Sometime before November 1869, when the Grays sailed for America, they or Darwin received the news that in mid-September Louis Agassiz had suffered a stroke that left him paralyzed and unable to speak.[43] Before departing, Gray mentioned in a brief note to Darwin, "I will hand the slip with question to Agassiz."[44] This "slip," probably combining some professional question with sympathetic sentiment, is not extant, but Darwin apparently asked Gray to use discretion about delivering the slip, depending on Agassiz's condition.

Gray also mentioned to Darwin that Agassiz's son, Alexander, had recently arrived in Europe with his family and was soon to be in London. Before December, Alexander visited Down House, handing Darwin a note of introduction written by his father the previous June: "You will find Alex more ready to accept your views than I shall ever be."[45] Darwin was no doubt moved: before him stood an admirable young naturalist, at odds with his father over Darwin's views, delivering the note from a man who, since writing it, had suffered a paralyzing stroke.

Darwin thought highly of Alexander and his wife and invited them to Down House more than once. Alexander probably passed along news of his father's slow recovery, and Darwin, at Gray's suggestion, subsequently sent questions to Alexander that might otherwise have gone to his father. Gray shared Darwin's high regard: "I knew you would be pleased with young Agassiz and his Yankee wife."[46]

In March 1870, Gray sent Darwin a message from Louis Agassiz's wife, whose ailing husband had dictated an answer to Darwin's query. Gray commented, "Agassiz evidently regrets having abused you in former times." Darwin responded, "Whenever you have any communication with Agassiz, pray give him my cordial thanks for his kind message & for his information. . . . I wish with all my heart that I could feel that I deserved what Alex. A. says of me."[47] The nature of that praise is unknown, but Darwin's emotional response suggests it was some judgment by Alexander, perhaps comparing his father's harsh attacks on Darwin over the years with Darwin's apparent avoidance of any bitter feelings. If such was Alexander's praise, Darwin knew it fell short of the truth.

In any case, Darwin did not attack Louis Agassiz in *The Descent of Man* since harshness had never been his style, let alone sniping at a man so gravely ill. Moreover, Darwin probably felt that, whatever reception the critics gave to his "man-essay," he had already won the war: even the enemy's son had come over to his side. Repeating the theme played already by Gray, Wallace, and Huxley, Darwin wrote confidently "that when the principles of evolution are generally accepted, as they surely will be before long, the dispute between the monogenists and the polygenists will die a silent and unobserved death."[48]

While Darwin's daughter Henrietta was editing *Descent*, her mother wrote to her that the book "will be very interesting, but that I shall dislike it very much as again putting God further off."[49] Darwin could not be surprised by his wife's reaction but may not have anticipated the mildness of the theological attacks on his latest work. Yet, in the last decade of his life, the issue of religion remained a major topic for Darwin—and for people interested in Darwin. It was simultaneously the cause of angry discussions about Lincoln, who was no longer present to control the debate.

25

An End to Religion

In February 1870, William H. Herndon wrote a long letter to *The Index*—not Henry Hotze's Confederate-funded journal, which had frequently mentioned Lincoln and sometimes Darwin as well—but to a journal of the same name newly launched in Ohio as the organ of the recently formed Free Religious Association. Like other association founders, *The Index's* editor, Francis Ellingwood Abbot, was a Bostonian and a former Unitarian who had found even that liberal creed too restrictive, especially in its views on the latest scientific advances, such as natural selection. His search for a sufficiently open-minded Unitarian congregation led him to Ohio, where he founded *The Index*. When his dwindling congregation stopped paying his salary in 1872, Abbot moved the journal back to Boston.

Herndon's letter to Abbot concerned Lincoln's religious beliefs and subsequently appeared in *The Index*, in a pamphlet, and in an early biography of Lincoln.[1] His explanation for writing pointed back to an occurrence shortly after Lincoln's assassination. Josiah Holland, a Massachusetts newspaper editor and sometime novelist and lecturer, had delivered a well-received eulogy in his community emphasizing Lincoln's "simple, honest, Christian heart." Urged to write a full biography, Holland had swiftly traveled to Illinois, where he found Lincoln's old law partner extremely helpful. "I freely told him what he asked, and much more," Herndon told Abbot. "He then asked me what I thought about Mr. Lincoln's religion, meaning his views of Christianity. I replied, 'The less said, the better.'" A version of that very phrase appeared as an anonymous quotation in Holland's book a few months later, but Herndon was disgusted that his opinion was buried under a load of hagiography. The book's conclusion reprised the main theme: that "the almost immeasurably great results which [Lincoln] had the privilege of achieving, were due to the fact that he was a Christian President." Holland's final prayer-like sentence ended, "[W]e receive thy life and its immeasurably great results, as the choicest gifts that a mortal has ever bestowed upon us; grateful . . . to God . . . [who] bestowed thee upon the nation and mankind."[2]

To Herndon, this was all "bosh," especially as Holland based much of his account of Lincoln's piety on a single anecdote told by Newton Bateman, Illinois superintendent of public education. Bateman's office was in the State House, and for a few months in 1860, Lincoln used an adjoining office as election headquarters. Bateman wrote for Holland an eight-page account of a conversation that Bateman said "made a vivid impression upon me." Shortly before the election, Lincoln entered Bateman's office, as he did occasionally to escape callers, but this time he locked the door. Referring to results of a recent canvass of Springfield citizens' electoral intentions, Lincoln was exasperated that twenty of the town's twenty-three ministers or church elders intended to vote against him. "Mr. Bateman, I am not a Christian—God knows I would be one—but I have carefully read the Bible, and I do not so understand this book." Lincoln took out a pocket New Testament. "These men well know that I am for freedom . . . and that my opponents are for slavery . . . and yet, with this book in their hands, in the light of which human bondage cannot live a moment, they are going to vote against me. I do not understand it at all." Much verbiage followed—"features surcharged with emotion," "trembling voice," "cheeks wet with tears"—all as untypical as Lincoln's outburst:

> I know there is a God, and that He hates injustice and slavery. . . . I know I am right because I know that liberty is right, for Christ teaches it, and Christ is God. I have told them that a house divided against itself cannot stand, and Christ and reason say the same; and they will find it so. Douglas don't care whether slavery is voted up or voted down, but God cares, and humanity cares, and I care; and with God's help I shall not fail. I may not see the end; but it will come, and I shall be vindicated; and these men will find that they have not read their Bibles aright.[3]

Denying one's Christianity while affirming Christ's divinity is one of many contradictions making Bateman's account dubious, although Allen C. Guelzo has suggested that the conversation may well have "revolved around Lincoln's perceived incongruity between Christian teaching and the reluctance of ministers to criticize slavery."[4] One might add that Lincoln chose his man well: though thirteen years Lincoln's junior, Bateman was an old acquaintance and respected in the community as a strong Christian who had risen from schoolteacher to officeholder. Bateman was clearly surprised by Lincoln's expressions of religious devotion, and he could do more to spread the word to fellow churchmen (hopefully before polling day) than could any of Lincoln's closer associates, who would appear more partisan—and were also less likely to swallow what Lincoln fed Bateman. According to Holland's version of his account, Bateman said to Lincoln, "Certainly your friends are ignorant of the sentiments you have expressed to me." "I know they are," Lincoln replied. "I am obliged to appear different to them; but I think more on these subjects than on all others, and I have done so for years; and I am willing that *you* should know."[5]

This passage, with its echoes of a secretive messiahship, outraged Herndon because it made Lincoln appear duplicitous and somewhat cowardly. After reading Holland's book, Herndon confronted Bateman in his office: "In order to make Lincoln a technical Christian—*you have made him a hypocrite*!" But Bateman, while admitting he had written his account only after Lincoln's death, presumably at Holland's request, backed down only partially.[6]

Whatever the value of Bateman's anecdote, Herndon was alarmed that Holland was making a plaster saint out of Lincoln: the higher Lincoln was raised toward heaven, the farther he would fall whenever the real facts emerged. Herndon decided to forestall Lincoln's "bitter enemies" by writing a biography himself.[7] He began collecting materials and trying them out in some lectures. His investigations led to the surprising conclusion that his former law partner, the cautious politician and rationalist, had not just been aloof from orthodox Christianity in his younger days but openly critical. The story of young Lincoln's "infidel book"—which Sam Hill threw into a stove—came as a shock because Herndon had always perceived Lincoln as far less radical than himself.

Herndon's draft for a December 1865 lecture observed that Lincoln did not believe in miracles, supernatural revelations, or the divinity of Jesus, but he crossed out these passages, saving them for a proper biography. Herndon did tell his audience that Lincoln had been a deeply religious man but added delphically, "If this people—this audience—can make of Mr. Lincoln a technical Christian man as the world—the Christian world—understands it, then this can be done by what is the so-called Christian people."[8]

Herndon neglected his law practice while pursuing his investigations without actually making a start on writing the biography. After 1867, he seemed to give up on the project as well as the law, tried his hand at farming, and failed miserably. In 1869, Herndon sold his notes to another would-be biographer, Ward Hill Lamon, an old acquaintance from the circuit-riding days who had served Lincoln during the White House years as marshal in Washington, D.C., and a sort of personal bodyguard. Herndon told him to "be bold. Tell the truth—that Lincoln was an infidel—a Deist. . . . He held in contempt the Idea of God's Special interferences &c &c." A few months later, Herndon sent the long letter that Abbot printed in *The Index* in April 1870 and then issued as a pamphlet for $3.50 per hundred. And when Lamon, or rather his ghostwriter, Chauncey Black, finally produced a biography, five of the eighteen pages devoted to Lincoln's lack of orthodoxy were filled by "the Abbot letter."[9] The letter ranged widely, but the centerpiece was Herndon's assertion that Lincoln "believed that all things, both matter and mind, were governed by laws, universal, absolute, and eternal." The list of specific doctrines Lincoln did not believe in included the Bible as revelation, miracles, and the divinity of Jesus, but top of the list was "special creation, [Lincoln's] idea being that all creation was an evolution under law."[10]

The Free Religious Association, which Abbot helped to found in 1867, included many figures who had admired Lincoln and were in turn admired by Herndon, such as Robert Dale Owen, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Charles Eliot Norton, and Lucretia Mott. Many of these also knew and admired Darwin. Higginson, who had commanded black troops during the Civil War, later corresponded with Darwin and even visited him at Down House, as did Norton. The Free Religious Association generally took an evolutionary view of religion, finding unity amid adaptive theological variation, and Abbot wrote articles for Norton's *North American Review* in praise of Darwin.[11]

Abbot enclosed copies of some of his articles and lectures when he first wrote to Darwin in May 1871 to assure him that, contrary to impressions he might receive otherwise, natural selection was widely accepted by educated Americans. Darwin wrote back immediately, pleased by this news and expressing admiration for Abbot's writings. A few days later he wrote again, praising a particular article by Abbot in *The Index* and enclosing money for a subscription.[12] Abbot was thrilled and sent Darwin a bound edition of the first volume of *The Index*, which included Herndon's letter on Lincoln's religion. Abbot also requested "a little note . . . setting forth your own view of the influence of your theory on religion" that he might quote during an upcoming lecture.[13] After hesitating, Darwin allowed the use of his earlier line of praise for Abbot's work "Truths for the Times": "I admire them from my inmost heart; and I agree to almost every word."[14] When Abbot pleaded that Darwin become a regular contributor, Darwin respectfully declined, citing ill health and asserting disingenuously that he had "never systematically thought much on religion in relation to science, or on morals in relation to society."[15]

In November 1872, Darwin published his most readable and popular book *On the Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, which completed his exposition of natural selection and demonstrated again his commitment to the unity of man. "The theory of expression confirms to a certain limited extent the conclusion that man is derived from some lower animal form, and supports the belief of the specific or subspecific unity of the several races," he wrote on the book's last page, "but as far as my judgment serves, such confirmation was hardly needed." Darwin could even argue magisterially that "blushing" could not have been "*specially* designed by the Creator" because that concept "is opposed to the general theory of evolution, which is now so largely accepted."[16]

Asa Gray's debates with Darwin about design had stalemated when Darwin came up with the analogy of a house built designedly out of stones shaped by pure chance. "I found your stone-house argument unanswerable in substance," admitted Gray, also agreeing with Darwin that one can believe but not know.

Gray also sent Darwin a copy of Gray's review demolishing a book that had equated Darwinism with atheism, saying in the accompanying letter, "You see *what uphill work* I [have] in making a theist of you." Darwin praised the review and then dodged, "The more I reflect on the subject, the more perplexed I grow."[17]

Of those who wrote to Darwin about his religious opinions, Gray and Abbot were among the few who received much response, however indistinct. In 1873, Darwin advised his son George not to publish an essay he had written on religion: "The evils are giving pain to others, & injuring your own power & usefulness."[18] To a young botanist, Darwin commented, "Many years ago when I was collecting facts for *The Origin*, my belief in what is called a personal God was as firm as that of Dr Pusey himself, & as to the eternity of matter I have never troubled myself about such insoluble questions."[19] Although he accepted that one reason to believe in God's existence was "the impossibility of conceiving that this grand and wondrous universe . . . arose through chance," he repeatedly stressed that "the mind still craves to know" how even a "first cause" arose and why there is such an "immense amount of suffering through the world." "The safest conclusion," Darwin suggested to another petitioner, "seems to be that the whole subject is beyond the scope of man's intellect, but man can do his duty."[20] When a German student wrote more than once, Darwin testily declared that science had nothing to do with Christ, and "for myself, I do not believe that there has ever been any revelation. As for a future life, every man must judge for himself between conflicting vague probabilities."[21] To a letter from a law student expressing a desire to read Darwin's books but worried lest they cause him to lose "my faith in the New Testament," Darwin answered, "I am sorry to have to inform you that I do not believe in the Bible as a divine revelation, & therefore not in Jesus Christ as the son of God." As usual, though rarely so ironically, Darwin signed himself, "Yours faithfully."[22]

Darwin dealt extensively with his own religious views in the autobiographical sketch written in 1876 with a few additions made over the next five years. Although writing ostensibly to explain himself posthumously to his own family, he may have assumed eventual publication. In any case, there was a diffidence, even tension, in the presentation. Many of his points have been quoted earlier or echo statements given in the above letters. While expanding on one of the arguments for the existence of God that had "much more weight" than others, Darwin ended one paragraph, "When thus reflecting I feel compelled to look to a First Cause having an intelligent mind in some degree analogous to that of man; and I deserve to be called a Theist." But the next paragraph ended, "The mystery of the beginning of all things is insoluble by us; and I for one must be content to remain an Agnostic." Eventually seeing the awkwardness of claiming to be theistic in one paragraph and agnostic in the next, Darwin later wedged in a clarifying sentence: "This conclusion was strong in my mind about the time, as far as I can remember, when I wrote the *Origin of Species*; and it is since that time that it has very gradually with many fluctuations become weaker."[23] Darwin was reluctant to record that he had entirely lost the status of a "theist," leaving his wife the grain of hope that he had retained a fragment of faith. Darwin told another inquirer in 1879 that "in my most extreme fluctuations I have never been an atheist in the sense of denying the existence of a God."[24] He was conscious, as he wrote in another letter in 1880, of "the pain which it would give some members of my family, if I aided in any way direct attacks on religion."[25]

Avoiding such direct attacks had also become an article of faith for Lincoln the politician, but after his death, his religious views became a political football for Republicans seeking to exalt the martyr and Democrats trying to block this. After Herndon's letter was published, Republican journals led the backlash, and the cause was taken up by the Reverend James A. Reed, who was now pastor at the Springfield church where Lincoln had formerly rented a pew. Reed had not known Lincoln, but he now energetically gathered up testimony from men who had, such as John T. Stuart and James H. Matheny, two of Herndon's best informants, who gave rather different stories to Reed. This material was eventually published in *Scribner's Monthly*, edited by Josiah Holland, the hagiographer who had stirred up Herndon in the first place.[26] Herndon unleashed an aggressive lecture on "Lincoln's Religion," laying into all who disagreed with him, especially those suggesting Lincoln had at some point during his presidency become a true Christian. "He died an unbeliever," Herndon thundered while Republican newspapers condemned, and Democrats made the most of it.[27]

Financial troubles overwhelmed Herndon for a few years, but in 1883, he submitted further articles on Lincoln's lack of religion to the Free Thought tabloid, the *Truth Seeker*.[28] He then read in Isaac N. Arnold's 1884 biography of Lincoln, which otherwise made great use of Herndon's material, that Lincoln was the most "reverent Christian [that] ever sat in the executive chair, not excepting Washington." While not claiming Lincoln was orthodox, Arnold declared, "Belief in the existence of God; in the immortality of the soul; in the Bible as the revelation of God to man; in the efficacy and duty of prayer; in reverence toward the Almighty and in love and charity to man, was the basis of his religion."[29]

Herndon finally produced, with the help of Jesse Weik, his own biography of Lincoln, which appeared in 1889. Weik took the rough edges off some of Herndon's assertions, but the biography retracted nothing significant and provided strong evidence from some of Herndon's best informants. Regarding Lincoln's religious views after he went to Washington and out of Herndon's presence, Herndon offered a letter from Lincoln's secretary John Nicolay, declaring there were no indications that Lincoln's beliefs changed—though Nicolay added, "I do not know just what they were, never having heard him explain them in detail."[30] Herndon relished that letter, having guessed correctly that Lincoln's son Robert had prevented Nicolay and Lincoln's other secretary, John Hay, from discussing

Lincoln's religion in their ten-volume life of Lincoln, which had been serialized in the *Century Magazine* starting in 1886: "they are afraid of Bob; he gives them material and they in turn play *hush*."[31]

Two years after publishing his biography, Herndon died, but the controversy over Lincoln's religion had a life of its own. The subject Lincoln learned to control so carefully causes continual debate and has even turned on itself. The skeptic has become the object of near-idolatrous veneration, as any visitor to various Lincoln pilgrimage sites will notice. In the centenary of his birth, Lincoln's profile replaced that of an American Indian—an earlier symbol for America—on the one-cent coin: the first president to be so honored, with no other U.S. coin series continuing so long. The stirring *Battle Hymn of the Republic*—with verses composed by Julia Ward Howe (Samuel Gridley Howe's wife) to invoke the Messiah's blessing on the North's crusade against slavery—has become the theme tune for every film portrait of Lincoln, who would have been amazed and amused.

By the time Darwin died in 1882, his status as a national institution was so formidable that his plan for a burial in Downe's churchyard was gently swept aside as influential associates arranged for Darwin's remains to be laid in Westminster Abbey beside those of England's greatest leaders and intellects.[32] Yet, before the year ended, a reformist newspaper published two letters Darwin had written about his religious views, causing a Catholic journal to declare him a heretic. This was mentioned the following year in an eight-page pamphlet on Darwin's religion by Edward B. Aveling, a physician, freethinker, socialist, and Karl Marx's son-in-law. Aveling had a brief correspondence with Darwin, and his pamphlet recounts his single visit to Down House, emphasizing a discussion of the terms "atheism" and "agnosticism." Darwin said (in words sounding more Marxian than Darwinian): "It is all very well for educated, cultured, thoughtful people; but are the masses yet ripe for it?"[33]

Just as Robert Todd Lincoln tried to protect his father's reputation by blue-penciling Nicolay and Hay's draft biography (even excising some references to Robert's paternal *grandfather's* religion), Darwin's heirs also took steps to disassociate his name from radical atheism.[34] When Darwin's son Francis produced the usual *Life and Letters* volume, including Darwin's autobiographical sketch, Emma requested that five passages about religion be omitted "to avoid," she said, "giving pain to your father's religious friends who are deeply attached to him, . . . and even the old servants."[35] And just as Herndon had felt compelled to deny that Lincoln had been religiously transformed while president, the Darwin family had to deal with ludicrous claims that Darwin underwent some "death-bed conversion."[36] Such stories have persisted because people who wish to believe them require no evidence. However, Darwin's personal beliefs have had less consequence than the issue that always divided Darwin and Gray: Paley's old argument from design. Unlike Paley, Agassiz, and modern creationists, Gray had never used design in order to demonstrate God's existence but simply suggested that there was more design in nature than "natural selection" could account for, reserving a possible role for God. But both Gray and Darwin, unlike modern creationists, understood that the Prime Mover's existence and the natural selection hypothesis could not prove or disprove each other.

The continuing contest between design and natural selection has a quaint air of futility about it, but far more tragic consequences have attended the continued controversy over the degree of difference among the races of man.

26

The Dream of Equality

In 1872, *On the Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* completed Darwin's work on man. Later works made important contributions to science and sold surprisingly well but related to subjects like "insectivorous plants," "climbing plants," and "the actions of worms." The abolition of slavery in the United States at first seemed to decrease the importance of the issue of mankind's unity, and the growing acceptance of natural selection made the old monogenist-polygenist debate seem obsolete. Also, Darwin felt no further need to counter the influence of Louis Agassiz.

Less than a year after his paralyzing stroke, Agassiz had made a fine recovery, and in early 1870, Asa Gray wrote that Agassiz seemed to have mellowed toward Darwin. But a year later, Agassiz's lectures (according to one student's notes) included references to "the English . . . propensity for fanciful theories."[1] Sometime before June 1871, Darwin must have heard from Alexander Agassiz that his father was not only well but feeling adventurous. "Pray give my most sincere respects to your father," wrote Darwin. "What a wonderful man he is to think of going round Cape Horn; if he does go, I wish he could go through the Strait of Magellan."[2]

During the *Hassler* expedition, named after the ship provided by his friend Benjamin Peirce of the Coastal Survey, Agassiz set out to dredge up seabed specimens along thousands of miles of North and South American coastline. Just before departing, he sent a letter to Darwin through Gray, for which Darwin thanked the latter, not mentioning its contents nor apparently attempting to get a reply to the voyager.[3] Yet Darwin was certainly on Agassiz's mind. "I had a special purpose in this journey," he wrote to a German colleague from aboard ship, " . . . to study the whole Darwinian theory free from all external influences and former prejudices. It was on a similar voyage that Darwin himself came to formulate his theories!" Agassiz mentioned changes in the subject of natural history that "I have pondered over," but (unlike his son) "I have not made any great progress in my conversion to the growing doctrine of evolution." Agassiz now hoped to find "sufficient material to allow thorough comparisons between related living types" that would enable him to test natural selection better than Darwin ever had.[4]

Returning from his journey in October 1872, Agassiz gave a lecture that convinced Gray that he was anything but reformed. "Hasty generalising of observation is Darwin all over," said Agassiz, before offering the bizarre conclusion "The weak may and do survive as well as the strong" based on his observation that large trees appear at the foot of a mountain while at the summit one finds "mere shrubs." Too appalled to write a calm correction, Gray instead wrote a satirical "squib" and sent it to Darwin, explaining that he dare not publish it in America even anonymously: Darwin could either burn it or arrange publication without Gray's name. The piece appeared a month later in *Nature* under the title "Survival of the Fittest."[5]

Agassiz, typically, produced no written report on the *Hassler* expedition, but Mrs. Agassiz produced three popular articles for the *Atlantic Monthly* about the trip. In "A Cruise through the Galapagos," she mentioned, "Here some of the best work of [Darwin's] youth was done; and now, at the close of his life, these very islands connect themselves, by an odd coincidence, with his theory of the origin of species." Clearly reflecting her husband's belief that Darwin's theory lacked substantial evidence, Mrs. Agassiz suggested that these volcanic islands offered too little geologic time for the evolution of "fauna specifically distinct from that of the mainland" and that although "transition types . . . should not elude . . . the watchful spirit of the age," none had yet been found.[6]

Agassiz began a serious effort to write up for the *Atlantic Monthly* the ideas featured in his current lectures. He rewrote it three times, having "too much at stake in this Article," he told the editor, "to be willing to allow it to appear without the severest criticism."[7] When it finally appeared in January 1874, the nine-page article, promised as the first of a series, proved that Agassiz had lost neither his dislike for transmutation nor his affection for special creation. Darwin's work was praised up to a point: "Indeed it might be said that he treated his subject according to the best scientific methods, had he not frequently overstepped the boundaries of actual knowledge and allowed his imagination to supply the links which science does not furnish."[8]

Although Mrs. Agassiz's earlier article had lugubriously referred to Darwin as "now, at the close of his life," in fact, one month before her husband's article appeared, Louis Agassiz died of a cerebral hemorrhage on 14 December 1873. In January, Darwin wrote to Joseph Dalton Hooker, "Many thanks for sending me Gray's interesting letter. What a terrible thing it is about Mrs. Agassiz, & how lost he will be."[9] The "Mrs. Agassiz" referred to was not Louis Agassiz's widow but his daughter-in-law, the wife of Alexander. She had died suddenly only a few days after her father-in-law, and both Gray and Darwin had found her delightful and could well imagine her young husband's grief.[10] Darwin left no record of any reaction to the death of Louis Agassiz himself.

Bostonian Thomas Wentworth Higginson (who mentioned both his friends Agassiz and Francis E. Abbot in other correspondence with Darwin) received in 1873 a letter from Darwin praising his book *Life with a Black Regiment*: "You must allow me to thank you heartily for the very great pleasure which it has in many ways given us. I always thought well of the negroes, from the little which I have seen of them; and I have been delighted to have my vague impressions confirmed, and their character and mental powers so ably discussed."[11] A decade earlier, Higginson had testified to the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission about his experience commanding the first black regiment in the Union army, and his memoir gave Darwin additional anecdotal evidence not available when Darwin had been writing about blacks in *Descent of Man* and cautiously using of Benjamin Apthorp Gould's tainted statistical evidence.[12] Darwin was currently busy producing a second edition of *Descent*, making many corrections and additions. One of particular relevance is in a section headed "Natural Selection as affecting Civilised Nations."

In *Descent*, Darwin never used the terms "superior race" or "inferior race."[13] He usually characterized human groups as being in a "savage," "barbarian," or "civilised" condition (often qualified as "more civilised," "less civilised," or "semi-civilised"). One addition to the second edition emphasized that whether civilized or not, a group could experience competition within itself as well as with other groups: "Nevertheless the more intelligent members within the same community will succeed better in the long run than the inferior, and leave a more numerous progeny, and this is a form of natural selection." A group's level of "intelligence" was not an inherited condition but a social development: "The more efficient causes of progress seem to consist of a good education during youth whilst the brain is impressible, and of a high standard of excellence, inculcated by the ablest and best men, embodied in the laws, customs and traditions of the nation, and enforced by public opinion." This brought Darwin back to the type of "social instinct" that he felt arose early in man's development and was, therefore, common to all races: "The enforcement of public opinion depends on our appreciation of the approbation and disapprobation of others; and this appreciation is founded on our sympathy, which it can hardly be doubted was originally developed through natural selection as one of the most important elements of the social instincts."[14]

Natural selection has less effect on "highly civilised nations" because they "do not supplant and exterminate one another as do savage tribes"; nevertheless, a "civilised" condition, being an attainment rather than an inherited trait, can also be reversed: "we see, for instance, in parts of S. America, that a people which may be called civilised, such as the Spanish settlers, is liable to become indolent and to retrograde, when the conditions of life are very easy."[15]

In 1876, a two-volume report, *Statistics, Medical and Anthropological, of the Provost Marshal-General's Bureau*, was sent to Darwin by the author, Jedediah Hyde Baxter, an army surgeon during the Civil War. Baxter's remit when organizing examinations of black (as well as white) recruits had been merely to certify the men fit for service. He had a much larger statistical sample than Gould but was not doing an anthropological study for the likes of Louis Agassiz. Baxter felt that the term "Colored Men" ought not to "be admitted in scientific terminology on account of its obvious lack of precision," and his basic questionnaires made no attempt to distinguish "full black" and "mixed race," simply asking examiners to report on "the physical qualifications of the colored race for military service." While some army doctors submitted no reports because they had no black recruits or were too busy, many others offered a wide range of judgments reflecting their own biases. Unlike Gould, Baxter did not find racial differences in chest dimensions and, if anything, found proportionally fewer cases of pulmonary diseases among blacks than whites. Overall, according to one recent study, "Whereas Gould's statistics erased the humanity of the people being measured, the army surgeons cast black recruits as human beings who could participate as active agents in their struggle for freedom."[16]

Had Baxter's evidence of racial similarity been published before 1870, Darwin undoubtedly would have used it to counter Gould's half-baked evidence of racial difference. But Darwin was now sixty-seven years old, preferred dabbling with experiments in which he controlled the sampling procedures, and could have safely predicted that most "observers" would find what they wished to find in Gould's and Baxter's studies. "No longer would attitudes of racial inferiority have to employ those pre-war measurements and conclusions which had been tainted with proslavery arguments," comments historian John S. Haller, referring to the works of Dr. Samuel G. Morton, George Robins Gliddon, Dr. Josiah Nott, and Louis Agassiz. The first two died before outbreak of the Civil War that destroyed slavery, and the latter two within a decade of the war's end. But scientific racism survived. "Perhaps the greatest irony of the Civil War," concludes Haller, "was that its anthropometric investigations [particularly Gould's] were used in the late nineteenth century to support institutional racism."[17]

Darwin wrote about the nature of man for the last time a few months before his death. To his detriment, Darwin's critics have quoted only brief excerpts of the 1881 letter, such as:

> I could show fight on natural selection having done and doing more for the progress of civilisation than you seem inclined to admit. Remember what risk the nations of Europe ran, not so many centuries ago of being overwhelmed by the Turks, and how ridiculous such an idea now is! The more civilised so-called Caucasian races have beaten the Turkish hollow in the struggle for existence.

> Looking to the world at no very distant date, what an endless number of the lower races will have been eliminated by the higher civilised races throughout the world.[18]

Gertrude Himmelfarb prefaced her quotation of this passage by declaring "proponents of the doctrine 'might is right' could find ample justification in his theory" and followed it immediately with references to "social Darwinism," "the hero, superman, or Führer," and a quotation from a German general.[19] But we should not ignore the original context of this private letter written to William Graham, a Belfast professor of law and political economy, who had sent Darwin his book *The Creed of Science: Religious, Moral, and Social.* With his usual courtesy, Darwin at first praised the work heartily but then proceeded to argue against some points "which I cannot digest." Graham asserted that "the development of the human species, the civilizations of humanity, have not been accomplished by natural selection, [but] . . . through great individuals, men of higher, deeper, finer, nobler natures, in mind, or soul, or moral purpose."[20] Darwin wished to "make somewhat of a case against the enormous importance which you attribute to our greatest men," for Darwin had never cared for Thomas Carlyle's "great men" theories. Darwin's "case" consisted of two points, the first a personal impression: "I have been accustomed to think, second, third, and fourth rate men of very high importance, at least in the case of Science." His second point—the much quoted passage—suggested Graham had attributed too much to "great individuals" and too little to natural selection as an agent "for the progress of civilization."[21]

Darwin's example of a conflict "not so many centuries ago" between "the nations of Europe" and "the Turks" was probably influenced by the recent Russo-Turkish War. Appalled by Turkish atrocities, Darwin had contributed £50 to a relief fund, but his argument to Graham referred to an earlier period when Europe was threatened by Suleiman the Magnificent—the only "great individual" most people could probably name from that conflict—who hardly represented progress and whose side lost. For Darwin, a higher level of "civilisation"—not great individuals or racial superiority—caused the "so-called Caucasian races" to gain advantage over the Turks (also a nonracial term).

Graham asserted, rather sarcastically, that the "universal medicine of 'natural selection' . . . , applied to human societies, virtually recommends that the present state of things should continue."[22] This provoked Darwin's seemingly harsh response about "an endless number of the lower races" likely "at no very distant date" to be "eliminated by the higher civilized races." This did not endorse the destruction of nonwhite races but pointed out that societies *do* change through causes broader than "great individuals" and that natural selection "recommends" neither change nor continuity. Having witnessed atrocities in South America and Australia, Darwin acknowledged that "civilised" societies possessed the means to destroy less organized peoples, but he never suggested this advantage bestowed any right, let alone any obligation to destroy the weak. "Civilised" is a relative term: if the "higher civilised races" were even *more* "civilised," they would not develop deliberate policies to "eliminate" lower (i.e., less civilized) races, and if the latter *became* more civilized, they might yet avoid the more likely types of "elimination."

A more recent critic, Richard Weikart, followed Himmelfarb in blaming Darwin for later social ills, quoting—in even more abbreviated form—the same passage from the letter to Graham.[23] However, Weikart also showed that a decade before that letter, Darwin had used a similar phrase in a passage in *Descent of Man*: "At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilised races of man will almost certainly exterminate and replace throughout the world the savage races."[24] Again, the context shows that Darwin was not endorsing such a development but was explaining how "breaks" or "gaps" between related varieties and species had been created in the past (and would be in the future) as "co-descendants of the same species" developed at different rates and gained advantages over one another.[25] Darwin gave two examples, the first (quoted above) being that "the civilised races of man will almost certainly exterminate and replace throughout the world the savage races." Again, far from endorsing this development, Darwin had personally witnessed and condemned "civilised" people who perpetrated such actions; yet, having no reason to believe they would soon stop, it was a viable example of an action that could widen the "breaks" between co-descendants by causing the extinction of some human groups that happen to have developed less civilized organization. Darwin's second example was that "anthropomorphous apes, as Professor Herman Schaaffhausen has remarked, will no doubt be exterminated" by man but perhaps as much by the "savage races" as by the "civilised" ones.[26] The extinctions would destroy the evidence not only of man's most immediate ancestor but also of various anthropomorphous cousins that had descended alongside man (though with fewer modifications).

"The break will then be rendered wider," Darwin projected, "for it will intervene between man in *a more civilised state*, as we may hope, than the Caucasian, and some ape as low as a baboon, instead of as at present between the negro or Australian and the gorilla" (emphasis added). Darwin accepted that the species of man include various races (e.g., Caucasians, Negroes, Aborigines) and does not include gorillas; and none of the nonwhite races are "intermediate" between apes and white men. Darwin linked blacks, Aborigines, and gorillas *only* by a single factor: their vulnerability in any competition with groups (such as most Caucasians) who possessed a "more civilised" social organization. But, crucially, Darwin actually declared Caucasians themselves to be vulnerable to competition with some "more civilised" group still to develop. In some distant future, *none* of the *existing* human races may survive, any more than the doomed gorillas, and on either side of a widened gap will be the more civilized humans of the future and their nearest, still-existing "co-descendants," some sort of baboon. None of this amounted to an endorsement for any deliberate policy of exterminating "less civilised" races (which could eventually include the present "Caucasian" race).[27]

The letter to Graham was not actually published until 1909. And long before that time, the idea of "the survival of the fittest"—coined by Herbert Spencer before *The Origin* was published—was already being misused to justify European acts of imperialism, a revival of laissez-faire economic policies, and the continuing oppression of blacks in the United States.

The Civil War had allowed Lincoln to free blacks from slavery (partly so they could help fight the war) and to take early steps to accord them political equality. Natural selection allowed Darwin to free blacks from the slur that they were not fully human by showing that *all* humans as a group were related to animals while the only advantageous differences within the group were derived from *social* developments. However, long before Lincoln and Darwin were born, *their* race—the white race—had generally developed social organizations that were more complex than those of other races and was *also* successful in appropriating other races' resources. To many whites, those two facts indicated that it was God's design and therefore "natural." And yet, Lincoln and Darwin both dissented from this prevailing attitude because of that combination of rationality and compassion that was so well blended in both men, enabling them also to recognize the unfortunate depth of their societies' prejudices. This is why Darwin predicted that less "civilised" races would remain under threat and why Lincoln thought the tremendous expense and pain involved in returning at least some blacks to Africa could perhaps be less than the suffering that free blacks might endure if they remained in America. A glance at the history of Spanish, Dutch, French, British, Belgian, and American rule over native populations indicates that Lincoln's and Darwin's worst anticipations were all too realistic and nearly came true.

In America, the Civil War resulted in a victory for the North's political principles but also, paradoxically, for the South's racial ideology. This is partly because plenty of Southerners had always agreed it was better to be in the Union than out of it, and plenty of Northerners shared the view that blacks were inherently inferior. Racism had existed before receiving any veneer of scientific justification and continued after scientific racism shed simple polygenism and donned a misshapen version of natural selection. Polygenists such as Nott (who died in 1873) had already realized that they could employ "Darwinism" by declaring that even if blacks and whites had common origins, they were effectively permanent "variants" of some kind. The phrase "struggle for survival" preceded Darwin's adoption of it, but the concept was also readily accepted by former polygenists forced to abandon separate creations and yet eager to stress the inferiority of nonwhites. There had long been those who predicted blacks in America were destined to decline. Louis Agassiz had told Samuel Gridley Howe that both the black and white races would be weakened by amalgamation and that blacks who had previously fled to the North would have to retreat to more tropical areas. Others concluded that slavery had "protected" blacks from the "struggle for survival": as Van Evrie wrote in 1868, the black's tendency to race extinction "accelerated or diminished in exact proportion as 'impartial freedom' [was] thrust upon him." Gould's data was manipulated to reinforce the notion that weaknesses made blacks less "fit" to compete. For those who wished to believe it, the new solution to the "black problem" did not require slavery, or granting the blacks the protection of equal rights, or attempting colonization: given time and no new black immigration, the existing group would simply disappear.[28]

Two years after Gould's report, the 1870 U.S. census supposedly showed that the population growth among blacks since 1860 was not only less than that of whites but also far below the blacks' growth averages between 1790 and 1850, which, according to one southern journal, proved that blacks had been better off under slavery and that the slowing growth rate would soon become a net fall in black population.[29]

The 1880 census, however, indicated that since 1870, despite substantial white immigration and hardly any black immigration, the black population increased by nearly 35 percent while the white population increased by 29 percent.[30] Rather than reaching the correct conclusion—that undercounting blacks in 1870 had skewed growth rates in both censuses—some people panicked, like the author of an article in *Popular Science Monthly* who now projected that in a century, blacks would number 190 million. Suddenly, instead of seeing blacks as probable losers in some race between races, many whites now blamed the blacks for their "remarkable fecundity."[31]

The situation reverted after the 1890 census showed black population growth of 14 percent compared with 25 percent for whites. This coincided with the period, nearly a decade after Darwin's death, when "Darwinism" was being misapplied as "Social Darwinism" in order to argue that all forms of competition—whether social, political, or economic and whether among individuals, classes, nations, or races—were necessary and beneficial overall and that it was "unnatural" to try to prevent it and positively harmful to society to help the "losers."[32]

A Darwin quotation occasionally cited as providing a basis for Social Darwinism was, again, excerpted by Himmelfarb, this time from *Descent of Man*:

> With savages, the weak in body or mind are soon eliminated; and those that survive commonly exhibit a vigorous state of health. We civilised men, on the other hand, do our utmost to check the process of elimination; we build asylums for the imbecile, the maimed, and the sick; we institute poor-laws; and our medical men exert their utmost skill to save the life of every one to the last moment. There is reason to believe that vaccination has preserved thousands, who from a weak constitution would formerly have succumbed to

> small-pox. Thus the weak members of civilised societies propagate their kind. No one who has attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that this must be highly injurious to the race of man.[33]

Himmelfarb prefaced this by asserting that Darwin's view represented a return to "laissez-faire—the free, unrestrained competition of individuals," reversing a more recent trend in which "social legislation" had begun to ameliorate factory conditions: a serious misinterpretation by Himmelfarb. Darwin himself had preceded the passage with references to three authorities who took a far harsher stance than he did, and Himmelfarb curtailed Darwin's argument before it reached a three-way comparison among how "savages" deal with weaker members of their societies, how "civilised men" deal with weakness when breeding animals, and how "civilised men" *should* deal with weakness among their fellow men. Darwin pointed out that

> the aid which we feel impelled to give to the helpless [results from] the instinct of sympathy, which was originally acquired as part of the social instincts, but subsequently rendered, in the manner previously indicated, more tender and more widely diffused. *Nor could we check our sympathy, if so urged by hard reason, without deterioration in the noblest part of our nature.* . . . [I]f we were intentionally to neglect the weak and helpless, it could only be for a contingent benefit, with a certain and great present evil [emphasis added].[34]

Darwin can hardly be blamed because Americans (not to mention Germans) misapplied his ideas to nonbiological subjects and by doing so gave support to entirely different views. In America in the 1890s, diverse writers produced influential works all reaching the conclusion that the black race would fairly rapidly become extinct in America. They described no real mechanism for this view, which was based on poor statistics, a misapplication of Darwinian concepts, and, above all, desire. Those believing blacks would soon disappear saw no reason to prepare them to be citizens or to bestow any social rights upon them. "The new prognosis," as historian George M. Fredrickson explains, "pointed rather to the need to segregate or quarantine a race liable to be a source of contamination and social danger to the white community."[35] This attitude sustained the segregation laws that were not only tolerated by the rest of the nation but upheld by the Supreme Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896.

Had Lincoln lived to witness such developments or learned for how many more decades blacks would suffer harsh discrimination, he would have been saddened but unsurprised, and he might have concluded that much misery and hypocrisy could have been avoided if white America had either adopted a plan for colonization or made up its collective mind to treat blacks as equals. Legalized segregation was simply a more cruel form of "internal" colonization.

In 1909, the centenaries of Lincoln and Darwin were commemorated on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, and a century later, numerous well-organized committees prepared larger celebrations for the 2009 bicentenaries. Lincoln and Darwin would have been pleased at being remembered after their deaths, the only immortality they could possibly anticipate, and more pleased by the general success of their viewpoints. Centenaries often foster reassessments, which seem superfluous for two lives that have undergone continuous scrutiny. The now customary attacks will continue—that Lincoln was a racist forced into the role of emancipator and that Darwin's ideas led the world straight to Auschwitz—but their reputations will easily survive such taunts.[36] Both men would be appalled if idolaters prevented intelligent discussion of their lives or, more important, of the complex issues each man had wrestled with. Neither man would accept that any issues have been finally settled.

Abraham Lincoln and Charles Darwin, justly revered for their willingness to challenge existing beliefs through a rational pursuit of truth and justice, have been celebrated in two centenaries. A third centenary may not take place, however, unless leaders with similar qualities—especially a serious regard for science and a concern that human beings cooperate rather than compete—attain influence and the political power that can effect necessary changes in the way their fellow human beings meet the new and dangerous challenges facing mankind.

Marx and Lincoln:
An Unfinished Revolution

Marx and Lincoln: An Unfinished Revolution

Robin Blackburn

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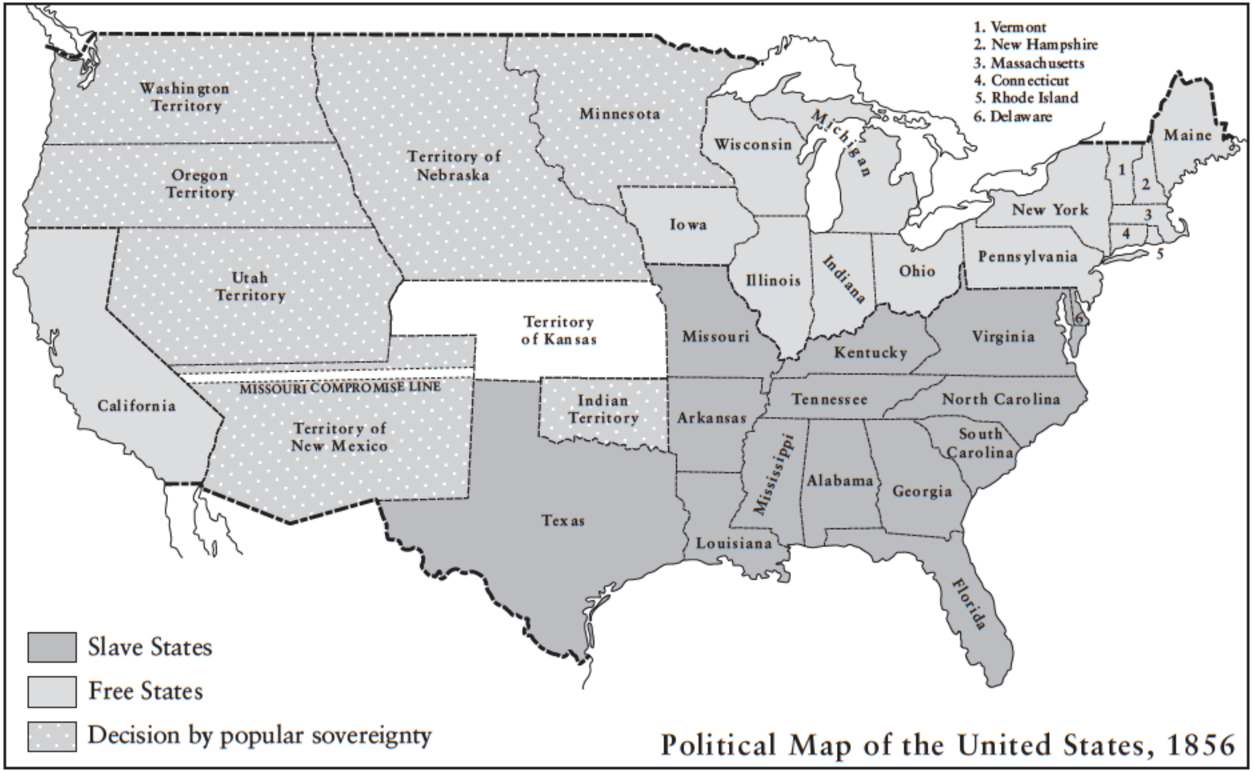
1. Vermont
2. New Hampshire
3. Massachusetts
4. Connecticut
5. Rhode Island
6. Delaware
Washington Territory
Oregon Territory
Territory of Nebraska
Minnesota
Wisconsin
Michigan
Maine
1
2
3
4
5
6
New York
Pennsylvania
Iowa
Illinois
Indiana
Ohio
Utah Territory
California
Territory of Kansas
Missouri
Kentucky
Virginia
MISSOURI COMPROMISE LINE
Indian Territory
Arkansas
Tennessee
North Carolina
Territory of New Mexico
South Carolina
Mississippi
Alabama
Georgia
Texas
Louisiana
Florida
Slave States
Free States
Decision by popular sovereignty

Political Map of the United States, 1856

Karl Marx and Abraham Lincoln: An Unfinished Revolution

In photographs Karl Marx and Abraham Lincoln both look the part of the respectable Victorian gentleman. But they were almost diametrically opposed in their attitude toward what was called at the time the social question. Lincoln happily represented railroad corporations as a lawyer. As a politician he was a champion of free wage labor. Karl Marx, on the other hand, was a declared foe of capitalism who insisted that wage labor was in fact wage slavery, since the worker was compelled by economic necessity to sell his defining human attribute—his labor power—because if he did not, his family would soon face hunger and homelessness.

Of course Marx's critique of capitalism did not deny that it had progressive features, and Lincoln's championing of the world of business did not extend to those whose profits stemmed directly from slaveholding. Each man placed a concept of unrewarded labor at the center of his political philosophy, and both opposed slavery on the grounds that it was intensively exploitative. Lincoln believed it to be his duty to defend the Union, which he saw as the momentous American experiment in representative democracy, by whatever means should prove necessary. Marx saw the democratic republic as the political form that would allow the working class to develop its capacity to lead society as a whole. He regarded US political institutions as a flawed early version of the republican ideal. With their "corruption" and "humbug," US political institutions did not offer a faithful representation of US society. Indeed, too often they supplied a popular veneer to the rule of the wealthy—with a bonus for slaveholders. But Marx's conclusion was that they should become more democratic, broadening the scope of freedom of association, removing all forms of privilege, and extending free public education.[1]

As a young man Marx had seriously considered moving to the United States, perhaps to Texas. He went so far as to write to the mayor of Trier, the town where he had been born, to request an *Auswanderungschein*, or emigration certificate. In the following year he wrote an article considering the ideas of the "American National Reformers," whose comparatively modest original aims—the distribution of 160 acres of public land to anyone willing to cultivate it—he recognized as justified and promising: "We know that this movement strives for a result that, to be sure, would further the industrialism of modern bourgeois society, but that … as an attack on land ownership … especially under the existing conditions … must drive it towards communism."[2] (The idea of distributing public land in this way did indeed have explosive implications, as we will see, and the new smallholders did often lack the resources needed to flourish, as Marx predicted, but his idea that they would therefore embrace "communism" was more than a stretch.) In 1849, writing as editor of Germany's leading revolutionary democratic journal, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, Marx praised the frugal budget and republican institutions of the United States in comparison with the bloated bureaucracy and unaccountability of the Prussian monarchy. [3]

Subsequently Marx remained fascinated by events in the US, and for ten years—1852 to 1861—he became the London correspondent of one of its leading newspapers, the *New York Daily Tribune*. The invitation to write for the *Tribune* came from Charles Dana, its editor, who had met Marx in Cologne in 1848 when Marx was in charge of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. Marx accepted Dana's invitation, and for a decade this was his only paid employment. He contributed over 400 articles, 84 of which were published without a byline, as editorials. Although initially happy with the arrangement, Marx complained of the pay ($5 an article, later raised to $10), of the fact that he was not paid for pieces that were not published, and of the editorial mangling of what he had written. In one moment of particular vexation—he had received no fees for months—he confided to his friend Frederick Engels that the whole arrangement was one of pure exploitation:

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[1] August Nimtz, *Marx and Engels: Their Contribution to the Democratic Breakthrough,* Albany 2000.

[2] Karl Marx, "American Soil and Communism," in *Karl Marx on America and the Civil War*, Saul Padover, ed., New York 1971, pp. 3–6.

[3] Karl Marx, "The American Budget and the Christian-German One," in *Karl Marx on America and the Civil War*, pp. 9–12. For Marx's emigration plans, see Padover's Introduction.

> It is truly nauseating that one should be condemned to count it a blessing when taken aboard a blotting paper vendor such as this. To crush up bones, grind them and make them into a soup like [that given] to paupers in a workhouse—that is the political work to which one is constrained in such large measure in a concern like this ...[4]

On other occasions Marx expressed himself as pleased to find an outlet for his views and the results of his research into British social conditions. He wrote about the everyday problems of British workers, about the Indian mutiny, the Crimean War, Italian unification, French financial scandals, and Britain's disgraceful Opium Wars.[5]

For obvious reasons, the one topic Marx did not cover was events in the United States. In February 1861 the *Tribune* responded to the crisis by dropping all its foreign correspondents except Marx. However, the paper, finding room for few of his dispatches, soon ceased paying him. He accordingly found another outlet for his journalism, the Viennese paper *Die Presse*, which, unlike the *Tribune*, expected him to write about the extraordinary conflict unfolding in North America; most of the longer articles reprinted in this book first appeared in *Die Presse*.

Abraham Lincoln had a rather more unalloyed experience of exploitation as a young man, since he worked for no pay on his father's farm until the age of twenty-one. Indeed, the elder Lincoln would hire out Abraham's services to other farmers, without handing over any payment to his son. In later life his relations with his father were cool and distant.[6] Marx obtained a doctorate from one of Germany's leading universities; Lincoln had only one year of formal education. Acquiring a license to practice law required no academic credential, but simply a judge willing to swear in the candidate and vouch that he was of good character. Working for a law firm was itself an education, one that evidently allowed Lincoln to hone his skills as a reasoner and advocate. His legal business prospered, and he came to embody the social mobility that was linked to the celebration of "free labor." As he was first a Whig and later a Republican, it is likely that he read quite a few of the articles Marx wrote for the *Tribune*, signed or otherwise, since this paper was favored by those interested in reform and the fate of the Republican Party. Marx was probably unaware of Lincoln, a one-term representative from Illinois, until the later 1850s, when Lincoln shot to prominence because of his debates with Stephen Douglas, as the two men contended to become senator for Illinois. Lincoln was nine years older than Marx; even so, it is still a little strange to read Marx's affectionate references to him as the "old man" in the mid-1860s.

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[4] These remarks are quoted in the introduction to an interesting selection of the articles, James Ledbetter's *Dispatches for the New York Tribune: Selected Journalism of Karl Marx*, London 2006, p. 8.

[5] British military expeditions that forced China to open its ports to British suppliers of the drug, which was produced in dismal circumstances by exploited Indians.

Marx and Lincoln both saw slavery as a menace to the spirit of republican institutions. But Lincoln believed that the genius of the Constitution could cage and contain the unfortunate slaveholders until such time as it might be possible to wind up slavery in some gradual and compensated manner. Marx saw the progressive potential of the republic in a different light. Its institutions, however flawed, as least allowed the partisans of revolutionary change openly to canvass the need for organization against capitalism and expropriation of the slaveholders.

In this introduction I explore why two men who occupied very different worlds and held contrary views nevertheless coincided on an issue of historic importance and even brought those worlds into fleeting contact with one another, and how the Civil War and

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[6] Eric Foner, *The Fiery Trail: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery,* New York 2010.

Reconstruction—which Eric Foner has called America's unfinished revolution[7]—offered great opportunities and challenges to Marx and to the supporters of the International in the United States. Furthermore, I will urge that the Civil War and its sequel had a larger impact on Marx than is often realized—and, likewise, that the ideas of Marx and Engels had a greater impact on the United States, a country famous for its imperviousness to socialism, than is usually allowed.

It is, of course, well known that Karl Marx was an enthusiastic supporter of the Union in the US Civil War and that on behalf of the International Workingmen's Association he drafted an address to Abraham Lincoln congratulating the president on his reelection in 1864. The US ambassador in London conveyed a friendly but brief response from the president. However, the antecedents and implications of this little exchange are rarely considered.

By the close of 1864 many European liberals and radicals were coming round to supporting the North, but Marx had done so from the outset. To begin with, the cause of the South had a definite appeal to liberals and radicals, partly because many of them distrusted strong states and championed the right of small nations to self-determination. Lincoln himself insisted in 1861 that the North was fighting to defend the Union, not to free the slaves. Many European liberals were impressed by the fact that the secessions had been carried out by reasonably representative assemblies. The slaves had had no say in the matter, but then very few blacks in the loyal states had a vote, either, and hundreds of thousands remained slaves.

If the Civil War was not about the defense of slavery, as many claimed, then the pure argument for Unionism was a weak one. Progressive opinion in Europe was supportive of a right to self-determination and in 1830 had not been at all disturbed when

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[7] Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution*, New York, 1989. For further discussion of whether these events amounted to a revolution, finished or otherwise, see Philip Shaw Paludan, "What Did the Winners Win?" in *Writing the Civil War: the Quest to Understand*, James McPherson and William Cooper, eds., Columbia, SC, 1998, pp. 174–200. However, Foner's conclusions concerning the winners seem to me closer to the mark than Paludan's, as I will explain below.

Belgium separated from the Netherlands, nor would it be in 1905 when Norway split from Sweden. Had the Netherlands or Sweden resorted to war to defend these unions, they would have been widely condemned. Consider, also, that Garibaldi began his career as a freedom fighter in the late 1830s as a partisan of the Republic of Rio Grande do Sul, a breakaway from the Empire of Brazil. Marx himself denounced Britain's dominion over Ireland. In December 1860, Horace Greeley, who had just replaced Dana as editor of the New York *Tribune*, wrote an editorial arguing that though the Secession was very wrong, it should not be resisted by military means. There were also minority currents in the European labor and socialist movement who preferred Southern agrarianism to the commercial society of the North.

The attitude toward the war of many outside North America greatly depended on whether or not slavery was seen as a crucial stake in the conflict. Some members of the British government were inclined to recognize the Confederacy, and if they had done so this would have been a major boost to the South. But ever since 1807, when Britain abolished its Atlantic slave trade, the British government had made suppression of Atlantic slave trafficking central to the Pax Britannica. When Lord Palmerston, as foreign secretary, negotiated a free trade agreement with an Atlantic state, he invariably accompanied it with a treaty banning slave trading. During the Opium Wars, British war ships were sent by Palmerston to demand that China should allow the drug traffic to continue in the name of free trade and pay compensation to British merchants whose stock they had seized.[8] Marx found the hypocrisy of "Pam" and the British breathtaking:

> Their first main grievance is that the present American war is "not one for the abolition of slavery' and that, therefore, the high-minded Britisher, used to undertake wars of his own and interest himself in other people's wars only on the basis of 'broad humanitarian principles," cannot be expected to feel any sympathy for his Northern cousins.[9]

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[8] Jasper Ridely, *Lord Palmerston*, London 1970; see especially pp. 329–30, 346–7, 375–6, 403–4.

[9] Karl Marx, "The American Question in England," *New York Daily Tribune*, October 11, 1861.

Withering as he was about the British government's humbug, he was well aware that large sections of the British people, including much of the working class, were genuinely hostile to slavery. The slaves in the British colonies had been emancipated during 1834–8, following a slave uprising in Jamaica and sustained, large-scale popular mobilizations in Britain itself. Public opinion was sensitized to the issue and uncomfortably aware of the country's dependence on slave-grown cotton. If it became apparent that the secessionists really were fighting simply to defend slavery, it would be extraordinarily difficult for the London government to recognize the Confederacy.

MARX REJECTS ECONOMIC EXPLANATIONS OF THE WAR

From the beginning, Marx was intensely scornful of those who supported what he saw as basically a slaveholders' revolt. He insisted that it was quite erroneous to claim, as some did, that this was a quarrel about economic policy. Summarizing what he saw as the wrongheaded view espoused by influential British voices, he wrote:

> The war between North and South [they claim] is a mere tariff war, a war between a tariff system and a free trade system, and England naturally stands on the side of free trade. It was reserved to the *Times* [of London] to make this brilliant discovery…The *Economist* expounded the theme further…Yes [they argued] it would be different if the war was waged for the abolition of slavery! The question of slavery, however, [they claim] has absolutely nothing to do with this war. Then as now, the *Economist* was a tireless advocate of the "free market."

Marx's unhesitating support for the North did not mean that he was unaware of its grave defects as a champion of free labor. He openly attacked the timidity of its generals and the venality of many of its public servants. Nevertheless he saw the Civil War as a decisive turning point in nineteenth-century history. A victory for the North would set the scene for slave emancipation and be a great step forward for the workers' cause on both sides of the

Atlantic. Support for the North was a touchstone issue, he believed, and it became central to his efforts to build the International Workingmen's Association.

Marx's political choice stemmed from an early analysis of the roots of the war in which he refused to define the struggle in the terms first adopted by the belligerents themselves. Marx's well-known conviction that politics is rooted in antagonistic social relations led him to focus on the structural features of the two sections, and the emergence therein of contradictory interests and forms of social life. Marx and Engels were quite well informed about US developments. Many of their friends and comrades had emigrated to the United States during the years of reaction that followed the failure of the European revolutions of 1848. With few exceptions those émigrés had gone to the North, especially the Northwest, rather than to the South. Marx and Engels corresponded with the émigrés and wrote for, and read, their newspapers.

Marx and Engels were well aware of the privileged position of slaveholders in the structure of the American state, but believed that this privilege was menaced by the growth of the North and Northwest. Lincoln's election was a threat to the Southern stranglehold on the republic's central institutions, as embodied in Supreme Court rulings, cross-sectional party alignments, and fugitive slave legislations. In July 1861 Marx writes to Engels:

> I have come to the conclusion that the conflict between the South and the North—for 50 years the latter has been climbing down, making one concession after another—has at last been brought to a head…by the weight which the extraordinary development of the Northwestern states has thrown into the scales. The population there, with its rich admixture of newly arrived Germans and Englishmen and, moreover, largely made up self-working farmers, did not, of course, lend itself so readily to intimidation as the gentlemen of Wall Street and the Quakers of Boston.[10]

One might wish this expressed a little more delicately and appreciatively—the Quakers had played a courageous role in resisting the slaveholders—but it is quite true that many of the Germans and English who sought refuge in the United States after 1848 brought with them a secular radicalism that changed and strengthened the antislavery cause in the United States by broadening its base of support. Before considering the nature of what might be called the German corrective it will be helpful to look at the evolution of Marx's analysis.

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[10] Marx to Engels, July 1, 1861, from Karl Marx and Frederick Engels's *Collected Works*, Volume 41, *Marx and Engels 1860–64*, London 1985, p. 114.

The clear premise of Marx's argument is that the North was expanding at a faster pace than the South—as indeed it was. But Marx contends that it is the South that is consumed by the need to expand territorially. The expansion of the North and Northwest, as Marx well knew, was even more rapid, a reflection of a momentous industrial growth and far-reaching commercialization of farming. The North and the Northwest, with a combined population of 20 million, were now linked by an extensive network of railroads and canals. The South might talk about King Cotton, but the truth was that economic growth in the South was not at all as broadly based as that in the North. Cotton exports were growing, but little else. In 1800 the South had the same population as the North; by 1860, it was only a little more than half as large, 11 million persons, about 7.5 million being Southern whites and 3.5 million slaves.

In Marx's view, the South had three motives for territorial expansion. First, its agriculture exhausted the soil, and so planters were constantly in quest of new land. Second, the slave states needed to maintain their veto power in the Senate, and for this purpose needed to mint new slave states just as fast as new "free" states were recognized. Third, there was in the South a numerous class of restive young white men anxious to make their fortune, and the leaders of Southern society were persuaded that an external outlet must be found for them if they were not to become disruptive domestically.[11]

By itself the argument that there was a shortage of land in the

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[11] Karl Marx, "The North American Civil War," *Die Presse*, October 25, 1861. This text is reproduced in full in the present volume. However there is no space here to print all Marx's writings on the United States and the Civil War. These are to be found either in the *Collected Works*, or in the already-cited collection edited by Saul Padover, or in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Civil War in the United States*, third ed., New York 1961, pp. 57–71.

South has limited validity. Expansion of the railroads could have brought more lands into cultivation. Additionally, the planters could have made better use of fertilizers, as did planters in Cuba. If there was a shortage, it was a shortage of slaves, relative to the boom in the cotton plantation economy of the 1850s.

Combined with the third point—the mass of restless filibusters[12]—the shortage argument gained more purchase. There was no absolute shortage of land and slaves, but planters could offer only so much support to their children. Southern whites had large families, and there was a surplus of younger sons who wished to make their way in the world. In the 1850s these young men—with what Marx called their "turbulent longings"—had been attracted to "filibustering" expeditions aimed at Cuba and Nicaragua—just as similar adventurers had sought glory and fortune in Texas and Mexico. Their parents might not always approve of freelance methods, but did see the attraction of acquiring new lands.

Undoubtedly Marx's clinching argument was that which referred to political factors:

> In order to maintain its influence in the Senate, and through the Senate its hegemony over the United States, the South therefore requires a continual formation of new slave states. This, however, was only possible through conquest of foreign lands, as in the case of Texas, and through the transformation of the territories belonging to the United States first into slave territories and then into slave states.[13]

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[12] During this period the term *filibuster* meant an irregular military adventurer, particularly one from the United States who hoped to seize land abroad, especially in Latin America.

[13] Marx, "The North American Civil War." Marx's stress on the centrality of political issues can be compared with the brilliant analysis offered by Barrington Moore Jr., in *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (New York 1969, pp. 111–58). Moore writes: "The fundamental issue became more and more whether the machinery of the Federal government should be used to support one society or the other" (p. 136). Although Moore's analysis stands up very well, it does not sufficiently register three vital aspects to which I will be paying particular attention: the rise of nationalism, the role of African American resistance, and the awakening of the working classes. Directly or indirectly, Marx's articles and letters do address these issues. For other accounts that were influenced by Marx, see Eric Foner, "The Causes of the American

He concluded:

> The whole movement was and is based, as one sees, on the *slave question*. Not in the sense of whether the slaves in the existing slave states should be emancipated or not, but whether twenty million free men of the North should subordinate themselves any longer to an oligarchy of three hundred thousand slaveholders.[14]

As social science and as journalism this was impressive, but it did not bring Marx to the political conclusion at which he aimed. The political subordination of Northerners—scarcely the equivalent of slavery—would be ended by Southern secession. Marx was focused on the possibility of destroying true chattel slavery, which he knew to be a critical component of the reigning capitalist order. He further insisted that it was folly to imagine that the slaveholders, aroused and on the warpath, would be satisfied by Northern recognition of the Confederacy. Rather, it would open the way to an aggressive South that would strive to incorporate the border states and extend slaveholder hegemony throughout North America. He reminded his readers that it was under Southern leadership that the Union had sought to introduce "the armed propaganda of slavery in Mexico, Central and South America."[15] Spanish Cuba, with its flourishing slave system, had already been singled out as the slave power's next prey.

Marx's argument and belief was that the real confrontation was between two social regimes, one based on slavery and the other on free labor: "The struggle has broken out because the two systems can no longer live peaceably side by side on the North American continent. It can only be ended by the victory of one system or the other." In this mortal struggle the North, however moderate its initial inclinations, would eventually be driven to revolutionary measures.

Civil War," in Foner's *Politics and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War* (Oxford 1980, pp. 15–33) and John Ashworth, *Slavery, Capitalism and Politics in the Antebellum Republic*, Vol. 2, *The Coming of the Civil War*, Cambridge 2007.

[14] "The North American Civil War," p. 71.

[15] "The North American Civil War," p. 71. Marx's argument was on target. See Robert May, *The Southern Dream of Caribbean Empire*, London 2002.

Marx believed that the polity favored by the Southern slaveowners was very different from the republic aspired to by Northerners. He did not spell out all his reasons, but he was essentially right about this. Southern slaveholders wished to see a Federal state that would uphold slave property; that would return and deter slave runaways, as laid down in the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850; and that would allow slaveholding Southerners access to Federal territories. The planters were happy that the antebellum state was modest in size and competence, since this meant low taxes and little or no interference with their "peculiar institution."[16] They did not favor either high tariffs or expensive internal improvements. But this restricted view of the state was accompanied by provisions that affected the lives of Northerners in quite intimate ways. The fugitive slave law of 1850 required all citizens to cooperate with the Federal marshals in apprehending runaways. In the Southern view, slaveholders should be free to bring slaves to Federal territories, an importation seen as an unwelcome and unfair intrusion by migrants from the Northern states, whether they were antislavery or simply antiblack. Southerners had favored censorship of the Federal mail, to prevent its use for abolitionist literature. They supported a foreign policy that pursued future acquisitions suitable for plantation development. But they did not want a state that had the power to intervene in the special internal arrangements of the slave states themselves. For them, a Republican president with the power to appoint thousands of Federal officials in the Southern states and with no intention of suppressing radical abolitionists spelled great danger.

Marx did not support the North because he believed that its victory would directly lead to socialism. Rather, he saw in South and North two species of capitalism—one allowing slavery, the other not. The then existing regime of American society and economy embraced the enslavement of four million people whose enforced toil produced the republic's most valuable export, cotton, as well as much tobacco, sugar, rice, and turpentine. Defeating the slave power was going to be difficult. The wealth and pride of the 300,000 slaveholders (there were actually 395,000 slave owners, according to the 1860 Census, but at the time Marx was writing this had not yet been published) was at stake. These slaveholders were able to corrupt or intimidate many of the poor Southern whites, and they had rich and influential supporters among the merchants, bankers and textile manufacturers of New York, London and Paris. Defeating the slave power and freeing the slaves would not destroy capitalism, but it would create conditions far more favorable to organizing and elevating labor, whether white or black. Marx portrayed the wealthy slave owners as akin to Europe's aristocrats, and their removal as a task for the sort of democratic revolution he had advocated in the *Communist Manifesto* as the immediate aim for German revolutionaries.

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[16] Robin Einhorn, *American Slavery, American Taxation*, Berkeley 2008.

LINCOLN ON MOB VIOLENCE AND THE RIGHT OF REVOLUTION

Lincoln, as a Whig brought up in Kentucky and southern Illinois, was quite familiar with the tensions created by slavery in the borderlands between South and North. His wife's close relatives were slaveholders; one of his great uncles owned forty slaves. As a moderate Whig and, later, moderate Republican, Lincoln was ready to uphold the legal and constitutional rights of slaveholders. But he worried about the nation's coherence and integrity. The earliest statement of his political philosophy, his speech "On the Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions," delivered at the Young Men's Lyceum in Springfield in 1838, gives expression to his pride in US political institutions. But it also expresses deep dismay at the growing streak of lawlessness he sees in American life. He was alarmed at rising antagonism stemming from race, slavery and abolition, citing the summary execution of blacks believed to be plotting rebellion; the wanton killing of a mulatto; and attacks on law-abiding abolitionists by violent mobs, leading to the death of Elijah Lovejoy, editor of an antislavery paper. These events violated the rule of law that should be every citizen's "political religion."[17] As he will have been aware, such mob actions were orchestrated by self-described "men of property and standing," the supposedly patriotic allies of Southern politicians—at this point all parties were cross-sectional in their support. The rioters portrayed the Abolitionists as the pawns of a foreign—specifically British—plot against America.[18] Here were disturbing signs that the republic's institutions were infected by an uncontrollable and deep-seated malady. Lincoln feared for a future in which some aspiring tyrant would establish his personal rule "at the expense of emancipating slaves or enslaving free men."[19] The lawless threat might come either from slaveholders or from abolitionists.

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[17] Lincoln, "The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions," in *Abraham Lincoln: His Speeches and Writings*, Roy Basler, ed., New York 1946, pp. 76–84, 81. See also Eric Foner, *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery*, New York 2010, pp. 26–30.

Lincoln's stress on the republic of laws and due process was accompanied by a defense of the need for a National Bank to collect and disburse the public revenues and by his consequent hostility to Van Buren's proposal that revenues should instead be entrusted to local "sub-treasuries." In a major speech he gave as a member of the Illinois state legislature Lincoln attacked this scheme. In Lincoln's view the Bank, run as a privately-owned public corporation, had two decisive advantages. Firstly, it put the money deposited with it to work, earning interest and furnishing credit, where the unspent revenue would simply rust away in the network of sub-treasury lock boxes. Secondly the National Bank better served align the "duty" and the "interest" of Bank officials than would a dispersed chain of sub-treasuries. As a permanent corporation the Bank knew that it would only continue to be entrusted with the public revenues if it proved a faithful custodian. The shifting personnel of a scattered network of sub-treasury officials in each state would be far more vulnerable to individual frailty or fecklessness (leading to the wry comment: "it may not be improper here to add, that Judas carried the bag, was the Sub-Treasurer of the Savior and his disciples"[20]).

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[18] Leonard Richards, *Gentlemen of Property and Standing: Anti-Abolition Mobs in Jacksonian America*, New York 1971. See also David Grimstead, *American Mobbing, 1828–61: Towards Civil War*, Oxford 1998, pp. 11–2. Several of the riots were directed at the lecture tour of George Thompson, a British abolitionist.

[19] "The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions", p. 83.

[20] Lincoln, "The Sub-Treasury," 26 December 1839, in Basler, *Abraham Lincoln: His Speeches and Writings*, pp. 90–112, 98.

Already at this comparatively early period, Lincoln saw corporate capital and credit as a fructifying force, idealizing corporate ownership and distrusting public initiatives in the realm of finance.

When elected to the House of Representatives in Washington, Lincoln's first act (in January 1848) was to denounce the victorious and almost concluded war with Mexico as unnecessary, unconstitutional, and the result of presidential mendacity and aggression.[21] While not pinning the blame for the war on slavery, as some did, and while accepting its result as a *fait accompli*, Lincoln backed David Wilmot's motion, which stipulated that slavery should be entirely excluded from any newly acquired land. Slavery had been abolished in Mexico in 1829, during the administration of Vicente Guerrero, and there was a real prospect that the self-proclaimed champions of "Anglo-Saxon freedom" would reestablish slavery in lands where it had already been eliminated.[22]

In the course of his speech attacking the way the Mexican war had been launched, Lincoln delivered the following judgment:

> Any people anywhere being inclined and having the power, have the right to rise up and shake off the existing government, and form a new one that suits them better. This is a most valuable, a most sacred right—a right which, we hope and believe, is to liberate the world. Nor is this right confined to cases in which the whole people of an existing government may choose to exercise it. Any portion of such a people that *can*, *may* revolutionize, and make their *own* so much of the territory as they inhabit. More than this, a *majority* of any portion of such a people may revolutionize, putting down a *minority*, intermingled with or near about them, who may oppose their movements. Such a minority was precisely the case of

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[21] "The War with Mexico," in Basler, *Abraham Lincoln: His Speeches and Writings*, pp. 202–16.

[22] Theodore Vincent, *The Legacy of Vicente Guerrero*, Gainesville 2001, pp. 195–9. For the significance of the black and mulatto population of Mexico, see Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, *La población negra de México, 1519–1810*, Mexico City 1946, pp. 223–45. For the racial rhetoric of "Anglo-Saxonism" at this time in the US see Roger Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: the Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism*, Cambridge, MA, 1981, pp. 249–71. Even opponents of the war sometimes appealed to the supposed superiority of the Anglo-Saxons, but Lincoln did not.

> the Tories in our own Revolution. It is a quality of revolutions not to go by *old lines*, or *old laws*.[23]

This blunt and brusque version of the "self-determination" principle was offered as the right way to look at Mexico's "revolution" against Spain and Texas's "revolution" against Mexico. Its terms might easily endorse "settler sovereignty," but Lincoln was later to enter a crucial caveat on this point (to be considered below).

Lincoln set out his views on slavery in a series of major speeches that defined him as a politician. These included one in Peoria in 1854 that dwelled on the implications of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and offered a sketch of the republic's successive attempts to compromise over slavery; the "House Divided" speech in 1858, delivered to a Republican convention; several speeches he gave as a Republican senatorial candidate in debate with Stephen Douglas (including one devoted to the Dred Scott ruling); and a speech at the Cooper Union in New York, in 1860. Put together, they make a weighty tome, and no other Republican leader devoted such sustained attention to the topic. The speeches often lasted two or three hours, were each heard by audiences of several thousand, and were reprinted verbatim in sympathetic newspapers. Southern leaders and opinion formers became familiar with their contents. Characteristically, they are quite unrelenting about the wrongs of slavery, but also moderate in their conclusions. Once he became a presidential candidate, Lincoln reiterated his respect for the compromises embodied in the US Constitution and the compromise acts of 1820 and 1850, but he opposed any further concessions. He favored an end to slavery in the Federal district in Washington because such a move was not excluded by those agreements. Likewise he opposes the Dred Scott ruling allowing slaves to be brought into Federal territory. But he was prepared to recognize and implement established law, including that relating to fugitives. For the long term Lincoln believed that means should be found gradually to emancipate the slaves, for example by freeing the children born to slave mothers once the children reached the age of 25, or some other alternative that gave compensation to their owners and allowed the former slaves to be settled in Africa. Abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison had long attacked the latter idea. It was associated with Whig slaveholders, notably Henry Clay, a man much admired by Lincoln, who supported what was known as the colonization of African Americans, treating them as aliens in the land where most of them had been born and inviting them to "return" to the land of their ancestors.

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[23] Basler, *Abraham Lincoln: His Speeches and Writings*, p. 209. Lincoln was at this time involved in a group that called itself the Young Indians. He was hugely impressed by a speech against the Mexican War delivered by Alexander Stephens of Georgia, another member of the group, in which he attacked hostilities that were "aggressive and degrading," since they involved "waging a war against a neighboring people to compel them to sell their country." Stephens insisted that facing such a prospect he would himself prefer to perish on "the funeral pyre of liberty" rather than sell "the land of my home." Stephens, who remained friendly to Lincoln, was, of course, to become vice president of the Confederacy. The quoted excerpts are from Basler, p. 214.

Lincoln's support for colonization separated him from the main currents of abolitionism, but his concern for the integrity of the Federal state, his early disapproval of the lawlessness of the defenders of slavery, and his distaste for the slaveholders' demand for special treatment all signal themes that characterized the Republican Party of the 1850s. Unlike the Radicals, he did not fulminate against the "slave power," but he did attack the exorbitant representation of Southern white men in the House of Representatives and electoral college, which came about because the slave population of each state was counted when apportioning delegates, with each slave deemed equivalent to three-fifths of a free man. He sought a new and more demanding ideal of the nation and the republic. Whereas antebellum US national feeling characteristically deferred to the slaveholders, the Republicans sponsored a new vision of the nation that challenged the South's claim to special consideration. In the Republican view, if slaves could be brought into Federal territories then the incoming slaveholders would be able to grab the best land and develop it more rapidly than free farmers. The Republicans also favored public improvements and free education. The Republican vision had great appeal in the regions characterized by cheap and rapid transportation, the growth of manufacturing, and the spread of the "market revolution."[24] This surge of growth spread wealth quite broadly among farmers, artisans, and small businessmen, in contrast to the South, where the cotton boom enriched a narrower circle of slave owners and their hangers-on.[25] Lincoln believed that the broad prosperity of the North and the Northwest was rooted in its free labor system, a view shared by Marx. Republican pride in the progress of the free states repelled the Southern mainstream. Lincoln won 40 percent of the popular vote in 1860, but all of these votes came from the free states.

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[24] See Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815–1846*, Oxford 1991, pp. 125–30, 271–8, 396–427, and Melvyn Stokes and

That Lincoln detested slavery was clear from his speeches and writings, and it is not surprising that he sketched half a dozen different key arguments on the topic in his notebooks.[26] He was also willing to talk about complex and gradual schemes of compensated emancipation. But as a national leader, what he offered was not an attack on slavery but implacable resistance to its territorial expansion. The puzzle here can only be resolved by identifying what else it was about his outlook and deepest convictions that restrained his evidently sincere opposition to slavery. The answer is probably his profound attachment to the Constitution and his awareness that within that Constitution it would be extraordinarily difficult to change the historic compromise the document represented between North and South, slavery and freedom. Lincoln's patriotism was even stronger than his dislike of slavery and obliged him, he believed, to accommodate to the latter out of due regard for a nation established by, and catering to, Southern slaveholders.

RIVAL NATIONALISMS?

The Republican Party was founded to defend the rights of "free labor" and to fight for a ban on slavery in Federal territories. The Republicans also adopted the "agrarian" stakeholder view, a semi-socialist idea that any man wishing to become a farmer should be given land for a homestead in the Federal territories, a proposal

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Stephen Conway, eds., *The Market Revolution in America: Social, Political and Religious Expressions*, Charlottesville 1996.

[25] Gavin Wright, *Slavery and American Economic Development*, London 2004.

[26] For example, those in *Abraham Lincoln: His Speeches and Writings*, Basler, pp. 278–9, 427, 477–8, and 513.

that was to be translated into legislation in 1862. Lincoln had worked hard, educated himself, and become a prominent attorney and political figure. This background reinforced his belief that the free labor system allowed a man to make his way in the world. The Republicans also supported a system of public education for all and the foundation of a chain of "land grant" colleges, namely colleges endowed with revenue from the sale of public land. Lincoln believed that the pacts that had made the United States must be respected, but he also held that in the long run the nation could not remain half slave and half free.

Marx did not directly compare the claims of North and South as competing nationalisms. Instead he questioned whether the South was a nation, writing, "'The South,' however, is neither a territory strictly detached from the North geographically, nor a moral unity. It is not a country at all, but a battle slogan." Many who were much closer to the situation than Marx entered the same judgment in the years before 1861, yet soon had to acknowledge that the Confederacy did rapidly acquire many of the ideological trappings of a nation, complete with a claimed "moral unity" based on exaltation of the racial conceits and values of a slave society and of the conviction that white Southerners were the true Americans. Their values were a strange mixture of traditional patriotism and paternalism and—for whites alone—libertarianism. Hundreds of thousands of white Southerners who owned no slaves nevertheless fought and died for the rebellion, seeing the Confederacy as the embodiment of their racial privileges and rural civilization. The rebels were fighting for a cause that embodied a way of life, one that embraced minimal taxation and extensive "states' rights." The mass of slaveless whites not only had the vote but also enjoyed the "freedom of the range," which is to say that they could graze their animals on vast tracts of public land and on uncultivated private land. They also enjoyed significant hunting rights. Such privileges allowed them to live, as they put it, "high on the hog." Engels pointed out to Marx that the secession movement had backing from the generality of whites in the more developed and populous parts of the South.[27]

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[27] Engels to Marx, July 3, 1861, from Marx and Engels, *The Civil War in the United States*, p. 326.

Southern nationalism itself responded to, and stimulated, Unionist or Yankee nationalism.[28] Whereas patriotism was about the past, the new nationalist idea, a reflection of modernity, was about the future. Even at a time when truly industrial methods only affected a few branches of society, "print capitalism" and the "market revolution" were already transforming public space and time. The new steam presses poured out a torrent of newspapers, magazines, and novels, all of them summoning up rival "imagined communities."[29] Rail and cable further accelerated the dynamics of agreement and contradiction. Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* appeared first as serial installments in a newspaper, then as a book. It moved the Northern reader to tears, but seemed a grotesque libel to Southerners. The North's imagined community could not embrace the slaveholder, let alone the degraded slave traders, and the South's drew the line at the abolitionist and the radical newspaper editor. That incompatible national imaginings played a part in precipitating the conflict by no means takes away from the underlying discrepancy between the two social formations.

That the Civil War was an "irrepressible conflict," that its roots lay in the different labor regimes of the two sections, and that these differences crystallized in opposing images of the good society are not novel propositions. Different versions of them have been entertained by, among many others, such notable historians as David Potter, Don Fehrenbacker, Eric Foner, Eugene Genovese, John Ashworth and Bruce Levine.[30] The idea that rival nationalisms played their part is an extension of such views, but Daniel Crofts points to the difficulty of pinpointing the exact moment of their birth:

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[28] Many historians reject out of hand, as Marx did, the idea that there was a Southern nationalism. Often they do so because they do not wish in any way to endorse the Confederacy or the later cult of Dixie. This is understandable, but wrong, as Drew Gilpin Faust has argued in an important study of the topic. Nationalism can be flawed and self-destructive, and it can change for better or worse. See Faust's *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South*, Baton Rouge 1989. See also Manisha Sinha's *The Counter-Revolution of Slavery*, Chapel Hill 2000, pp. 63–94. For the general argument, see Tom Nairn, *Faces of Nationalism*, London 1995.

[29] The classic study is, of course, Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, second ed., London 1993.

[30] David Potter, *The Impending Conflict*, Don Fehrenbacker, ed., New York 1976; Eugene Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery*, New York 1967; Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, New York 1970 and Foner, "Causes of

> It is tempting to project back onto the prewar months the fiercely aroused nationalisms that appeared in mid-April [1861]. To do so would not be entirely in error, but it invites distortion. The irreconcilably antagonistic North and South described by historians such as Foner and Genovese were much easier to detect after April 15. Then and only then could Northerners start to think in terms of a conflict urged on behalf of "the general interests of self-government" and the hopes of humanity and the interests of freedom among all peoples and for ages to come.[31]

But this account gives too much to Unionist rhetoric. The Union's war aim was quite simply the preservation of the Union, and the frustration of "the interests of self-government" as understood by the majority of Southern whites. Both nationalisms had a markedly expansive character, but the Union's was purely continental at this stage, whereas the Confederacy's looked toward South America (notably to Cuba) as well as to the west. The clash was thus one of rival empires as well as competing nations.

It was the election of Abraham Lincoln that precipitated Secession. Lincoln's positions on slavery, as we have seen, were moderate—he took his stand only against any *expansion of slavery*, as he carefully explained in his exchanges with Stephen Douglas in the 1850s. But he represented a dangerous figure for Southern slaveholders nonetheless, because he attacked slavery as a wrong and because he concentrated on this issue to the virtual exclusion of any other. If Marx was right about the inherently expansionist character of Southern slavery, then Lincoln's modest but firm stance against it was enough to provoke them to the desperate expedient of secession. As I have already noted, there was no real space constraint—and if there had been, Kansas was not the right place

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the Civil War" in *Politics and Ideology*; John Ashworth, *Slavery, Capitalism and Politics in the Antebellum Republic*, 2 vols., Cambridge 1998 and 2007; Bruce Levine, *Half Slave and Half Free: the Roots of Civil War*, New York 1992.

[31] Daniel Crofts, "And the War Came," in *A Companion to the Civil War and Reconstruction*, Lacy Ford, ed., Oxford 2005, pp. 183–200; p. 197.

for cotton plantations—but Lincoln's presidency rankled for other reasons.

The vehement speeches that defined Lincoln's emergence as a Republican challenger were insulting as well as alarming to Southern ears. He was not more radical than other Republicans in his conclusions—rather the reverse—but he was more consistent and unwavering in his focus, and that was very unsettling.[32] How could his appointees be trusted? How would he and they respond to any future John Brown–style adventure? Many leading Southerners, though exercised by such dangers, nevertheless still at first opposed secession (Alexander Stephens, the future Confederate vice president, being a case in point), on the grounds that it was fraught with even worse danger—revolutions invariably destroy those who start them. But the more moderate Southerners were at the mercy of the more extreme. The departure of one slave state, let alone five or more, would decisively weaken the remaining Southern states' position in Washington. Such a conclusion belongs to the realm of rational calculation, but at a certain point, the clash of two incompatible nationalisms—and the sense of rightfulness and justification they entail—is needed to explain the willingness to engage in a life-and-death struggle.

Marx had scorn for national one-sidedness and self-satisfaction, but he did see a sequence of national revolutions as necessary to the war against aristocracy and monarchy. He may not have been fully aware of the extent to which he saw both German nationalism and North American nationalism as progressive forces. In 1861 his options stemmed from a conviction that the Civil War had a good prospect of destroying the world's major bastion of chattel slavery and racial oppression. But he was also aware that ideas produced by the German national revolution were helping to redefine the Union.

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[32] Lincoln's steady focus on slavery after 1854 emerges clearly in Foner's *The Fiery Trial*.

THE GERMAN AMERICANS

This brings us to the too often neglected contribution of the German Americans. Bruce Levine's study *The Spirit of 1848* shows the transformative impact of the huge German immigration around the midcentury.[33] At this time the level of immigration was rising to new heights, and Germans comprised between a third and a half of all newcomers. In the single year 1853, over a quarter of a million German immigrants arrived. The German Americans soon became naturalized and formed an important pool of votes for those who knew how to woo them. To begin with, Democratic rhetoric had some impact on them, but by the mid-1850s many German Americans were attracted to the Republicans, and they in turn helped to make Republicanism and the antislavery position more broadly attractive.

Protestant evangelicalism strongly influenced US abolitionism. The evangelical repudiation of slavery was very welcome, but eventually too close an association between the two served to limit antislavery's base. The evangelicals twinned antislavery with temperance and Protestantism, and this diminished the appeal of abolitionism in the eyes of many Catholics and not a few freethinkers. Already in the 1830s William Lloyd Garrison and William Channing were seeking to root the antislavery critique in more rationalist varieties of Protestant Christianity. There was also a current of radical English immigration that inclined to antislavery and the secular politics of Tom Paine.[34] But the large-scale German influx greatly strengthened the secular culture of antislavery. With their breweries, beer gardens, musical concerts, and *turnverein* (exercise clubs), the German radicals furnished a strong secular current in the antislavery movement, and even the German Protestants had concerns which differentiated them from the US Methodists and Baptists.

The temperance cause loomed large for evangelicals but had no charm for German and Nordic immigrants. The more radical German Americans supported women's rights and female suffrage;

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[33] Bruce Levine, *The Spirit of 1848: German Immigrants, Labor Conflict, and the Coming of the Civil War*, Urbana, IL, 1992.

[34] The overrepresentation of British immigrants among antislavery activists in the 1830s is noted in Richards, *Gentlemen of Property and Standing*.

Mathilda Anneke published a German-language women's paper. Margarete Schurz was influential in the introduction of public kindergartens. Sometimes Marx's German American followers are portrayed as deferring to the prejudices of white, male trade unionists, but this is unfair. When Joseph Wedemeyer, Marx's longtime friend and comrade, helped to found the American Workers League (*Amerikanische Arbeitersbund*) in Chicago in 1853, its founding statement of principles declared that "all workers who live in the United States without distinction of occupation, language, color, or sex can become members."[35] Today such a formula sounds entirely conventional, but in 1853 it was very fresh. Indeed, this may have been the first occasion on which a workers' organization adopted it. The revolutionary German Americans did not invent this stance all by themselves, but they did readily adopt a critique of racial and gender exclusion pioneered by radical abolitionists. Like other exiles, the German Americans quarreled with one another, some inclining to the Republicans and others opting for purely labor-oriented groups, and Marx's followers shared this division. Many saw the founding of a labor party as the long-term goal, but even some of those closest to Marx, like Wedemeyer, also saw a tactical need to strengthen the Republicans and attack the slave power. Indeed, August Nimtz concludes that "the Marx party, specifically through Wedemeyer…played an important role in winning the German émigré community to the Republican cause."[36]

The mass of German Americans were naturally hostile to the nativist chauvinism of the Know Nothings (or American Party). The Republican Party only emerged as the dominant force in the North in the 1850s by defeating the Know Nothings and repudiating its own nativist temptation. While some Republican leaders flirted with nativist prejudice, the party itself attacked—even demonized—"the Slave Power" and not the immigrants. The presence of hundreds of thousands of German American voters helped to ensure this orientation.[37]

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[35] Levine, *The Spirit of 1848*, p. 125. In later decades some German Americans did indeed soft-pedal women's rights when seeking to recruit Irish American trade unionists, but while this should be duly noted, it is far from characterizing all German Americans, whether followers of Marx or not. For an interesting study that sometimes veers towards caricature, see Timothy Messer-Kruse, *The Yankee International, 1848–76: Marxism and the American Reform Tradition*, Chapel Hill 1998. This author has a justifiable pride in the native American radical tradition and some valid criticisms of some of the positions adopted by German American "Marxists," but he is so obsessed with pitting the two ethnic political cultures against one another that he fails to notice how effectively they often combined, especially in the years 1850–70. See Paul Buhle, *Marxism in the United States*, New York 1983, for a more balanced assessment.

[36] Nimtz, *Marx and Engels*, p. 170.

As the Civil War unfolded, German Americans and their overseas friends furnished vital support to the Northern cause. At the outbreak of the war, a German American militia in St. Louis played a key role in preventing Missouri's governor from delivering the state—and the city's huge arsenal—into Confederate hands. Wedemeyer became a colonel, served as a staff officer in St. Louis for General John Frémont, and was put in charge of the city's defenses. Eventually 200,000 Germans fought for the Union, with 36,000 fighting in German-speaking units. Carl Schurz became a major general, and later a senator. Franz Sigel and Alexander Schimmelfennig became generals. Two other members of the Communist League who also became Unionist officers were August Willich and Fritz Anneke. Indeed, the correspondence of Marx and Engels is studded with references to the military progress of these friends and acquaintances. The imperative to rally against the "Slave Power" also alleviated the sometimes bitter differences of émigré politics.

The military resources represented by the wider German-American enrollment were very significant, but the same could be said of the Irish American contingents, which grew to be just as large. The German Americans brought with them an openness to the antislavery idea that was to promote a new sense of the character of the war and the way it should be fought. Reviewing a recent collection of hundreds of letters written by German American volunteers, Kenneth Barkin writes: "the major reason for volunteering

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[37] For the role of antislavery in swinging German Americans to the Republican Party in upstate New York, see Hendrik Booraem, *The Formation of the Republican Party in New York: Politics and Conscience in the Antebellum North*, New York 1983, pp. 204–5.

[for the Union army] was to bring slavery to an end."[38] This new research very much vindicates Levine's argument in *The Spirit of 1848*.

The veterans of 1848 saw themselves as social revolutionaries but also as exponents of a national idea and movement. Whatever their ambivalence—and it was considerable—they were aware of the lessons of the Napoleonic epoch and of the nationalist renewal that it had provoked in Germany. One of the most striking expressions of this movement had been the doctrines of Carl von Clausewitz—his contention that war was the continuation of politics by other means, his attention to moral factors, and his insistence on the priority of destroying the enemy's social basis rather than capturing territory or capital cities. Clausewitz's magnum opus, *On War*, had been published in 1832, and its ideas had currency among the 1848 veterans. Unionist military strategy at first ignored the Clausewitzian imperatives and instead preferred the doctrine of Antoine Jomini, a Swiss military theorist who had sympathized with the French Revolution.[39] With few exceptions, Northern commanders were determined to avoid resorting to revolutionary measures, fearing that this would lead to race war. Instead, they relied implicitly on a strategy of blockade and cordons to exhaust the Confederacy and on the capture of Richmond (a strategy that Marx questioned in his article for the March 27, 1862, issue of *Die Presse*).

At a different level, Francis Lieber, a teacher at Columbia College and a German American of pre-1848 vintage, helped to shape the Union response to the war. The War Department looked to him when devising its rules of military conduct. Lieber played an important role in the Loyal Publication Society. He had been a strong exponent of the need for a party system in the antebellum period, but thought a new approach was needed once fighting began. His pamphlet *No Party Now But All for Our Country* stressed the wartime need to suppress party conflict and devote all energies to defeating the rebellion. His program for a more thoroughgoing and single-minded mobilization for the war effort was welcomed by the Union Leagues.[40]

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[38] Kenneth Barkin, "Ordinary Germans, Slavery and the US Civil War," *Journal of African American History*, March 2007, pp. 70–9.

[39] Gary Gallagher, "Blueprint for Victory," in *Writing the Civil War*, James McPherson and William Cooper, eds., Charlottesville 1998, pp. 60–79.

The German American mobilization for the Union was disinterested in that it did not ask for anything for itself in return for its support, though it did sometimes urge recognition for the workingman.[41] (Northern Protestant churches gave strong support to the Union, but some of their leaders urged that the time had come for Protestantism to be recognized as the country's official religion.)[42]

The national imagination pitted producers against parasites, or plain folk against snobs. Both Marx and Lincoln used a class-like language in evaluating the conflict. Marx stressed that secession was, above all, the work of aristocratic slaveholders, implicitly absolving the plain folk of the South from responsibility. There were clear majorities for secession in the representatives' gatherings that agreed to the setting up of the Confederacy, with the issue of secession decided by special conventions in ten cases and by the legislature in one other. Scrutiny of these decisions—and the contrary decisions taken by one special convention and three legislatures—shows that the participants were nearly all slaveholders and considerably better off than the average free citizen (only about a third of the heads of Southern households owned slaves). The supporters of immediate secession were considerably richer than those who were lukewarm or opposed. Put another way, those with more slaves—the main form of wealth—were keenest on secession.[43]

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[40] Mark Neeley, *The Union Divided*, Cambridge, MA, 2002, pp. 9–12.

[41] Lincoln made a friendly response to an address delivered to him by a torchlight procession of German Americans at Cincinnati, Ohio, on February 12, 1861, in which he observes, "I agree with you that the workingmen are the basis of all governments, for the plain reason that they are the more numerous" but adds that "citizens of other callings than those of the mechanic" also warranted attention. See "Address to Germans at Cincinnati, 12 February 1861," in Basler, *Abraham Lincoln: His Speeches and Writings*, pp. 572–3.

[42] George Frederickson, "The Coming of the Lord: The Northern Protestant Clergy and the Civil War Crisis," in *Religion and the American Civil War*, Randall Miller, Harry Stout, and Charles Reagan Wilson, eds., New York 1998, pp. 110–130.

[43] Ralph Wooster, *The Secession Conventions of the South*, Princeton 1962, pp. 256–66.

Lincoln claimed to find a similar pattern in Washington in the first days of the war as many deserted their posts:

> It is worthy of note that while in this the government's hour of trial large numbers of those in the Army and Navy, who have been favored with offices, [have] proved false to the hand that had pampered them, not one common soldier, or common sailor, is known to have deserted his flag. The most important fact of all is the unanimous firmness of the common soldiers and common sailors…This is the patriotic instinct of the plain people. They understand, without an argument, that destroying the government which was made by Washington means no good to them.[44]

Though certainly invoking class-like qualities, at the same time Lincoln is certainly appealing to national sentiment, just as on the Confederate side there was also, very emphatically, an appeal to the spirit of George Washington (and Thomas Jefferson) and a claim that the common (white) folk were the heart of the nation and that it was they who filled the fighting ranks of the rebel army. (This was true, though by the end of the extraordinarily grueling conflict, Southern desertion rates were to be higher.)

THE NORTH DECIDES TO FIGHT

Lincoln was to spell out an important qualification to the sweeping endorsement of the right of revolution in his Mexican War speech, one that had a direct bearing on the South's right to self-determination. He declared: "The doctrine of self-government is right—absolutely and eternally right—but it has no just application, as here attempted. Or perhaps I should rather say that whether it has such just application depends upon whether a negro is not or is a man. If he is not a man, why in that case, he who is a man may, as a matter of self-government, do just as he pleases with him. But if the negro is a man, is it not to that extent a total destruction of self-government to say that he, too, shall not govern himself?

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[44] Quoted by William Lee Miller in *President Lincoln: the Duty of a Statesman*, New York 2008, p. 106.

When the white man governs himself that is self-government, but when he governs himself and also governs another man, that is more than self-government—that is despotism. If the negro is a man, why then my ancient faith teaches me that 'all men are created equal' and that there can be no moral right in connection with one man's making a slave of another."[45]

Lincoln uttered these words in Peoria in 1854 responding to the debate over the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the dispute over the right of communities in the Federal territories to establish themselves as newly formed states, with or without slaves. The principle outlined in the above passage ruled out what Marx called "settler sovereignty." However attractive and compelling Lincoln's argument might be, it could only be urged in favor of Unionist resistance to secession if the Union had itself repudiated slavery. But Lincoln and the majority of Republicans expressly condoned the survival of slavery in the Union and only opposed its extension to the Federal territories.

Once elected, Lincoln's main concern was to court the slaveholding border states and make sure as few of them as possible backed the rebellion. His success in this became the source of his caution in moving against slavery. Amending the Constitution in order to outlaw slavery was anyway out of the question—it would have needed large qualified majorities to pass in Congress and be endorsed by the states. Lincoln also held that the wrong of slavery was a national and not personal affair, and therefore slaveholders should be compensated for their loss of property. Given that the slaves of the South were worth more than all the machines, factories, wharves, railroads, and farm buildings of the North put together, any program of emancipation was going to be very gradual. In his first inaugural address Lincoln declares that the only major difference between the sections was with reference not to slavery as such but to its expansion.

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[45] Abraham Lincoln, speech in Peoria (Illinois) on October 16, 1854. Available in Basler, *Abraham Lincoln: His Speeches and Writings*, pp. 283–325. The quote from the Declaration of Independence strikes a patriotic note, though some might conclude that the speech also queried the break of 1776, given the prominence of slavery in several North American slave colonies. No doubt Lincoln would have insisted that the objection was not available to George III and his governments, since they were massively implicated in slavery, and that at least the Founding Fathers were uneasy about the institution.

Many US historians treat the Northern decision to go to war in a fatalistic way, echoing Lincoln's own later phrase: "And the war came."[46] The Unionist cause—US or American nationalism—is simply taken for granted as an absolute value needing no further explanation or justification. However, Sean Wilentz adopts a bolder line, taking his cue from the Lincoln's first inaugural address:

> Above and beyond the slavery issue, Lincoln unflinchingly defended certain basic ideals of freedom and democratic self-government, which he asserted he had been elected to vindicate. There was, he said, a single "substantial dispute" in the sectional crisis: "one section of our country believes that slavery is right and ought to be extended, while the other believes it is wrong and ought not to be extended." There could be no doubt about where Lincoln stood, and where his administration would stand, on that fundamental moral question.[47]

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[46] The phrase "And the war came" occurs in Lincoln's second inaugural address (reprinted in this volume). It has been adopted for many valuable accounts, but its implicit denial of Northern agency fails to acknowledge the emergence of a new nationalism or to pinpoint the Union's legitimacy deficit in 1861–2 and hence a vital factor impelling the president to remedy it. See Kenneth Stampp, *And the War Came*, Baton Rouge 1970; Daniel Crofts, "And the War Came," in *A Companion to the Civil War and Reconstruction*, Lacy Ford, ed., pp. 183–200; James McPherson, "And the War Came," in *This Mighty Scourge: Perspectives on the Civil War*, Oxford 2007, pp. 3–20, 17. The legitimacy deficit was the more damaging in that abolitionists and Radicals, who might have been the warmest supporters of the administration, felt it keenly. It was alleviated by the Emancipation Proclamation but not fully dispelled until 1865, as we will see.

[47] Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy*, New York 2005, p. 783. Wilentz proceeds from these remarks to this conclusion: "The only just and legitimate way to settle the matter [the difference over slavery extension], Lincoln insisted…was through a deliberate democratic decision made by the citizenry" (p. 763). A riposte to this is suggested by Louis Menand's observation: "The Civil War was a vindication, as Lincoln had hoped it would be, of the American experiment. Except for one thing, which is that people who live in democratic societies are not supposed to settle their disagreements by killing one another." Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America*, New York 2001, p. x. This important book, together with Drew Gilpin Faust's *The Republic of Suffering*, New York 2007, prompts the thought that the massive

But Lincoln's formula was deliberately circumscribed to allow agreement to disagree, and not to challenge slavery as such. If slavery really was a moral outrage—and if it disqualified sovereign right, as Lincoln himself had declared in Peoria in 1854—then he should have said that slavery was "wrong and ought to be abolished." In the absence of any action against slavery—even something very gradual like a "Free Womb" law—the war policy of the Union, measured against Lincoln's own statements, suffered a yawning legitimacy deficit. As to whether there could be doubt about where Lincoln stood, it is a simple fact that many of his contemporaries, especially the Radicals and abolitionists, did indeed doubt him and his administration. Marx, for his part, was aware of the problem, and troubled by it, but prepared to place a wager that the North would be forced to take revolutionary antislavery measures.

During the secession crisis Lincoln refused to compromise an iota of his stand against any expansion of slavery, something that could not be said of other Republican leaders once thought to be more radical than Lincoln (notably Seward). But he was prepared indefinitely to extend or perpetuate the compromise that he had made. He supported a proposed new amendment—it would have been the Thirteenth—to declare the future of slavery in the various states to be wholly the concern of those states forevermore, and no business of the Federal authorities. In February and March the proposed amendment received the necessary qualified majority in Congress and the approval of several Northern states, as well as Lincoln's approval. But it was then overtaken by the logic of secession and the firing on Fort Sumter.[48]

If the new president could not come out more clearly against slavery, then he could not challenge the South's "right to revolution." Lincoln declared himself satisfied that the Union cause and his oath of office were fully self-sufficient and amply justified resistance to rebellion. To underline that secession was rebellion,

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bloodletting of the war weakened the justifications offered for it. Of course, those who went to war on both sides made poor guesses as to its duration, and this ignorance was itself a very significant cause of the war.

[48] William Freehling, *The South Vs. the South: How Anti-Confederate Southerners Shaped the Course of the Civil War*, Oxford 2001, p. 39; and Michael Vorenberg, *Final Freedom*, Cambridge 2001, pp. 18–22.

he waited until a Federal installation had been attacked before ordering military action. While there was certainly room for doubt concerning Lincoln's exact position on slavery, it is also very possible that he was himself aware that the Union cause *with* slavery was very much weaker that it would be *without* slavery. The gains of an emancipation policy were later explained in terms of weakening the Confederate economy or strengthening the Union Army, but, important as these considerations were, there was another just as important: the imperative to remedy the North's legitimacy deficit, for the sake of the morale of the Union's keenest supporters. At some level Lincoln was probably aware of this, but in 1861 he was beset by an immediate and elemental challenge to which he had to respond. In his statement concerning the right to revolution there was a half-stated implication that such a right only existed where it was realistic. For a while opposition to secession could be offered in terms of realpolitik—the South was too weak to sustain it and its rebellion was destroying international respect for the republic and what it stood for.

William Seward, shortly to become Lincoln's secretary of state, broadly hinted at the international situation and the damage that secession would do to the projection of US power. Speaking in the Senate in January 1861 he declared:

> The American man-of-war is a noble spectacle. I have seen it enter an ancient port in the Mediterranean. All the world wondered at it and talked about it. Salvos of artillery, from forts and shipping in the harbor, saluted its flag. Princes and princesses and merchants paid it homage, and all the people blessed it as a harbinger of hope for their own ultimate freedom…I imagine now the same noble vessel entering the same haven. The flag of thirty-three stars and thirteen stripes has been drawn down, and in its place a signal is run up, which flaunts the device of a lone star or a palmetto tree. Men ask, "Who is the stranger that thus steals into our waters?" The answer, contemptuously given, is: "She comes from one of the obscure republics of North America. Let her pass on."[49]

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[49] Quoted in a perceptive study by Richard Franklin Bensel, *Yankee Leviathan: the Origins of Central State Authority in America, 1859–1877,* Cambridge 1990, p. 18. That rival expansionist impulses in both sections provoked sectional hostility was clear enough by the 1850s. See Michael Morrison, *Slavery and the*

The secession of a limited number of rural states would, in this view, drastically diminish US power. It would hand over control of the Mississippi to the rebels and put in question free access to Southern markets. Even worse, it would spell the end of the "empire of liberty," harming both sections, since, separated, they would no longer count. Seward was speaking in the Senate and addressing his remarks as much to moderate Southerners, who could be deterred from joining the secession movement, as to Northerners. All concerned were aware that the European powers were already jostling to take advantage of Washington's distraction. (A French military expedition had landed in Mexico and was about to install a puppet regime, that of the "Emperor Maximilian.") If there had been a sectional compromise, and some sort of nominal union had been salvaged, we can be pretty sure that it would have been sealed by territorial expansion—most likely the seizure of Cuba.

The Confederate president, Jefferson Davis, sought to play down the defense of slavery as the motive for the conflict and instead dwelt on the Northern threat to states' rights and on the affronts that had been offered to Southern honor. He stressed continuity between the ideals of the American Revolution and their latter-day embodiment in the Confederacy. The Confederate Constitution was closely modeled on that of 1787. Davis's vice president, Alexander Stephens, was not so careful—he described slavery as the "cornerstone" of the Confederacy. The nature of the conflict itself would steadily highlight Southern dependence on slavery. The slaveholders' aversion to taxation led the Confederate authorities to try to finance the war simply by printing money, with paralyzing consequences.

Of course dissidents in the North claimed that Lincoln rode roughshod over republican liberties. But this was in the service of a Unionist nationalism to which many Democrats as well as Republicans also subscribed. As the conflict proceeded, the salience of slavery in Southern society itself became of decisive importance, creating severe problems for the Confederacy and becoming a target of Unionist strategy. The Confederacy's very belated attempt

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American West: the Eclipse of Manifest Destiny and the Coming of the Civil War, Chapel Hill 1997.

to free a few hundred slaves and enroll them in a colored regiment came much too late to have any impact and still rested on a racial compact. But implicitly it conceded that the South had built on a faulty foundation.[50]

Let us return to the sources of the conflict and the nature of the Republican threat. The Civil War crisis was, of course, precipitated by the growth of the Republican party and the election of a Republican president. Lincoln would be able to make a host of appointments, including many in the Southern states themselves. He would be able to veto legislation and give orders to the executive apparatus. Moreover, civil society in the North had become tolerant of provocations escalating from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and its more militant sequel (*Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp*, 1856) to John Brown's attack on Harper's Ferry. Brown was an out-and-out revolutionary yet broad sections of Northern opinion were inclined to excuse—or even endorse—his bloody escapades. Southern leaders abominated religious abolitionism, but they were even more alarmed at the growth of a secular Republican politics that could win Northern majorities and use these to dominate the state. Southern fear of Republicanism and radical abolitionism imbued secession with a pre-emptive counter-revolutionary purpose and vocation, something easily perceived by Marx. Yet while the South's counter-revolution speedily carved out a new state, the Northern revolution proved weak and laggard.

CONTRABANDS AND EMANCIPATION: CIVIL WAR STRATEGY AND POLITICS

Lincoln had gone to great lengths to promote the widest possible alliance in defense of the Union, accommodating moderates and making concessions to slaveholders in the border states. But by the summer of 1862, lack of progress, heavy casualties, and the cautious and defensive conduct of the war were inspiring mounting criticism and a greater willingness to listen to abolitionists and Radical

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[50] Bruce Levine, *Confederate Emancipation: Southern Plans to Free and Arm Slaves During the Civil War*, Oxford 2006.

Republicans, who argued for a bolder strategy, both militarily and politically.

The more Marx learned about militant abolitionism, the more impressed he became. In an article for *Die Presse* of August 9, 1862, he wrote of the growing attention paid in the North to Abolitionist orators, and in particular to Wendell Philips, who "for thirty years… has without intermission and at the risk of his life proclaimed the emancipation of the slaves as his battle cry." He paraphrases at length a speech by Phillips "of the highest importance" in which the veteran abolitionist indicts Lincoln's conservative and cowardly policy:

> The government [of Lincoln] fights for the maintenance of slavery and therefore it fights in vain … He [Lincoln] waits … for the nation to take him in hand and sweep away slavery through him … If the war is continued in this fashion it is a useless squandering of blood and gold … Dissolve this Union in God's name and put another in its place, on the cornerstone of which is written: "Political equality for all the citizens in the world" … Let us hope that the war lasts long enough to transform us into men, and then we shall quickly triumph. God has put the thunderbolt of emancipation into our hands in order to crush the rebellion.[51]

Lincoln's willingness to adopt an emancipation policy was somewhat greater than his abolitionist and Republican critics allowed. Even compensated emancipation was still keenly opposed by the loyal border states, and by many Democrats who declared they would fight for the Union but not for the Negro. Lincoln believed that maintenance of the broadest Unionist coalition was essential to victory. He also greatly preferred an emancipation accompanied by compensation, and allowing due process to the property-holders. Democrats and moderate Republicans long hoped to persuade the Confederacy to come to terms, and to this end, they opposed measures that would irrevocably alienate the South. But while abolitionists and radical Republicans railed against Lincoln's studied moderation, it was the actions of a few thousand slave rebels outside the political system—the "contrabands"—which helped the Radicals in Washington eventually to win the argument.

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[51] "Abolitionist Demonstrations in North America," Marx and Engels, *The Civil War in the US*, pp. 202–6.

The arrival of fugitive slaves in Union encampments surrounding the Confederacy made slavery and its role in the conflict impossible to ignore. Some Union commanders tried to return the fugitives to their masters. Others found this a perverse and impractical response. General Benjamin Butler—stationed in Virginia—became the first Union commander to obtain Washington's backing for a policy of refusing to return escaping slaves; instead, he put them to work as civilian auxiliaries. The legal term *contraband* was adopted to explain and justify this practice, though the term awkwardly implied that the (ex)-slaves were confiscated rebel property. A Confiscation Act passed by Congress and "reluctantly" endorsed by the president declared that slaves working for the rebel forces would be subject to confiscation and would be put to good use as support workers by the Union Army. In August, General Frémont, commanding in Missouri, declared martial law and announced that rebels were liable to summary execution and that their slaves were free. There was an outcry; Frémont refused to modify his order and was dismissed.

Lincoln allowed the pragmatic use of "contrabands" but not advocacy of an emancipationist military policy. Frémont had acted impulsively and in hope of political advancement. But the deeds and words of two field commanders—David Hunter in South Carolina and John Phelps in Louisiana—showed that military emancipation had an operational logic. General Phelps, commanding a Vermont regiment, urged, "The government should abolish slavery as the French destroyed the ancien régime."[52] His men enrolled all slaves who presented themselves, and forbade planters to use the whip. Similar proposals came from General Hunter, who was advancing along the South Carolina coast and islands. Both men would be removed from their commands. General Butler, who had welcomed the contrabands, at first declined to form black regiments, but by mid-1862 he had dropped his opposition. (Refusing to accept colored soldiers in Louisiana was particularly absurd, as they had always existed in this state and had even been recognized by the Confederacy.) Thanks to his political connections, Butler managed to recruit black units without getting immediately dismissed. Meanwhile the growing number of "contrabands" showed the folly of making no open attempt to deprive the rebels of slave labor and of not urging Union commanders to enroll as many former slaves as possible by offering them their freedom.[53]

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[52] "The Destruction of Slavery," in *Slaves No More!*, Ira Berlin et al., Cambridge 1993, pp. 1–76; 36. The full text of Phelps's proclamation is given in *Freedom: a Documentary History of Emancipation*, Ira Berlin et al., Cambridge 1985.

By the summer of 1862 the Union's failure to make military progress led many to listen to the abolitionists and radical Republicans who were making the case for an immediate emancipation policy. Speaking tours by Wendell Phillips, Anne Dickinson, and Frederick Douglass attracted huge and enthusiastic crowds. Lincoln became increasingly eager to break what seemed like a military stalemate. The Confederacy was able to send more white soldiers to the front because slaves were still toiling to produce the supplies needed by the Confederate armies. The Confederates also used slaves in their military camps to carry out service and support roles. A second Confiscation Act in July allowed Union commanders to commandeer rebel property, and put "contrabands" to work, with fewer formalities. But in Lincoln's view neither Congress nor the military had the authority to determine the future fate of the "contrabands" who, in law, had become the property of the state, not free citizens.

The president still worried about the reaction of the border states—their representatives in Congress ensured that—but by June 1862 their key centers were securely held by Union troops. More worrying was the military impasse and a discouraging international reaction, with the British considering diplomatic recognition of the rebels. Lincoln believed that his "war powers" as president and commander-in-chief fully entitled him to free the slaves of rebels and to arm freedmen if he deemed it a military necessity. But he had to frame his use of these powers in such a way as to minimize the risk of a challenge from Congress or the Supreme Court (where there was still a Democratic majority). He also felt the need to justify emancipation in such a way as to avoid giving the impression that he wanted slaves to slaughter their masters and mistresses in their beds. Cabinet colleagues urged him to wait until there was good news, so that the emancipation would not seem like an act of desperation. In September 1862, following the battle of Antietam, he issued the preliminary proclamation, giving the rebels time to abandon the insurrection, failing which the proclamation would come into force on January 1, 1863.

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[53] Kate Masur, " 'A Rare Phenomenon of Philological Vegetation': the Word 'Contraband' and the Meanings of Emancipation in the United States," *Journal of American History*, 93:4, March 2007, pp. 1050–84.

Marx and Engels had from the outset insisted on the war's antislavery logic, but the first eighteen months of the conflict tested their conviction. Engels was particularly distressed by the passivity and defensiveness of the Union commanders, and beyond that what he called "the slackness and obtuseness" that appeared throughout the North, the lack of popular zeal for the republic, contrasting it with the daring and energy of the rebels. On August 7, 1862 Marx urged his friend not to be overinfluenced by the "military aspect" of matters. On October 29, following the announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation, Marx was powerfully reassured. He wrote:

> The fury with which the Southerners have received Lincoln's [Emancipation] Acts proves their importance. All Lincoln's Acts appear like the pettifogging conditions which one lawyer puts to his opposing lawyer. But this does not alter their historic content. Indeed it amuses me when I compare them with the drapery in which the Frenchman envelops even the most unimportant point.[54]

Thereafter Marx and Engels had growing confidence in Lincoln, even if they continued to complain about the quality of the Union's military leadership and the need for a thoroughgoing shake-up in the republic's ruling institutions.

The Emancipation Proclamation brought new legitimacy and—at least in principle—new opportunities to deepen the struggle. However, it did not entirely sever the Union from support of slavery. Its terms respected the slave property rights of loyal slaveholders in the border states and in areas occupied by the Union Army. Emancipation applied to the roughly three million slaves beyond

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[54] Marx and Engels, *The Civil War in the US*, p. 258.

Union control, since they were the property of slaveholders still in rebellion. These freed people were enjoined "to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defense" and to be willing to work at "reasonable wages." The Proclamation includes a clause permitting freedmen to be enrolled for garrison duty. The Proclamation went further than the Confiscation Acts in allowing former slaves to be organized in fighting units though for some time many were kept in menial support roles. Those who were enlisted as soldiers were placed under white officers and, to begin with, given a lower rate of pay. Eventually the thirst for manpower in a hugely destructive war led to the enrollment of 180,000 African Americans in the Union Army and over 10,000 in the Navy. (By the end of the conflict, however, only about a hundred African Americans had been commissioned as officers of the colored units, most of these being chaplains or doctors). Many "contrabands" did not become soldiers but were put to work digging trenches or graves, or in other support roles. Most Union commanders remained cautious in their use of black troops and their appeals to the black population, shunning the sort of autonomous mobilization thought entirely appropriate for German American or Irish American troops.

The Emancipation policy exacerbated Confederate problems in areas near the fighting, but it remained unclear whether the proclamation's message was reaching much further or whether the slaves could respond even if it was. Militia, patrols, and military police roamed the Southern countryside looking for slave fugitives and Confederate deserters. The number of slave fugitives grew to as many as 400,000 or 500,000 by the end of the war, a total that includes many who fled their masters in Kentucky, the border states, and the other Union-occupied areas that had been excluded from the Emancipation Proclamation. Although there are some signs of slave desertion or noncooperation in rebel-held areas, the patrols, militia, and military police were still a strong deterrent for those deep in Confederate territory, and only those close to the front could escape. A few could hide out in swamps and forests, but it was Union advances—from Vicksburg in July 1863 to Atlanta in September 1864—that eventually made it possible for slaves to desert the plantations en masse. This having been said, the war placed the slave order under great strain, with many white men of military age away and their wives managing as best they could. Anxious about their economic fate, planters ordered cotton to be grown and neglected the cultivation of foodstuffs. The war still made for very uneasy relations between slaves and overseers or mistresses. Peter Kolchin writes:

> Slaves took advantage of wartime disruption in numerous ways: they obeyed orders with less alacrity, they challenged weakened authority more readily, they followed the progress of Yankee forces and aided that progress in a variety of ways, from providing valuable military intelligence to enlisting in the Union army, and they fled in increasing numbers, especially when Federal troops neared. Despite heightened fears on the part of the white population, however, they did not engage in the sort of massive uprising that occurred in Saint Domingue during the French Revolution.[55]

It was more rational for Southern slaves to look to the Union army, with its new black contingents, to lead the assault on the slave order.

The emancipation policy certainly helped in Europe, rendering public opinion in Britain and France more hostile to recognizing the rebels. The fledgling labor and socialist movements were not completely united, but the most dynamic and representative currents now rallied against the Confederacy. Marx and Engels based their efforts to develop the International Workers Association on this trend. Marx believed that the willingness of Manchester workers to rally in support of the North, even though the "cotton famine" menaced their own livelihood, showed the moral superiority of a rising class.

Lincoln was dismayed when General Meade failed to aggressively follow up his victory over the rebels at Gettysburg. Instead, Meade issued a proclamation saying that the country "looks to the army for greater efforts to drive from our soil every vestige of the presence of the invader." Lincoln was dismayed to find that he had yet another general who entirely failed to grasp the simple idea that

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[55] Peter Kolchin, "Slavery and Freedom in the Civil War South," in James McPherson and William Cooper, eds. *Writing the Civil War*, Charleston 1998, pp. 241–60.

"the whole country is our soil."[56] But above and beyond the importance of defending the whole territory of the former Union was the claim that the North was defending a new Union that would correspond more closely to the democratic nation state cherished by so many nineteenth-century nationalists.[57] In his famous address at Gettysburg Lincoln underlined the "new birth of freedom" that must inform and infuse the military struggle. He used the word *nation*, with its warm resonance, five times, in preference to the flatter term *union*. Was this rebirth defined by slave emancipation or was it simply a vindication of American "principles of self-government"? Both interpretations were available. The rebirth of the national spirit was something that many immigrants as well as natives would be able to understand, because they came from lands like Germany and Ireland where the national revolution was as yet unconsummated. (The Irish Fenians strongly supported the North, helping to organize a number of units). And as revolutionary and democratic nationalists, they were less inclined to be fixated by given political forms, such as the US Constitution.

European nationalisms, with their dominant ethnicities and religions, had their own problems with reconciling rival concepts and recognizing minorities. The Republicans had shied away from crude nativism, but without embracing the radical abolitionist call for equality. The formulas expressed by Lincoln at Gettysburg did not offer citizenship to the freedmen (nor to American Indians), though Northern European Protestant immigrants somehow fit in. Dorothy Ross urged that Gettysburg marks a step back from the universalism of the Declaration of Independence:

> Lincoln transforms a truth open to each man as man into something he shares by virtue of his partnership in the nation…Lincoln solved the moral conflict he faced between principles and national survival by linking human rights to national allegiance, but human rights became the subordinate partner.[58]

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[56] James McPherson, "A. Lincoln, Commander in Chief," in *Our Lincoln*, Eric Foner, ed., New York 2009, p. 33.

[57] For the evolution of Unionist nationalism, see Bensel, *Yankee Leviathan*, pp. 18–47.

[58] Dorothy Ross, "Lincoln and the Ethics of Emancipation: Universalism,

However, one could say that lofty statements of rights desperately need to be brought down to earth and that at least Lincoln was pushing in that direction (Marx inclined to this conclusion). But at the time of Gettysburg, slavery was not yet finished, and what remained of it might still be given a new lease of life in the event of the Northern peace party gaining the upper hand. The Radical concern to get some sweeping and thorough antislavery measure agreed upon—perhaps a Thirteenth Amendment—stemmed from this fear.

The leaders of the North faced more dissidence than did those of the South. The war's heavy toll on life and the North's failure to inflict decisive defeats on the Confederate forces led "copperhead" Democrats to hanker for peace talks. Conscription led to violent draft riots in 1863 in New York and other urban centers, with the rioters attacking blacks as the supposed cause of the conflict. But even New England abolitionists with impeccable patriot credentials could doubt whether war was the right way to impose their section's superior civilization. The avowed abolitionist (and future chief justice) Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., as a young officer who had just experienced several terrible, bloody engagements, wrote to his orthodox Republican father:

> If it is true that we represent civilization wh. is in its nature, as well as slavery, diffuse & aggressive, and if civn and progress are better things why they will conquer in the long run, we may be sure, and will stand a better chance in their proper province—peace—than in war, the brother of slavery—it is slavery's parent, child and sustainer all at once.[59]

What Holmes here refers to as civilization and progress are forces that Marx would have seen as capitalism or the advance of bourgeois social relations. The sentiments expressed point to pacifism rather than anti-imperialism. The idea is that one way or another the North is going to prevail, so why not do so in a kinder, gentler way? The North's ownership of the future is set down to the

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Nationalism and Exceptionalism," *Journal of American History*, 96: 2, September 2009, p. 346.

[59] Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America*, New York 2001, p. 45.

extraordinary locomotive of its capitalist economy. Marx himself probably would have agreed that the North would prevail in any case, but would have added that 300,000 slaveholders were not going to give up their human property without a continuing fight.

Holmes's letter was written in December 1862, at a time when the consequences and character of the emancipation policy were not yet clear. Without abandoning all his misgivings, Holmes became more committed to the war over the next year or two. His enthusiasm for the Union cause was boosted by the bravery of the black soldiers in the assault of Fort Wagner, by revulsion at the racial attacks in New York, and, finally, by the growing effectiveness of the Northern war machine, which at last made all the bloodshed seem to be to some purpose after all.[60] The fluctuations of Northern morale illustrated the old saw that nothing succeeds like success.

The gradual improvement in the Union's military position, especially the taking of Vicksburg in July 1863, allowed for a greater application of the emancipation policy, as Union forces broke through into territories where there were large numbers of slaves. A static war, and one focused on set-piece engagements, meant that the slaves in the Confederate rear areas had little chance of playing any role. The majority of African Americans who enrolled, including slaves, came from areas already controlled by the Union. Indeed, many tens of thousands of them came from Kentucky, since, as the loyal slaveholders had warned, Union commanders had no way of knowing whether a black recruit was someone's property or, if he was, what the home state or political stance of that property owner might be. Heavy troop losses—and black losses were very heavy—meant that commanders were disinclined to ask awkward questions. For their part, the new recruits saw enlistment as a good way to escape bondage, even if it was also an illegal one. (Legal slavery actually outlasted the Confederacy and was only formally ended towards the close of 1865, when the Thirteenth Amendment, introduced by the Congressional Radicals, was finally endorsed by the requisite qualified majority of states.)

The advantages of an "aggressive" emancipation policy—one that aimed to penetrate Confederate lines—were logistical, as well as military in the narrow sense, as may be inferred from Grant's account of the advantages of a war of movement in North Carolina. It would, Grant wrote, "give us possession of many Negroes who are indirectly aiding the rebellion."[61] In practice, of course, the appearance of Union columns led the slaves to act no longer as mere "possessions," but as Union scouts, auxiliaries, and recruits eager to see the Confederacy defeated. The Emancipation policy was always premised on the view that slaves would respond to it. So long as slaves were still unarmed in the face of mounted patrols and blood-hounds, there was little they could do, but once Union troops thrust into Confederate territory the black population became an invaluable ally, helping the Union at last to crush the stubborn rebellion. There had been intimations of this in 1862 and 1863 but, partly because of excessive caution, the emancipation policy was not pursued with sufficient vigor until the last six months of the war. [62]

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[60] Menand, *The Metaphysical Club*, pp. 52–3.

From time to time Lincoln hankered for an aggressive military policy linked to emancipationism. As early as March 1863 he wrote to Governor Andrew Johnson of Tennessee warmly endorsing the idea of Johnson taking command of a "negro military force" since "[t]he colored population is the great *available*, yet *unavailed of*, force for the restoration of the union." He was especially supportive of this since Johnson was the governor of a slave state, and "[himself] a slaveholder." Lincoln was convinced that "[t]he bare sight of fifty thousand armed and drilled black soldiers on the banks of the Mississippi would end the rebellion at once."[63] Wendell Phillips had pointed out in an influential lecture that Toussaint Louverture had raised precisely such a drilled black force in Saint Domingue in the 1790s and trounced the Spanish and British.[64] But, unlike Andrew Johnson, Toussaint was black and a former slave.

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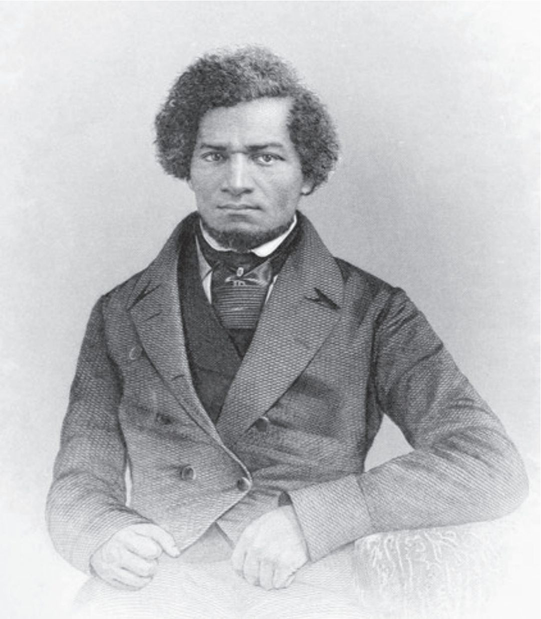
[61] Quoted Archer Jones, "Jomini and the Strategy of the American Civil War: a Reinterpretation," *Military Affairs*, December 1970, pp. 127–31, p. 130.

[62] See Steven Hahn, "Did We Miss the Greatest Rebellion in Modern History," *The Political Worlds of Slavery and Freedom*, Cambridge, MA, 2009, pp. 55–114. See also James Oakes, *Slavery and Freedom: an Interpretation of the Old South*, New York 1990, pp. 185–92.

[63] Letter to Gov. Johnson 26 March 1863, Abraham Lincoln, *Speeches and Writings*, pp. 694–5.

[64] Mathew Clavin, *Toussaint Louverture and the American Civil War: the Promise and the Peril of a Second Haitian Revolution*, New York 2010, pp. 6–7.



Frederick Douglass, 1852

Lincoln later returned to the idea of an unorthodox force that might get behind enemy lines. In August 1864, he invited Frederick Douglass, the black abolitionist, to visit him to discuss whether there might be some way of bringing the emancipation message to the mass of still enslaved blacks and of encouraging them to desert the plantations. He explained, “The slaves are not coming as rapidly and numerously to us as we had hoped.”[65] Lincoln seems to have envisioned a small, highly mobile force, but it is not clear whether he intended that the commander be black, nor what rules of engagement the unit might have. The president was keen to avoid any hint or imputation of race war (the Proclamation’s injunction against violence toward slaveholders was prompted by this concern). The encounter with Douglass did not come to anything. Douglass thought a propagandist column would soon be overwhelmed. The two men did not meet again for several months during which General Sherman's capture of Atlanta and march to the sea at last brought the possibility of escape to masses of slaves on his route. Union successes also ensured Lincoln's victory in the election of 1864, something that had seemed—to Lincoln as well as his critics and opponents—very much in doubt in the summer of that year.

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[65] Frederick Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglas*, quoted by James Oakes in *The Radical and the Republican*, New York 2007, p. 231.

THE ADDRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL TO PRESIDENT LINCOLN

It is at this point that we should consider the brief and mediated exchange between Marx and the US president. The two men were both averse to wordy rhetoric and conventional pieties, and yet both discovered an emancipatory potential in a bloody and often sordid Civil War. Lincoln did not indulge in flowery language. When it came to justifying slave emancipation, Lincoln was bound by political and constitutional considerations, the need to retain the loyalty of the border states, and the legal obligation to take only such actions as conformed to his war powers as president. So neither the Emancipation Proclamation nor the Gettysburg address avow an abolitionist objective, even if both had an implicit antislavery message for those willing to hear it.

The Radical Republicans liked the Emancipation Proclamation but saw it as incomplete. It left in bondage some 800,000 slaves owned by loyal masters—and, of course, those in rebel territory—so the final fate of slavery still remained to be decided. Radical Republicans debated different options, and in January 1864 they introduced a Thirteenth Amendment that, if approved by the necessary majorities, would end slavery and override any peace negotiations or Supreme Court rulings that might salvage slavery's considerable remnants.[66]

Lincoln was aware that the Proclamation might be vulnerable, and this awareness may explain why he invited the artist Francis Carpenter to stay a few months at the White House and paint a picture of the first reading of the Proclamation to Lincoln's cabinet. The painting makes it clear that the measure was backed by the cabinet's weightiest members, with Seward prominently depicted addressing his colleagues. Lincoln was obviously proud of the Proclamation—he described it as "the central event of my administration and the great event of the nineteenth century"—but he also wanted to display the backing it enjoyed from all his distinguished colleagues. Seward himself saw matters differently, explaining to the painter that the Emancipation Proclamation was "merely incidental" and that the most important cabinet meeting was the one that followed the firing on Fort Sumter. However, the painting, usually in a lithograph version, was to be widely adopted, becoming one of the most widely diffused of national images in subsequent decades.[67]

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[66] Michael Vorenberg, *Final Freedom: The Civil War, the Abolition of Slavery, and the Thirteenth Amendment,* Cambridge 2001, 197–210.

Lincoln's course following the Emancipation Proclamation aimed not just to maintain and invigorate the Unionist coalition but also to appeal to public opinion in the wider Atlantic world and to head off the inclination of the governments in Paris and London to recognize the Confederacy or, later, to offer mediation. Lincoln's carefully constructed appeals to abolitionism were a vital part of this. Since the International Workingmen's Association (IWA) embraced several British and French trade unions, it was evidently worthy of some diplomatic acknowledgment. The General Council of the IWA asked Karl Marx to draft a message of congratulation to Lincoln on the occasion of his reelection. The Republican watchword "Free Labor, Free Soil, Free Men" was designed to indict the "Slave Power" and, however vaguely, to offer rights, land, and recognition to the laborer. This was not anticapitalism, but it was, in Marx's terms, a step in the right direction.

Marx found drafting the International's Address to Lincoln more difficult than he had anticipated. He complained to Engels that such a text was "much harder [to draft] than a substantial work," since he was anxious that "the phraseology to which this sort of scribbling is restricted should at least be distinguished from the democratic, vulgar phraseology …"[68] Nevertheless he allowed himself the following resonant, if complex, paragraph:

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[67] Harold Holzer, "Picturing Freedom," in *The Emancipation Proclamation*, Harold Holzer, E. G. Medford and Frank Williams, eds., Baton Rouge 2006, pp. 83–136.

> When an oligarchy of 300,000 slaveholders dared to inscribe, for the first time in the annals of the world, "slavery" on the banner of armed revolt; when on the very spots where hardly a century ago the idea of one great democratic republic had first sprung up, whence the first Declaration of the Rights of Man was issued, and the first impulse given to the European revolution of the eighteenth century … then the working classes of Europe understood at once, even before the fanatic partisanship of the upper classes for the Confederate gentry had given warning, that the slaveholders' rebellion was to sound the tocsin for a general holy crusade of property against labor …

The address also warned that so long as the republic was "defiled by slavery," so long as the Negro was "mastered and sold without his concurrence," and so long as it was "the highest prerogative of the white-skinned laborer to sell himself and choose his own master," they would be "unable to attain the true freedom of labor."[69]

The repeated invocation of the cause of labor in the address thus gave its own more radical twist to the "free labor" argument characteristic of Lincoln and other Republicans. In the address, Marx observed:

> The workingmen of Europe feel sure that as the American War of Independence initiated a new era of ascendancy for the middle class, so the American antislavery war will do for the working classes. They consider it an earnest of the epoch to come, that it fell to the lot of Abraham Lincoln, the single-minded son of the working class, to lead his country through matchless struggle for the rescue of an enchained race and the reconstruction of the social world.[70]

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[68] Marx and Engels, *The Civil War in the United States*, p. 273.

[69] "The Address," Marx and Engels, *The Civil War in the United States*, pp. 260–1.

[70] Ibid, p. 281. The meanings of the address are rarely addressed, so it is all the more regrettable to find it interpreted in a tendentious way, as it is in Timothy Messer-Kruse's book *The Yankee International, 1846–1876: Marxism and the American Reform Tradition*, Chapel Hill 1998, pp. 54–6. This author

The US ambassador to Britain, Charles Francis Adams, replied to the address, on behalf of the president, a month later, writing, "I am directed to inform you that the address of the Central Council of your Association, which was duly transmitted through this legation to the President of the United States, has been received by him. So far as the sentiments expressed by it are personal, they are accepted by him with a sincere and anxious desire that he may be able to prove himself not unworthy of the confidence which has recently been extended to him by his fellow citizens." Adams went on to declare that "the United States regard their cause in the present conflict with slavery-maintaining insurgents as the cause of human nature and…they derive new encouragement to persevere from the testimony of the workingmen of Europe."[71] Thus both the address and the reply refer to labor with the greatest respect and both assert the rights of labor, embedding them in, respectively, the "rights of man" and "the cause of human nature."

THE STATUS OF THE FREEDMEN AND WOMEN

As emancipation advanced on the military and legislative fronts, the question was raised were the freedmen and women US citizens and did they have the vote? In the months before he unveiled his emancipation policy, Lincoln had gone out of his way to reiterate his support for colonization of those freed from slavery. He had invited black leaders to the White House to lecture them on the wisdom of leaving a land where they would never be accepted as real equals. This was the summer of 1862 and may charitably be interpreted as an attempt to placate Northern racism. But in 1864–5, as the emancipation policy led to large-scale escapes and as

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notes Marx complaining at the "bother" of having to write something of such little importance as this address and claims that he only consented to do so because "[in] Marx's view, slavery had to be destroyed in order to allow for the historical development of the white working class" (p. 54). This illogically insinuates that Marx was privileging the white workers by insisting that the more oppressed blacks should be freed first. In reality, Marx was rejecting the idea of a preordained sequence.

[71] "The American Ambassador's Reply," in *The Civil War in the United States*, Marx and Engels, pp. 262–3.

the Thirteenth Amendment gathered support, a new abolitionist and antiracist agenda emerged concerning the civic status of those who were to be freed from slavery. Lincoln had repeatedly declared that slaves were part of humankind and that it was blasphemy to belittle or deny this, as he thought Stephen Douglas and other Democratic leaders did. But Lincoln's vehemence on the equal humanity of the former slaves did not mean that they were all simply Americans who were entitled, once released from slavery, to equal citizenship. As we have seen, he long believed that they would remain a sort of alien or stranger and should be invited to leave North America and found a land of their own in Africa or the Caribbean.[72]

In a speech at Charleston on September 18, 1858—part of his famous debating duel with Stephen Douglas—Lincoln had insisted, "I am not, nor have I ever been, in favor of making voters or jurors of negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people."[73] This view of the Negro and his rights was not lightly held, but it did change in the course of the conflict.

In the last year of the war Lincoln gave up his long-held attachment to the policy of encouraging freed people to leave the United States and find a new life in Africa. He found that colonization was rejected not only by black abolitionists and church leaders but also by the "contrabands" who had fled the Confederacy. Elizabeth Keckley, seamstress and confidante to the president's wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, and herself a former slave, headed the Contraband Relief Association in Washington, D.C.[74] The president was curious about the outlook of the contrabands and Keckley arranged for a few to visit the White House. As we have noted, the "contrabands" had pressured the Union authorities to take a stand on slavery. Now they helped to persuade Lincoln to give up the idea of colonization, which African Americans had many reasons to reject. A point they sometimes made that may have had a special appeal to Lincoln was the argument of "unrequited labor." After all, the slaves' toil had built the seat of government in Washington, D.C., and many fortunes in both South and North.[75] There was also the emphatic rejection voiced by the black leader Edward Thomas: "Are you an American? Are you a Patriot? So are we. Would you spurn all absurd, meddlesome, impudent propositions for your colonization in a foreign country? So do we."[76]

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[72] Lincoln's long attachment to the colonization idea is documented by Eric Foner in "Lincoln and Colonization," in *Our Lincoln: New Perspectives on Lincoln and His World*, Eric Foner, ed., New York 2008, pp. 135–66.

[73] Speech of September 18, 1858, taken from Harold Holzer's *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, New York 1993, p. 189. This was not an offhand remark, but rather forms part of a careful introduction to his speech. However, on one point it jars with the positive terms he used more than a year before to refer to the enfranchisement of some blacks in the early United States. In a speech on June 26, 1857, on the Dred Scott ruling he cites the dissenting opinion by Judge Curtis, which had shown that some free blacks in five states in the 1780s did exercise the vote. While not advocating giving the vote to free blacks Lincoln seemed keen to stress that, contra Chief Justice Taney, some free blacks did have (voting) rights in the early republic.

[74] Foner, *Fiery Trial*, p. 257.

By the time of the Lincoln's second inauguration, in March 1865, the president was less constrained than on earlier occasions and placed slavery as central to the conflict in a way that he had previously avoided. He gave vent to his sense of the heavy wrong that his nation had committed by permitting an extremity of human bondage. He declared that each side in the still unfinished conflict had looked for "an easier triumph" but had not been able to contrive "a result less fundamental and astounding." He saw the carnage of the war as perhaps God's punishment for the nation's "offences" and concluded that he could only hope and pray that "this mighty scourge of war" would come to a speedy end. He added: "Yet if God wills that it continue, until all the wealth piled up by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'"

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[75] See Foner's essay in *Our Lincoln,* Eric Foner, ed., pp. 135–66. Manisha Sinha's contribution to this volume also cites the African Americans' influence in changing his mind on the question. See her "Allies for Emancipation: Lincoln and Black Abolitionists," pp. 167–98. In this same volume James Oakes argues that the "unrequited labor" strand in Lincoln's rejection of slavery became more marked in the late 1850s and the war years, in his essay "Natural Rights, Citizenship Rights, States' Rights, and Black Rights: Another Look at Lincoln and Race," pp. 109–34.

[76] Allen Guelzo, *Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation: the End of Slavery in America*, New York 2004, p. 19.

This passage certainly put "American slavery" at the center, and strikingly memorialized its enormity as a system for the exploitation of labor. But the Second Inaugural Address did not mention the black soldiers or outline any ideas as to the future fate of the emancipated slave. In the preceding months Radical members of Congress had urged that the freedmen should be given the vote as part of the reconstruction of the rebel states. Lincoln had been noncommittal to begin with, but as he explained himself, he became more positive. Writing to the governor of Louisiana at a time when that state was establishing franchise qualifications, he gently observed, "I barely suggest for your private consideration whether some of the colored people may not be let in—as for instance the very intelligent, and especially those who have fought gallantly in our ranks."[77] In this attempt to cajole the Louisiana governor, using a moderate tone was no doubt advisable, and the enfranchisement of black soldiers would already establish a considerable bloc of black voters. If Lincoln had lived, it seems quite possible that as the situation evolved, so would his views on this matter. James Oakes has noted that Lincoln, in the last year of his life, went out of his way to seek out Frederick Douglass, the outstanding black abolitionist, as on the occasion noted already. Given the racism that permeated the North as much as the South, Lincoln's willingness to solicit the views of the veteran abolitionist and treat him as an equal was a significant development. When Douglass was stopped at the door of the reception held following Lincoln's second inaugural, the president went over publicly to greet him and make clear to all how welcome this black leader was in the White House. [78]

Douglass himself later wrote, "Viewed from genuine abolition ground, Mr. Lincoln seemed tardy, cold, dull, and indifferent, but measuring him by the sentiment of his country, a sentiment he was bound as a statesman to consult, he was swift, zealous, radical, and determined." This verdict doesn't directly refer to race, but we may assume that racial feeling is also covered by the term *sentiment*. Lincoln's attempts to reach out to Douglass in the last year of his life seem to signal the stirring of an awareness of the need for African American agency if freedom were really to be won.

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[77] Charles Vincent, *Black Legislators in Louisiana During Reconstruction*, Baton Rouge 1976, p. 22.

[78] Oakes, *The Radical and the Republican*, pp. 238–43. Oakes explains that Douglass had declined an invitation from the president about a week after his meeting at the Oval Office in August 1864 on the grounds of a prior speaking engagement. Their third (very friendly) encounter was not until six months later. While both men were very busy the apparent lack of follow-through to the second meeting remains puzzling.

By the time of the Second Inaugural the Confederacy was collapsing. The North's belated victory reflected growing success in mobilizing its potential resources—and the Confederacy's increasing failure to do so. The emancipation policy, black enlistment and Union strikes deep inside rebel territory allowed black courage and toil to favor and fortify the Union. So long as it could maintain 400,000 men in the field—as it did until the last months of 1864—the Confederacy still had a hope of exploiting one of the waves of Northern defeatism that periodically swept the North and bringing it to terms. But while the North was at last bringing its resources to bear the Confederacy was dragged down by problems that stemmed directly from the slave regime. Confederate nationalism and the battlefield effectiveness of the rebel forces were sapped by severe shortages, hyperinflation and market collapse. The Southern armies possessed the war materiel they needed to maintain the fight. Indeed, if he had known about it, Marx could have been impressed by the success of the state-directed Southern war industries. But the class-egoism of the planters—their tax allergy and their obsession with growing cotton—led to financial chaos and agricultural dearth. The planter-dominated government resorted to printing bank notes and haphazard requisitions. The resulting hyperinflation disorganized production and exchange. The planters stockpiled some 7 million bales of the commodity in the hope of selling at a good price once the war had ended. The depreciating currency robbed producers of any incentive to grow food for sale, leading to desperate food shortages—in an agricultural state. The Southern desertion rate overtook that of the North. Eventually the Southern military decided to negotiate surrender rather than to pursue a guerrilla struggle that might once again have put wind in the sails of a Northern peace movement. Educated Americans knew about the major role played by "guerrilla" struggle in the Spanish resistance to Napoleon. They also knew about Toussaint Louverture's victory over the British and the defeat of the French by the Haitian republic. But the Southern elite had no stomach for such a fight since it would have imperilled the entire social order of the South. By surrendering when they did the Southern officers were able to retain their side-arms, their horses and some hope of keeping their land and, as we have seen, of rebuilding their local leadership and cross-sectional alliances. [79]

The assassination of Lincoln prompted the International to send another "Address," this time to Andrew Johnson, the new American president.[80] This address closed with the observation that the way was now open to a "new era of the emancipation of labor." But Marx and Engels were soon alarmed by the actions of Lincoln's successor. On July 15, 1865, Engels writes to his friend attacking Johnson: "His hatred of Negroes comes out more and more violently…If things go on like this, in six months all the old villains of secession will be sitting in Congress at Washington. Without colored suffrage, nothing whatever can be done there."[81] The IWA General Council sent a protest to President Johnson in September 1865 and urged that the freedmen should not be denied the vote. In April 1866 Marx writes to Engels, "After the Civil War the United States are only now really entering the revolutionary phase."[82] A clash between president and Congress drove the Republicans to more radical measures just as the ending of the war was marked by a multiplication of movements and demands.

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[79] For social conditions in the Confederacy and of the reasons for its defeat, see James Roark, "Behind the Lines: Confederate Society and Economy," in *Writing the Civil War: the Quest to Understand*, James McPherson and William Cooper, eds.,Charleston 1998, pp. 201–27. Famine led to bread riots and contributed to the collapse in morale. See Paul Escott, *After Secession: Jefferson Davis and the Failure of Confederate Nationalism*, Baton Rouge 1978, pp. 137–8. See also Mary DeCredico, "The Confederate Home Front," in Ford, *A Companion to the Civil War and Reconstruction*, pp. 258–76 and David Williams, *Rich Man's War*, Athens GA 1998, pp. 98–103.

[80] This address, like the first written by Marx, heaps praise on Lincoln as "a man neither to be browbeaten by adversity nor intoxicated by success; inflexibly pressing on to his great goal, never compromising it by blind haste; slowly maturing his steps, never retracing them; carried away by no surge of popular favor, disheartened by no slackening of the popular pulse" and so forth. "Address of the International Workingmen's Association to President Johnson," *The Civil War in the United States*, Marx and Engels, p. 358.

[81] Marx and Engels, *The Civil War in the United States*, pp. 276–7.

[82] Marx and Engels, *The Civil War in the United States*, p. 277.

CONSEQUENCES OF VICTORY

Marx and Engels expected more from the victory of the Union than an end to slavery, momentous as that was. They also expected the producers to assert new political and social rights. If the freedmen moved simply from chattel slavery to wage slavery, if they were denied the right to vote, or to organize, or to receive an education, then the term *emancipation* would be a mockery. Some Union commanders were already settling freedmen on public or confiscated land. The decision to set up a Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands in March 1865 seemed to mark a recognition that the occupying power was to take responsibility for an extraordinary situation.

As it turned out, the era of Reconstruction did indeed bring a radical surge in both South and North, with the Republican party seeking to keep abreast of events by adopting the ideas of radical abolitionists, black as well as white, and with pressure being exerted by a shifting coalition of labor unions, social reformers, African American conventions, feminists, and last but not least, the multiplying American sections of the IWA. The martyred president's acknowledgment of its earlier address, and the warm, not to say fulsome, nature of Marx's tribute to the "son of the working class" helped to make the International a quite respectable and visible body. The post–Civil War radicalization in North America in some ways may be compared with the British experience of slave emancipation and home political reform in the 1830s.[83] In both countries, abolitionism and the "free labor" doctrine seemed at a certain juncture to consecrate wage labor and its central role in the capitalist order, only to give rise to popular movements—Chartism in Britain, a wave of class struggles and popular radicalism in the US—that challenged the given form of the bourgeois order. Although the banner of free labor expressed bourgeois hegemony at one moment, it furnished a means of mobilizing against it at another. In one register, the ideal of free labor encouraged the aspiration of workers to become independent small producers, with their own workshops and farms. Hence the Republican slogan "Free soil, free labor, free men" and its embodiment in the Homestead Act of 1862.[84] But in the United States of the 1860s and 1870s, as in the Britain of the 1840s, there were increasing numbers of wageworkers who did not want to become farmers and who looked to a collective improvement in the rights of working people. David Montgomery, taking a sample of over seventy labor organizers of the later 1860s about whom information is available, found that most of them were second-generation wageworkers, about half of them British immigrants. Their efforts focused not on acquiring land but on regulating the conditions of labor and securing political and industrial representation of the workingman.[85] Of course some workers did take up the offer of land, but many realized that this could prove a trap. Already by the middle and late 1860s the farmers' Grange movement was complaining about exorbitant railroad freight rates and cutthroat competition from large producers.

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[83] I sketch British slave emancipation in *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery*, London 1988, pp. 294–330. For a brilliant reading of the social meanings of British abolitionism, see David Brion Davis's *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, New York 1975, and *Slavery and Human Progress*, New York 1984.

David Fernbach points out that the "Address to President Lincoln" was one of the first public acts of the International.[86] Lincoln's reply was a publicity coup. Moreover, the campaign to radicalize the resistance to Southern secession—to turn the Civil War into a social revolution—seems to have had a major impact on Marx's thinking and vocabulary. The addresses written by Marx for the International, including the association's own inaugural address, make repeated use of the term "emancipation," a word that

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[84] The classic study of the free labor doctrine is Eric Foner's *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War*, New York 1970.

[85] David Montgomery, *Beyond Equality: Labor and the Radical Republicans, 1862–1872*, New York 1967.

[86] Karl Marx, "Introduction," *The First International and After*, Political Writings Vol. 3, edited and introduced by David Fernbach, London 1974, p. 14.

Marx used in his early writings but which did not figure in the *Communist Manifesto* or in his writings in the 1850s. Marx's return to the concept also involved a modification of the way it was used by abolitionists. For most abolitionists the word *emancipation* conjured up the idea of an Emancipator, an external agent carrying out the process of liberation. Marx believed that the new working class would be the agent of its own liberation. He did sometimes take note of slave resistance and slave revolt, but he did not study the Haitian example and tended to believe that slaves needed external deliverance. Given that people of color were a minority—albeit a large one—in the Southern US, this was very likely to be the case in North America. But the notion of emancipation also contains within it the idea that the person or social group to be emancipated is self-standing, capable of exercising freedom, and has no need of an exploiter. Marx had always seen the modern industrial working class as the first exploited class that—because of the social and political rights it had, or would, conquer, and because it was schooled and organized by capitalism itself—could take its destiny into its own hands. The agent here was the "collective worker," all those who contributed to social labor. Marx argues in the IWA's inaugural address that "the emancipation of the working class will be the task of the working class itself." In a word, it will be self-emancipation. Marx saw the fostering of working-class organization as the International's most crucial task, and he believed that class struggle would set up a learning process that would lead them sooner or later to see the need for working-class political power.[87] Even this modification of the emancipation concept may have contained some small, unconscious echo of Lincoln at Gettysburg, as when Marx commends the Paris Commune for embodying "the people acting for itself, by itself."[88]

Raya Dunayevskaya argues in *Marxism and Freedom* that the US agitation for an eight-hour day during and immediately after the Civil War prompted Marx to deepen and elaborate his analysis of the length of the working day in *Das Kapital*, published in 1867.[89] The early US labor movement, like Britain's, sought, and sometimes won, laws limiting the length of the working day. In the years 1864–8 this campaign achieved a new scale and intensity in the United States. Some employers argued that this would be ruinous, since they made all their profits in the last two hours of the day—an argument Marx refuted. He showed that the more efficient employers would be able to thrive under such regulation. As we will see below, struggles over this issue were to play a major role in US labor organizing in the postbellum world. The eight-hour day movement was important to Marx because it expanded the free time available to the laborer.

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[87] As Carol Johnson points out, this leaves little room for long-term reformism. See Carol Johnson, "Commodity Fetishism and Working Class Politics," *New Left Review*, 1:119 (1980).

[88] Hal Draper, *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution*, Vol. III, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, New York 1986, p. 273.

Marx was well aware that the forced labor of the slave meant very long hours for all, whether old or young, male or female. And in the scarce hours left to them the slaves were as far as possible denied uses of their time that would pose any risk to the system. Thus rigorous laws sought to prevent slaves from learning to read or write, or to venture outside the plantation without a pass. The wageworker, even though intensely exploited, had greater opportunities for education and communication. When Joseph Wedemeyer organized the *Arbeitsbund* that organization sought to develop the workers' access to culture, to press for universal public education, and to oppose "all laws that violate anyone's natural rights, like temperance, Sabbath, or other prohibitionist laws."[90]

The discretion available to the wageworker in the sphere of consumption, culture, and reproduction was registered as a vital point in Marx's work for *Das Kapital*. Slaves were superexploited because they did not receive any monetary reward for toil that yielded a huge flow of premium commodities. With little or no cash, they had no claim on social wealth. Although the wageworkers received much less than the value of their work, they were able to shape their own "extended reproduction," that is, not only to reproduce themselves and their families in ways of their own choosing but also to achieve a level of social communication beyond that—for example, by buying newspapers and even helping to produce them.[91] Plantation slaves were, by contrast, permitted only "simple reproduction" within a narrow locality—a subsistence defined by allowances from the planter and by what they could themselves produce in garden plots. Marx and the abolitionists sometimes went too far in attributing an abject state to the slaves. They were not sufficiently aware of the reality of a slave community that produced its own culture of survival and resistance. But they were nevertheless quite right to indict the tight invigilation of the slaves, the narrow space allowed them, the daily violence of the slave system, and the constant disruption of the slave community as the plantation economy advanced. The controversies over North American slavery brought home to Marx the relatively broader possibilities of class struggle open to the wageworker even in normal times.

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[89] Raya Dunayevskaya, *Marxism and Freedom*, London 1971, pp. 81–91.

[90] Levine, *The Spirit of 1848*, p. 145.

[91] See, for example, Karl Marx, "Results of the Immediate Process of

The political antecedents and consequences of slavery and emancipation in the US republic also had a deep impact on Marx and other nineteenth-century socialists. Marx was far from admiring the US political system, which he regarded as continuing to exhibit extreme degrees of corruption, demagoguery, and humbug. But he was impressed by the vast scale and almost elemental character of the social struggles that had been unleashed there. Curiously, Marx and Engels devoted little attention to the aspects of the Constitution and its functioning that rendered it so vulnerable to abuses. For example, they did not note the vagaries of the electoral college or the indirect election of senators. Nevertheless Lincoln's conduct during the Civil War crisis illustrated important points, in Marx's view. The challenge of a "slaveholders' revolt" justified resort to military means. Karl Kautsky and other Marxists were later to argue that any workers' government elected within a bourgeois democratic regime should expect there to be the capitalist equivalent of a "slaveholders' revolt" and should prepare to suppress it by any means necessary. Lincoln's preparedness to suspend habeas corpus and to impose presidential Reconstruction showed that democracy might need to be defended by emergency measures. The example of the Paris Commune reminded Marx of the term "dictatorship of the proletariat," a term that he had not used between 1852 and

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Production," published as an appendix to Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, [Penguin Marx Library], London 1976, p. 1033.

1871. Like the Romans, Marx saw dictatorship as different from tyranny in that the dictator wielded extraconstitutional powers for a brief emergency period. Lincoln's actions were justified by socialists using such arguments as Hal Draper points out in his discussion of the evolution of Marx's ideas.[92]

At the close of the Civil War, Engels wrote to Wedemeyer with the following prophecy:

> Once slavery, the greatest shackle on the political and social development of the United States, has been broken, the country is bound to receive an impetus from which it will acquire quite a different position in world history within the shortest possible time, and a use will then soon be found for the army and navy with which the war is providing it.[93]

Northern capitalism did indeed receive great impetus from the war, after which it embarked on headlong continental expansion. For three decades this proved to be such an absorbing task that little was done to project US power outside the country's own borders. William Seward wanted Caribbean acquisitions, but the Radical Republicans were not interested.[94] Troops were sent to repress the resistance of the Sioux, Cheyenne, and Apache, and steps were taken to modernize the navy, but the terrible losses of the Civil War bequeathed a great distrust of military adventures that lasted for a generation.

Instead, the main focus was on three intimately interlinked processes that were of supreme interest to Marx and Engels: the advance of capitalism in North America, the unfolding of an epic class struggle, and the progress made toward building a genuine workers' party. The outcome of this mighty contest was to determine the possibility, timing and character of any US bid for empire.

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[92] Hal Draper, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, New York 1987, p. 15.

[93] Engels to Joseph Wedemeyer, November 24, 1864, Marx and Engels, *The Civil War in the United States*.

[94] Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: an Interpretation of American Expansion*, Ithaca 1963, pp. 24–32.

RECONSTRUCTION AND LABOR FERMENT

In the post–Civil War era, the recently reunited United States was the most dynamic and soon the largest capitalist state in the world. No country illustrated Marx's ideas with greater precision and purity. Great railroads spanned the continent, and vast factories sprouted up, producing steel, agricultural machinery, sewing machines. The emancipation of four million slaves, the demobilization of three million soldiers, and the arrival of a stream of new immigrants swelled the size of the most diverse laboring class in the world. Marx predicted that capitalist conditions would generate class conflict as workers were brought into contact with one another and discovered their common condition. Though they might at first follow their employers, their attempts to acquire security and improved pay or conditions would repeatedly bring them into conflict with them. This would teach the workers the need to organize and seek political representation. And since capitalism would create wealth at one pole and misery at another, and since it would be gripped by recurrent crises, the workers would be drawn to support increasingly radical measures. The Gilded Age served as a laboratory test of such ideas, and with its robber-baron capitalists and titanic labor conflicts, it vindicated many of them.[95] But despite several attempts, no broad-based working-class party emerged in the United States, and the country proved a laggard in developing a welfare state. In these respects much greater progress was made in Europe, especially in Marx's native Germany, where the rise of a Social Democratic Party inspired by Marx's ideas persuaded Chancellor Otto von Bismarck to begin construction of a social security system.

Marx had observed that labor in the white skin would not be truly free so long as labor in the black skin was in chains. This should be understood as a complex sociological proposition as much as a simple moral statement. In 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery in the United States, ended a formal legal status that was already crumbling because of massive slave desertions, the Emancipation Proclamation, and deep, disruptive inroads by the Union armies. The greater part of the Confederate forces had melted away and the planter class was reeling from its spectacular defeat. But, paradoxically, local white power emerged in some ways stronger than before. Alarmed at the sight of free black people, former Confederate officers and men formed militia and patrols designed to defend white families from luridly imagined threats and to deny land and hunting rights to the freemen, to ensure that they were still available for work. Union officers enforced a ban on the whip, but they could not be everywhere. Moreover, the coercion applied to the freed people was increasingly economic rather than physical. Many were obliged to enter very lopsided contracts, with minimal pay until the crop had been sold and with wages paid in "checks" that could only be redeemed at the local store.

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[95] Matthew Josephson, *The Robber Barons*, New York 1934.

The new president in Washington condoned and shared the Southern whites' reaction to black freedom. Johnson urged white-only Southern assemblies to endorse the Thirteenth Amendment, saying that if they did their states could then reenter the Union. He was angered by the continuing demands of the Radical Republicans and the actions of some Union officers who had taken over properties abandoned by Confederate officials and begun distributing land to the freedmen. Johnson believed that the freedmen now needed to be taught their place. He sympathized with the actions of all-white assemblies who enacted strict new labor codes, obliging the freedmen to accept work where it was offered and penalizing "vagrants." Leading Southern gentlemen and ladies paid court to Johnson in the White House, hailing him as the harbinger of reconciliation and the savior of his country. So although Johnson did press Southerners to accept the Thirteenth Amendment, he did so while assuring them that their acceptance would smooth their state's path to rapid reentry into the Union. The idea that the original secessions had been illegal, null, and void potentially opened the way to arguing that the seceders could now simply return. The Republicans insisted that it should fall to Congress to set out the terms of "Reconstruction." They passed resolutions stripping former Confederate officials and officers of their political rights and laying down procedures for fines and confiscations. But the president found ways to frustrate them.

Using his presidential power, Johnson issued thousands of pardons to Confederate military and civilian officials. He also issued a decree halting the distribution of land to the freedmen (of course the estates of whites who had been pardoned could not be seized anyway). The Republican Radicals were able to pass a series of Reconstruction Acts by margins large enough to make the measures immune to presidential veto. In 1866 the Republicans had shied away from giving the freedmen the vote, but the conflict with Johnson and their own plans for Reconstruction persuaded them that only extending the franchise could bring about the election of genuinely loyal assemblies in the Southern states. The presence of an occupying Union Army certainly helped, but the Republicans also needed to mobilize as much political support as possible in the states undergoing Reconstruction.

The Republicans failed (by a narrow margin) to impeach Johnson for treason, but nevertheless were able to impose much of their own vision of Reconstruction on the former slave states, thanks to the presence of Union troops and to the emergence of Union Leagues drawing support from the freedmen and from Southern whites who resented the power of the planters. But the Republican leaders set too much store by the ballot, underestimating the need for measures to tackle the severe economic problems of the South. So long as Union troops were on hand, the freedmen braved intimidation and went out to vote, but occupation was not a long-term solution. Returning Confederate soldiery lurked in the shadows and bided their time.[96]

As the Northern public became aware of the new President's gross indulgence of traitors and of the planters' resort to violence in their attempt to rebuild a coercive labor regime, support for the Radicals grew. Northern outrage at the presidential pardons and at the vicious racial revanchism of the Ku Klux Klan and kindred groups led the Congressional Republican majority to support more radical measures and to propose extending the vote to the freedmen of the South. The Fourteenth Amendment of 1868 promoted the enfranchisement of black males. In 1866–8 the Radical Republicans had the wind in their sails and managed to overrule the president on key issues. But the momentum of the Radicals was checked by the defeat of their attempt to impeach Johnson, with the appearance of moderates who refused to back the measure. The Republican Party recovered in 1868 by endorsing General Ulysses S. Grant, the hugely popular Union commander, as its candidate in the presidential election. Though this ensured a Republican victory, it gave the White House to a man who lacked political experience and judgment, surrounded himself with mediocrities, and failed to include a single Southern Republican in his cabinet. However, as a military commander Grant had at least learned how fickle, short-sighted, and cowardly was the "public opinion" manufactured by the newspapers.

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[96] Foner, *Reconstruction,* pp. 228–81, and William McKee Evans, *Open Wound: the Long View of Race in America*, Urbana 2009, pp. 147–74. See also David Roediger, *How Race Survived US History*, New York 2009.

President Grant lent his backing to a Republican strategy of restoring some of the sanctions on former Confederate officials and obliging the reconstructed states to give freedmen the vote as the price of reentry into the Union. For a while the Radical Republicans could still influence Grant, but they failed to register that the revolution in the South was generating its own counterrevolution and could only be sustained by strong and constant support from Washington, and by a far-reaching mobilization of those who supported the new order in the South.

Reconstruction set out to make freedom and equality more tangible, and for a while it succeeded in curbing white terror and promoting black representation and equality. Congressional Reconstruction had given the vote to the freedmen, and the result was to be Republican majorities in the occupied states and the election of some 600 black legislators and officials throughout the occupied South. By itself this was an extraordinary development. African Americans now sat in the Senate and House of Representatives in Washington as well as in the state assemblies.[97]

In Louisiana attempts had been made to segregate public space and means of transport. The state's 1868 Constitutional Convention asserted the novel concept of "public rights," which would give equal access to public space. The Constitution's Bill of Rights declared that all citizens of the state should enjoy "the same civil, political, and public rights and privileges, and be subject to the same pains and penalties." The concept of public rights was clarified by a prohibition of racial discrimination on public transport and in places of public resort or accommodation. Rebecca Scott, quoting the document, contrasts this clear requirement with the “oblique language” of the Fourteenth Amendment.[98]

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[97] Foner, *Reconstruction*, pp. 351–63.

Many abolitionists and Radical Republicans believed that the suppression of slavery was not enough and that the freedmen deserved at least free education, and preferably land and the vote as well. In this situation it was important that some Union Leagues were responsive to abolitionist appeals and that a convention of 150 colored men from 17 states met in Syracuse, New York, in October 1864. The Syracuse convention and subsequent gatherings in Charleston and New Orleans framed a broad program for equal civic and political rights. Many of the participants in these events were already free before the war. They articulated the aspirations of colored communities in Louisiana, South Carolina, and Tennessee—areas occupied by Unionist forces long before the final collapse. Their leaders argued that black soldiers had earned citizenship by helping to save the Union. They also paid their taxes, and therefore deserved representation. At Syracuse, Charleston, and elsewhere the call was not simply for rights in the abstract but for tangible expressions of a new status—the right to vote and serve on juries—and a Homestead Act for the South that would give land to the freedmen. A “Declaration of Rights and Wrongs,” adopted at both Syracuse and Charleston, warned that passing measures favorable to the freedmen would be a hollow mockery if planters were still free to intimidate and dragoon them.[99]

The Reconstruction administrations were elected by precarious majorities, achieved by the votes of black men, and also by reaching out to whites who had never owned slaves or supported the Secession, or who had found the Confederacy a nightmare. The Freedmen’s Bureau, established in 1865, was wound up in 1870. Radical Republicans and abolitionists were too inclined to believe that once slavery had been struck down a new regime of wages and “free labor” would automatically follow. Many freedmen and women devoted more time to cultivating tiny plots that they rented or claimed as squatters. Though some entered into agreements with the planters, who still owned the best land, their new employers complained that the freed people thought that they could withdraw their labor whenever convenient or demand higher pay just when the harvest had to be brought in. An early recovery of the Southern economy was not sustained because of a credit famine. Merchants were only willing to advance credit for staple production, leading to shortfalls in the production of subsistence crops. The plantation economy went into decline, with many landowners in the cotton belt offering sharecropping arrangements to the freedmen. In some cases the sharecropper would be the tenant of a piece of land, some of which could be used for subsistence production. But to begin with it was more common for the sharecropper to work on a planter’s land for a modest wage and the promise of further pay once the crop was sold. Thus the sharecropper bore the risk of a poor market on his own shoulders, and this was not the end of his problems. Tenants and sharecroppers often needed to borrow money, and they became indebted to store owners, who would charge them high rates of interest on loans as well as high prices for merchandise. These arrangements narrowed the scope of the Southern market, fostered stagnation and decline, and caused economic pain to white farmers as well as black laborers and tenants.[100]

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[98] Rebecca Scott, *Degrees of Freedom: Louisiana and Cuba after Slavery*, Cambridge, MA, 2005, pp. 43–5.

[99] Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration*, Cambridge, MA, 2003, pp. 103–5.

With Union soldiers on call, the freedmen voted in new officials and sent black representatives and senators to Washington. The Reconstruction administrations also fostered a variety of social programs. These regimes, lasting from four to ten years, were innovative. As Eric Foner explains, they sought to introduce social institutions that the old slave-state authorities had neglected: “Public schools, hospitals, penitentiaries, and asylums for orphans and the insane were established for the first time or received increased funding. South Carolina funded medical care for poor citizens, and Alabama funded free legal counsel for indigent defendants."[101] With some charitable assistance, the Reconstruction administrations laid the basis for an educational system that was to comprise university colleges as well as high schools, open to the freed people and their descendants. The social programs of Reconstruction demanded resources that were in chronically short supply. Raising taxes alienated potential supporters. The South experienced a credit famine, as banks and storekeepers would advance supplies only for cotton cultivation and did so in far more modest installments than they had before the war, when slave property could be offered as collateral.

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[100] The postbellum miseries of the freed people are trenchantly explored by Roger Ransom and Richard Sutch in *One Kind of Freedom: the Economic Consequences of Emancipation*, second ed., Cambridge 2001, especially pp. 244–53.

The empowerment of the freedmen was carried through in the teeth of continuing resistance from white "rifle clubs," the Ku Klux Klan, and kindred organizations. The Reconstruction administrations fared best—at least for a while—in states where there was either a large black population (South Carolina and Louisiana) or a solid phalanx of white Republicans (Texas and Arkansas).[102] Much depended on the quality and energy of local political leadership. What was needed was an alternative to Federal troops as guarantors of the new order.

In the few areas where there were not only Union soldiers but also black elected officials and police, there were instances of freedmen's labor associations successfully taking over and running the plantations. This occurred on several of the rice plantations along the rivers of coastal South Carolina. The planters' practice of paying wages in "checks" at high-priced stores that they controlled had bred hostility to the wage system: "In Colleton County, by the early 1870s, several large plantations were operating under what a newspaper called "a sort of 'communism,' " with black laborers forming societies, electing officers, and purchasing estates collectively.[103] But such enclaves of labor power were precarious, and in the later 1870s black organization and ownership was to be targeted in South Carolina as it was elsewhere.

The Northern public had been disturbed by white terrorism and so-called "race riots" (really ethnic cleansing), but it had little patience for the heavy costs of an extended occupation of the South and was demoralized by reports of carpetbagger corruption. Prior to the 1872 election, a group of "reform" or Liberal Republicans, led by Horace Greeley, mustered a challenge to Grant, but they argued for less rather than more engagement in the South. Grant's reelection gave a little extra time, but neither the president nor the Republicans gave decisive support to the Reconstruction administrations. To do so would have been expensive and contrary to the growing view that the time had come for a reconciliation with Southern elites. The size of Union forces in the South was continually being whittled down, and white vigilantism was emboldened. Some attempts were made in South Carolina to defend Reconstruction by relying on a local mixed militia, but eventually in the key states the Republican governors had to rely on Federal troops.[104]

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[101] Foner, *Reconstruction*, p. 364.

[102] Eric Foner, *Reconstruction*, pp. 439–40.

[103] Eric Foner, *Nothing But Freedom: Emancipation and its Legacy*, Baton Rouge 1983, p. 85.

THE RESTORED UNION AND A THWARTED REVOLUTION

The Civil War had landed Washington with a debt of $2.8 billion, and the bankers had extracted exceedingly favorable terms.[105] Schuyler Colfax, from Indiana, proposed that the huge war effort required new taxes—a progressive income tax and a levy on the shareholders of the banks and the new corporations. Colfax pointed out that the farmer had to pay a tax on his property, so justice demanded that there should be a tax on capital—especially that of shareholders—as well as on employees and cultivators.[106] The income tax was agreed upon but the plan for a tax on capital was vetoed by Wall Street and the treasury secretary. The income tax was set at 3 percent and much war expenditure was paid for either by issuing war bonds or by printing greenbacks. Some urged that the public debt be paid off in the same way, although the value of the paper currency had fallen by about a third. The Republicans, having contracted the debt, argued that paying it off with devalued paper would be a sorry reward for the patriotism of those who had subscribed, whether bankers or ordinary citizens. Their decision to pay off that debt in gold left the Treasury bare, unable to pay for Reconstruction in the South or ensure steady growth in the North. Neither the Lincoln administration nor its Republican successors seized the opportunity to introduce a central bank or effectively to regulate the thousands of private banks. This was to be a source of future financial instability and meant that farmers and small or medium businesses did not have access to reliable and reasonably-priced credit. In a book of letters addressed to Colfax in 1865, Henry Carey, the noted critic of free-trade economics, warned that a credit famine would ruin all hopes for successful Reconstruction.[107] Yet nothing was done to meet this problem, Southern producers were starved of credit and by 1880 per capita income in the US South was only 50 percent of the national average, and it would remain so for many decades after. The weakness of the Southern economy was a drag on national performance, but the national economy also suffered because of the primitive banking regime. One rather understated criticism of the postbellum US financial system concludes: "The main costs to the US economy of not having a central bank were a less efficient payments system and a greater potential for instability."[108] The North's master financier, Jay Cooke, who had marketed the Union's war bonds, was himself to be bankrupted by the crisis of 1873.

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[104] Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet*, pp. 302–13.

[105] The total cost of the war has been estimated at $6.5 billion by Claudia Goldin and Frank Lewis, prompting Phillip Paludan's comment, "That amount would have allowed the government to purchase and free all the 4,000,000 slaves (at 1860 prices) give each family 40 acres and a mule and still have provided $3.5 billion as reparations to former slaves for a century of lost wages." Paludan, "What Did the Winners Win?" in *Writing the Civil War*, McPherson and Cooper, p. 181.

[106] W. Elliot Brownlow, *Federal Taxation in America*, Cambridge 1996, p. 26. Colfax was at this time in the Radical camp. Also see Vorenberg, *Final Freedom,* pp. 206–7.

As it happened, by 1869 Schuyler Colfax was vice president and, one might have hoped, ready to devise a way of taxing the new breed of robber barons. Unfortunately, it was soon discovered that he was implicated in the Credit Mobilier scandal. The Credit Mobilier had issued shares to large numbers of legislators, backing return for their backing on its railroad projects. (From the days of John Law onward, there has always been a connection between financial innovation and swindling.)

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[107] Henry Carey, *Letters to the Honorable Schuyler Colfax*, Philadelphia 1865.

[108] Richard Sylla, "Reversing Financial Reversals," in *Government and the American Economy*, Price Fishback et al., Chicago 2007, pp. 115–47, p. 133.

During the heyday of Radical Reconstruction Northern white workingmen made some gains of their own. The freed people were in a struggle for the control of *space*, both public and private; the Northern workers sought to control *time*. In this industrializing era the average working day lasted more than eleven hours. In 1868 Congress was persuaded to establish an eight-hour legal working day for Federal employees. Eight states had similar laws, though implementation was weak. Radical Reconstruction also favored the first attempts to regulate the railroads. The stirrings of a new social utopianism and a very practical trade union movement were encouraged by the polarizations around Radical Republicanism. Wendell Phillips led prominent abolitionists and Radicals in supporting Eight Hour Leagues. In demanding the eight-hour day the "labor reformers" were accepting "clock time" and a degree of labor discipline as part of a wider scheme of improvement. Starting from free labor principles, Ira Steward argued that shorter hours meant higher pay and that higher pay would combat unemployment and the erosion of wages by inflation. As he bluntly put it, "new employments depend upon a more expensive style of living."[109]

In 1867 a National Labor Union was formed to spread the eight-hour day demand. At its first national meeting the NLU declared: "The National Labor Union knows no north, no south, no east, no west, neither color nor sex, on the question of the rights of labor."[110] The London headquarters of the International sent a warning in May 1869 attacking both ill-founded rumors of war (between Britain and the US) and the all-too-real domestic threat to living standards:

> The palpable effect of the Civil War was, of course, to deteriorate the position of the American workman. In the United States, as in Europe, the monster incubus of a national debt was shifted

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[109] Quoted in David Roediger and Philip Foner's *Our Own Time: A History of American Labor and the Working Day*, London 1989, p. 85.

[110] Quoted in Messer-Kruse's *Yankee International*, p. 191.

> from hand to hand, to settle down on the shoulders of the working class.[111]

However, it ventured to anticipate that there would be resistance, and resistance that would have been enhanced by what had already been achieved: "For all this, the Civil War did compensate by freeing the slave and [by] the consequent moral impetus this gave to your own class movement."[112]

Phillip Paludan urges that the war's deleterious impact on labor, and labor's reaction, have not received sufficient attention. The immiseration of Northern workers as a consequence of the great inflation of the 1860s prompted hundreds of strikes and the emergence of many new workers' organizations. Indeed for a while there was a sharp discrepancy between the squeezing of these workers and the improvements accruing to both farmers and former slaves. The Homestead program allowed farmers' sons to acquire land cheaply. Farmers could pay off debts with depreciated currency, and the building of new railroads soon gave them easier access to markets. As for the former slaves, the disintegration of a formidable apparatus of labor coercion had immediate benefits, as families reunited and some withdrew from the labor force while others received at least modest payment.[113] But in both cases these improvements were precarious, as Northern and Northwestern railroads raised freight rates, Southern landowners drove a harder bargain, and white vigilantes sought to intimidate the freedmen.

Some Southern black workers sought to join the eight hours movement. The New Orleans *Tribune*, published by black journalists, supported the campaign, and a State Labor Convention in South Carolina called for a nine-hour day. But true wage labor was of limited significance in the South, so the impact of these moves was small. A Colored Workers Convention in New York in 1869 sought to build a bridge between organized labor and the freedmen. The "Declaration of Rights and Wrongs" framed by African

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[111] "Address to the National Labour Union of the United States," in *Karl Marx on America and the Civil War*, Saul K. Padover, ed., p. 144.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Paludan, What Did the Winners Win?" in *Writing the Civil War*, pp. 178, 183, 187.

American conventions at Syracuse and Charleston denounced segregation in public places and warned that measures favorable to the freedmen would be a hollow mockery if planters were still free to intimidate and dragoon them.[114] But the differing problems of workers in the South and North made it more difficult to promote an alliance between them.

THE POSTWAR RADICALIZATION

Marx's addresses had increased awareness of the International Workingmen's Association in the United States. The IWA attracted a diverse range of supporters there, and even as senior a figure as Senator Charles Sumner was occasionally prepared to support events staged by the International. By the early 1870s the IWA had fifty sections in a dozen urban areas, ranging from Boston and New York in the East, to such crucial hubs as St. Louis and Chicago in the Midwest, to San Francisco on the West Coast. In New York there were militia companies led by supporters of the International, and an African American militia was also said to have become affiliated. But there is no mention of sections in the South, even in those areas like South Carolina where there was labor militancy. The reason for this was very likely the threatening security situation, which obliged all supporters of Reconstruction to cleave to the Republican Party and its militia. (During the early 1870s the young Albert Parsons—subsequently a strong supporter of the International, advocate of independent working-class politics, and Haymarket martyr—was a colonel in the Texas National Guard, which was in effect a Republican militia).

Some leading female abolitionists declined to support the Fourteenth Amendment on the ground that while promoting the enfranchisement of black men it left women without the vote.[115] This was an argument about priorities, since nearly all abolitionists supported women's suffrage. The great majority of abolitionists believed that any chance of achieving black male enfranchisement should be supported. The 1868 elections, allowing voters their first opportunity to respond to Johnson's conduct and to news of white brutality in the South, was a good year for Republicans in most parts of the North and West, and confirmed the Republican Congress's desire for black suffrage in the South. Where the Republican leadership had the courage to fight for black male suffrage in the North and West, then they had a good prospect of winning it at home as well as for the South. The fact that so many African Americans had risked their lives for the Union carried great weight with Northern voters. In Iowa, a proposal to give black men the vote passed in a referendum in 1868 though a similar proposal had failed there in 1857. However, the skill and conviction with which the Iowa Republicans seized the "egalitarian moment" was not seen everywhere.[116]

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[114] Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet*, pp. 103–5.

[115] See Angela Davis, *Women, Race and Class*, New York 1983, pp. 30–86.

The vulnerability of the black communities in the South also furnished an added argument for black male enfranchisement. The women of the North and West had certainly rallied to support the war effort and were shortly to gain the right for themselves to vote for school boards in Kansas and elsewhere. But whereas the racial order was—at least momentarily—disputed, gender divisions had not been challenged by the war. (Though, as we will see below, this began to change with the advent of peace.) The dispute over this issue soon subsided, as most socialists and abolitionists did support votes for women. This cleared the way for new attempts in the 1870s to explore the makings of a progressive coalition.[117]

The appearance of the labor movements encouraged the view that a fresh start could be made in the 1870s, with the emergence of new issues and voices. Racism, sexism, and conscious or unconscious bourgeois ideology continued to hold much of the population in thrall and to weaken progressive movements. But much more remarkable than this predictable state of affairs was the emergence of challenges to it: to racism, including institutional racism; to male privilege in the home and workplace as well as at the ballot box; and to the divine right of employers to dictate to their employees and to accumulate vast personal fortunes.

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[116] Robert Dykstra shows that military service was a trump card in the debate over enfranchising black men in Iowa. See Robert Dykstra, *Bright Radical Star*: *Black Freedom and White Supremacy on the Hawkeye Frontier*, Cambridge, MA, 1993.

[117] Women had been lauded for their contributions to the war as nurses and homemakers, but the passage from this to enfranchisement proved more difficult. See also Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, *Correspondence, Writings, Speeches*, Ellen Dubois, ed., New York 1981, pp. 92–112; 166–9. Dubois, in her editorial presentation, argues that Anthony and Cady Stanton were, in different ways, both trying to adapt the women's movement to the need for wider alliances. While Anthony drew on "free labor" ideology to criticize women's dependence, Stanton sketched the programmatic basis for an alliance between the women's and labor movements.

For a brief span—about half a dozen years—the US sections of the IWA became the sounding board and banner for a diverse series of radical initiatives. The IWA and the National Labor Union were seen as sister organizations. The German American Marxists wielded what was then a very novel doctrine—the idea that if labor were only sufficiently well organized it would became a mighty lever for social advances, opening the way to all sections of the oppressed. The privileges of white and male workers were not addressed: all attention was focused on the great concentration of privilege represented by capital. In theory, female and black workers were welcome to join the workers' organizations and would enjoy equal rights within them, though the practice often lagged some way behind. Some of the IWA's US sections developed a primitive and sectarian Marxism that contrasts with the program and practice of the German Social Democratic Party. Marx and Engels were often uneasy at the narrow-mindedness of their American followers, but they were themselves partly responsible for this, since they had not yet developed a conception of the different character and goals of trade unions on the one hand and political parties on the other. The fact that the International embraced, or mixed, both types of organization was no bad thing, but because there had been no theorization of their distinct and different purposes the result was often confusion and tension. There was also the dilemma posed by the scope for social alliances. The workers needed to organize themselves as a distinct body, yet they also needed to reach out to potential allies—farmers, farm laborers, progressive members of the middle class, home workers—on a range of issues. The implicit labor metaphysic of some of the German American Marxists failed to tackle these issues. Nevertheless, in the short run the International actually thrived by avoiding a clear stance on such questions and simply allowing each section to organize in its own way and according to its own priorities.

The German American Marxists might have been narrow-minded, but still they were committed to the principles of racial and gender equality, though they soft-pedaled these issues when seeking to recruit *bona fide* wageworkers such as the Irish of Pennsylvania, New York, and elsewhere who did not share these principled commitments, arguing that it would be easier to educate them once they had joined the IWA. Marx and Engels, familiar with anti-Irish discrimination in England, readily agreed that special efforts should be made to win over the Irish workers. They may not fully have realized that in the US the Irish workers—especially the Pennsylvania miners—had been stigmatized as "copperheads" and traitors because they were believed to have lacked enthusiasm for the Northern cause. The International's strong Unionist credentials and welcoming attitude toward the Irish proved a good combination.

The IWA became a rallying point for many of the disparate forces of emancipation seeking to take part in the reconstruction of the social order. It attracted the attention of Victoria Woodhull—in some ways the Arianna Huffington of the 1870s—who edited the widely selling and much discussed *Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly* and used it to publicize the initiatives of the IWA. Tennie Claflin, Victoria's sister, was elected colonel of a militia after urging that the workers would need a force to defend them in the struggles to come. In 1870 and 1871 the *Weekly* published several articles summarizing the *Communist Manifesto* or explaining the documents of the IWA. It exposed the schemes of the railway promoters and argued that the greed of the owners of the Staten Island ferry led them to skimp on safety, and their negligence eventually caused a disaster in which a hundred passengers perished. An editorial evoked the new spirit:

> This is the age of rights, when, for the first time in human history, the rights of all living things are, in some way, recognized as existing. We are far enough yet from according to all their rights, but we talk about them, we see them, and thought is busy to determine how best they should be secured.[118]

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[118] "The Rights of Children," *Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly*, December 6, 1870.

A series of articles entitled "Man's Rights, or How Would you Like It?" explored the idea of women taking leading positions in economic affairs while it became the turn of men to be "housekeepers and kitchen girls."[119] Other articles sought to reconcile a needed collectivism with the rights of the individual. The banks and the corporations should be taken into truly public ownership, and democratic institutions should ensure "the personal participation of each in the preparation, administration, and execution of the laws by which all are governed." But the state should not seek to prescribe how people lived: "Social freedom means the absolute immunity from impertinent intrusion in all affairs of exclusively personal concernment, such as scientific or religious belief, the sexual relationship, habits of dress, diet or the like."[120]

With her sister, Woodhull was the founder of Wall Street's first female brokerage, and used her rewards from this to finance the *Weekly*, "the lady broker's paper." Eclectic and radical, the *Weekly* showed a lively interest in socialism and new forms of collective self-government and published a special edition of Marx's "Address on the Civil War in France." Marx wrote a friendly note to Woodhull and suggested that his daughter Jenny could supply an article on her experiences in France following the suppression of the Paris Commune.[121]

After the European panic occasioned by the Commune uprising, Marx and his followers had moved the IWA's headquarters to New York. This is often seen as a ploy by Marx and his followers to prevent the IWA failing into the hands of the anarchists. No doubt there is truth in this. Yet there was indeed, as Marx claimed, a promising opening in the United States in which the International could begin to sink real roots in North America.

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[119] "Man's Rights, or How Would You Like It?" ibid., September 8, 1870.

[120] "The International: Appeal of Section No. 12," ibid., September 23, 1871.

[121] Unfortunately this cordial tone was not maintained. Primed by the doctrinaire Internationalists, in a later letter Marx casually refers to Woodhull as "a banker's woman, free lover and general humbug"; so far as sexual matters were concerned, Marx, the likely father of Frederick Demuth, was more deserving of the term "humbug" than Woodhull.

In Europe, respectable opinion was outraged by the supposed excesses of the Communards in 1871. But in the United States it was the bloody suppression of the Commune that provoked outrage, and sympathy for the victims. Marx's *Civil War in France* was widely read by reformers and radicals. The IWA mustered a demonstration of 70,000 or more in New York in December 1871 to pay tribute to the Commune's tens of thousands of martyrs. The parade brought together the Skidmore Guards (a black militia), the female leadership of Section 12 (Woodhull and Claflin), an Irish band, a range of trade unions, supporters of Cuba's fight for independence marching under the Cuban flag, and a broad spectrum of socialist, feminist, Radical, and Reform politics. In its aftermath, Section 12 and its supporters in the Equal Rights Association, a new reform body, proposed running a ticket in the forthcoming presidential election, with Victoria Woodhull and Frederick Douglass as the candidates. For a brief moment an attempt was made to present a progressive alternative in the 1872 elections, but it passed.[122]

Many of Marx's US followers distrusted Woodhull. She was president of the American Society of Spiritualists, and her Wall Street brokerage had the support of Cornelius Vanderbilt, the richest man in America. The IWA Council declared that wage earners should comprise at least 60 percent of the membership in all sections. Section 12 was suspended for failing to reach this figure. The failure to distinguish between trade union and party was part of the problem here. So, too, was the conception that workers' interests were somehow natural and sociologically given without benefit of ideology or politics. The sectarian exclusion of Section 12 weakened the International, though in the short run the dissension it aroused was eclipsed when Woodhull and her *Weekly* became embroiled in an unrelated obscenity suit. Incensed by hypocritical attacks on her philosophy of "free love," she ran a story in the *Weekly* exposing the extramarital affair of New York's most prominent preacher. The scandal briefly led to Woodhull's imprisonment and prevented her from developing her political profile. Feminist and spiritualist leaders followed the socialists in keeping their distance from her.[123]

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[122] The classic study is Montgomery's *Beyond Equality*; the IWA is discussed on pp. 414–21. But see also Herbert Gutman, *Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America,* Oxford 1976, pp. 293–343, and Samuel Bernstein, *The First International in America*, New York 1962.

There was to be a legacy of distrust and factional strife between those of Marx's German American followers who believed that party building was the priority, and others who saw the trade unions as the priority. Both "Yankee" and German Internationalists deplored racial violence and supported female enfranchisement, but the trade unionists gave low priority to such issues, and many Socialists despised the narrowness and caution of the trade union leaders. On the other hand the rumblings of class conflict split the radical Republicans, as some sided with the employers, others with the workers, some supporting the eight-hour demand, and others hostile to it. Then the postwar boom was brought to a shuddering halt by the crash of 1873. The wages of workers had been eroded by the depreciating purchasing power of greenbacks. With their own living standards falling by as much as a third in a few years, the workers of the North and West were first and foremost concerned about bread-and-butter issues. The Republicans lost ground, as they seemed incapable of defending either the wages of Northern workers or the political gains of Southern freedmen. Ultimately the Republicans had deferred to the large property holders in both sections.

AN EXPLOSION OF CLASS STRUGGLE: 1877 AND AFTER

The presidential election of 1876 was deadlocked in the electoral college. The Republicans had failed to find anyone with even remotely Grant's appeal and received many fewer votes, but there was an even tie in the college. This eventually led to a deal—the Wormley House pact of 1877—whereby the Republican went to the White House but the Federal Army was withdrawn from the South. The last Reconstruction governments there collapsed, to be replaced by white "Redeemers," but the spirit of radicalism unleashed by the Civil War and its outcome had not yet been laid to rest.

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[123] For a rounded assessment see Amanda Frisken, *Victoria Woodhull's Sexual Revolution*, Philadelphia 2004.

The deal hatched by the Republicans and Democrats was not a pretty one. It sent the less popular candidate to the White House and allowed him to find jobs in Washington for a horde of displaced Southern Republicans. The press was full of reports of payoffs involving the award of railroad franchises. The new administration soon catered to bankers and bondholders by resuming specie payments. These developments confirmed the scathing assessments of the most dogmatic Marxists of the Socialist Party. The bosses were using the two main parties as blatant spoils machines, and in most areas they were oblivious to the plight of the growing working class. To the socialists, the need for a quite new party—a farmer-labor party—could not have been clearer. The Internationalists moved to form a Workers Party. Robin Archer has recently shed new light on why this possibility was nipped in the bud. He sees it as happening because of a combination of ferocious repression, Socialist sectarianism, and the reluctance of workers' organizations to address political questions, since to do so would risk antagonizing the large number of religious workers with their ties to the existing party system.[124]

The existing party system was difficult to beat because it adjusted to the threat of third parties either by stealing their slogans or by ganging up against them—as the Republicans and Democrats did with their joint slate in Illinois in the 1880s. Successful labor leaders were wooed as candidates by the two established parties. But both parties took handouts from the robber barons, with state assemblies becoming the pawns of railway promoters awarding them large tracts of public land in return for kickbacks. The state authorities also frequently allowed the state militia to be used as strike breakers. Although striking workers sometimes enjoyed public support, the newspapers and middle class opinion easily turned against them.

However, it was an employers' offensive and an across-the-board 10 percent cut in rail workers' pay that detonated the Great Rail Strike of 1877. Many of the rail workers were Union Army veterans, and the rail companies sought to encourage their loyalty by issuing them uniforms and placing well-known generals on the board. But with this further pay cut such petty palliatives could no longer hold them in check. The Great Strike of 1877 has been described as "one of the bitterest explosions of class warfare in American history."[125] It reached inland to the great rail hubs and soon gripped the greater part of the North and West. Though it erupted three months after the ending of Reconstruction, the Great Strike did not come out of a blue sky. The employers had acted in a concerted fashion and counted on support from Washington, now that the political crisis had been resolved and the troops withdrawn from the South. The rail workers had much public sympathy, and their action encouraged others to down tools and take to the streets in urban areas.[126] Workers in mines and steel plants joined in. The strike gathered momentum because some militia units were loath to threaten lives. One commander explained, "Meeting an enemy in the field of battle, you go there to kill … But here you have men with fathers and brothers and relatives mingled in the crowd of rioters. The sympathy of the people, of the troops, my own sympathy, was with the strikers proper. We all felt that these men were not receiving enough wages."[127]

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[124] Robin Archer, *Why Is There No Labor Party in the United States?*, Oxford 2008. This carefully researched and argued study is the most provocative work on its theme since Mike Davis's *Prisoners of the American Dream* (London 1985) and extends the latter's comparison of the US and Australia.

In St. Louis, the strike, orchestrated by the Workingmen's Party, an offshoot of the International, had control of the city for several days. Burbank reports:

> The British Consul in St. Louis noted an example of how society was being turned upside down: on a railroad in Ohio, the strikers "had taken the road into their own hands, running the trains and collecting the fares" and felt that they deserved praise because they turned over the proceeds to company officials. The consul commented stiffly that "it is … to be deplored that a large part of

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[125] Eric Foner, R*econstruction*, p. 383. For this momentous event see also Robert Bruce, *1877: Year of Violence*, New York 1959, and Philip Foner, *The Great Labor Uprising of 1877*, New York 1977.

[126] David Stowell, *The Great Strike of 1877*, Urbana, IL., 2006.

[127] Quoted in John P. Lloyd's "The Strike Wave of 1877," in *The Encyclopedia of Strikes in American History*, Aaron Brenner, Benjamin Day and Immanuel Ness, eds., Armonk, NY, 2009, p. 183.

> the public appear to regard such conduct as a legitimate mode of warfare."[128]

The strikers produced their own newspaper, the St. Louis *Times*, which attacked the voice of the city's leaders:

> The St. Louis *Times* jeered at *The Republican*'s solemn warnings, quoting the phrase about the railroad men striking "at the very vitals of society": on the contrary, said the *Times*, it was "the very vitals of society' which were on strike, 'and hungry vitals they are too!"[129]

African Americans played a prominent role in the St. Louis action, a fact harped on by municipal authorities and the local press in their attacks on the strike. A report of the general meeting convoked by the strike leadership noted: "The chairman introduced the Negro speaker, whose remarks were frequently applauded."[130] The strike leadership required the authorities to enact a series of radical measures, including restoration of wage cuts and the generalization of the eight-hour day, but were thwarted when a Committee of Public Safety set up by the leading men of the city raised a militia and sent it to crush the rebellion and end the strike. However, the black population of St. Louis remained a force to be reckoned with—in 1879 blacks fleeing Southern repression, the "Exodusters," were able to shelter in St. Louis prior to leaving for Kansas.[131]

Just as the withdrawal of Federal troops abandoned the field to semiprivate white militia in the South, so the employers in the North were able to pay for thousands, sometimes tens of thousands, of National Guards, specially recruited "deputy marshals," and Pinkerton men to break the strike, which had spread until it had national scope.[132] One hundred strikers lost their lives in the course of the 1877 strike. The employers were also able to bring in black workers to take the place of strikers. The more far-seeing and enlightened labor organizers had urged that blacks be welcomed and organized, too, but it took time for formal recognition to be translated into practical action.[133]

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[128] David Burbank, *Reign of the Rabble: the St. Louis General Strike of 1877*, New York 1966, p. 64.

[129] Ibid., p. 25.

[130] Ibid., p. 33.

[131] For the role of African Americans in the strike and later see Bryan Jack, *The St. Louis African American Community and the Exodusters*, Columbia, MO, 2007, especially pp. 142–50.

[132] Samuel Yellin, *American Labor Struggles*, 1877–1934, New York 1937.

The new president, Rutherford B. Hayes, noted in his diary that the 1877 strike had been suppressed "by *force*." Grant, the man he replaced, was vacationing in Europe—he found these proceedings "a little queer." During his own administration, Grant noted, the entire Democratic Party and "the morbidly honest and 'reformatory' portion of the Republicans had thought it 'horrible' to employ Federal troops 'to protect the lives of negroes.' Now, however, there is no hesitation about exhausting the whole power of the government to suppress a strike on the slightest intimation that danger threatened."[134]

By the 1880s there were 30,000 Pinkerton men, making them a larger force than the Army of the Republic. The latter's strength had dropped to less than 27,000, with those soldiers not in the West reduced to strikebreaking roles. By 1877 the Democrats were calling for Army strength to be further reduced to no more than 20,000. The robber barons of the North and West and the planters of the South had found brutally effective ways to cow the direct producers. Both distrusted the Army and both hated the Federal taxing power. The steep reductions in the Federal military establishment reflected both an economy drive and the conviction of some that an Army that stemmed from the Civil War and Reconstruction was not well adapted to enforcing labor discipline.

An unsavory alliance of politicos and robber barons had beaten the rail workers into submission, but this was just the start of two decades of large-scale clashes. From actions by the Illinois and Pennsylvania dockers, lumbermen, miners, and steelworkers of the 1880s to the Pullman and Homestead strikes of the 1890s, the United States was shaken by epic and desperate industrial struggles. These battles involved tens, sometimes hundreds, of thousands of workers and had no equal in Europe. In the great battles of the 1880s and 1890s, hundreds of strikers were killed, thousands imprisoned, and tens of thousands blacklisted. These grueling labor battles sometimes seemed like a civilian echo of the Civil War, with the strikers cast as copperheads, or even rebels, and the army, police, and deputy marshals as the loyalists. The Republicans, encouraged by Unionist veterans organizations like the GAR, sought to retain the support of their followers by voting pensions for veterans. Black veterans also qualified. Thanks to this, by 1914 the US provision for public pensions was larger than Germany's, but it was destined steadily to diminish as the old soldiers died. This was a sectional welfare state; the Southern authorities did not have the resources to match it on behalf of Confederate veterans.[135]

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[133] Gutman, *Work, Culture and Society*, pp. 131–208.

[134] Quoted in Foner's *Reconstruction*, p. 586.

Stephen Skowronek describes the closing decades of the nineteenth century as the epoch of the "patchwork state" and emphasizes the role of labor struggles in shaping its peculiar formation.[136] The antebellum regime had defended plantations without regulating them; the postbellum regime did similar service for the new corporations. It is sometimes believed that the Civil War, whatever else it did—or did not do—at least modernized and strengthened the US Federal state. But the authority of the state remained very uneven, the civilian administration was in hock to party placemen, and the legislatures were in league with the money power. These features had survived the war and been intensified by Reconstruction and its overturning. The frustration of "bourgeois" revolution brought no gain to Northern workers or Southern freedmen.

DEFEAT AND TRIUMPH FOR AMERICAN WORKERS

The double defeat of Reconstruction had suppressed black rights in the South and curtailed labor rights in the North. Jim Crow in the South and the widespread use of Pinkerton's men and other goons in the North were both victories for privatized violence and a minimal view of the state. They were a defeat for the republican ideal of a unified and responsible federal authority. It was most particularly a defeat for Lincoln's idea that the rule of law should be the "political religion" of all Americans.

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[135] Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: the Political Origins of Social Security*, Cambridge, MA, 1992.

[136] Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State: the Expansion of National Administrative Capacities*, Cambridge 1982, pp. 38–84.

There was orchestrated violence in the North, but it was put into the shade by Jim Crow. During the years 1884–1899, between 107 and 241 African Americans were murdered each year by lynch mobs, with total victims numbering more than 3,000. Lynchings were concentrated in the South and a great majority of the victims were black, but they were not unknown elsewhere and they sometimes targeted white labor organizers, Chinese, and Mexicans. Along the Mexican border dozens of Hispanics were lynched during these years. And there were also lynchings of whites in other parts of the Union, especially the "wild" West.[137] The intensification of Jim Crow in the South was accompanied by the spread of onerous, if less extreme, practices of racial exclusion in other sections, affecting residence, employment, and education.[138]

The freed people of the South and the labor organizers of the North not only faced physical threats but also found their attempts to organize and negotiate assaulted in the name of the same conservative strain in free labor ideology—that which construed any regulation or combination as a violation of "freedom of contract." The Republicans and Democrats deferred to this doctrine and the Supreme Court codified it. These rulings pulverized the workers and sharecroppers, leaving them to negotiate only as individuals.

Without a political order capable of regulating the employers, the case for a social democratic party was more difficult to make, and to some a syndicalist perspective seemed more realistic. Another obstacle to proposals for a labor party was the fact that the federal state was fiscally hamstrung, rendering impractical projects for a welfare state. The Union's vast Civil War outlays had been met in part, as noted above, by the progressive income tax.[139] However, in the early 1870s the income tax was dropped—and then declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. The Fourteenth Amendment had promised "all persons" the equal protection of the laws. Though this proved a dead letter so far as the freedmen were concerned, the corporations—who enjoyed the legal status of persons—successfully invoked it against measures for corporate taxation and regulation.

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[137] Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation*, Oxford 1984, pp. 117–8, 185–9; Ida B. Wells-Barnet, *On Lynchings*, with an introduction by Patricia Hill Collins, New York 2002 (first ed. 1892), pp. 201–2.

[138] Desmond King and Stephen Tuck, "De-Centering the South: America's Nationwide White Supremacist Order After Reconstruction," *Past and Present*, February 2007, pp. 213–53.

These and other reactionary developments might themselves have increased the willingness of the trade unions to back a labor party. Indeed, those trying to organize general or industrial unions aimed at the mass of workers realized that they needed the support of government. But Archer argues that many key craft leaders—especially Samuel Gompers—had greater industrial bargaining power and feared that their organizations might be put at risk if they teamed up with political adventurers.

Several key trade unions had been inspired by the agitation surrounding the IWA and Marx's writings on the importance of self-organization by the workers. Several US unions were to describe themselves as International organizations—the International Longshoremen or International Garment Workers Union and so forth—an echo of the IWA. Sometimes the "International" was justified by its reference to organizing in Canada, but it had a resonance beyond this. If Marx's followers—many of them German Americans—can take a share of the credit for the impetus given to trade union organization, they must also accept some of the blame for the failure of the US workers' movement to develop a labor party and for the related tardy development and weakness of the US welfare state. Indeed, some blame the influence of Karl Marx for these failures.[140]

Yet Marx favored both trade unions and social democratic or socialist parties in the 1870s, as may readily be seen in the case of Germany. The German SPD was clearly linked to and supportive of organized labor, but its Erfurt program committed it to revolutionary and democratic objectives and to immediate reforms. It campaigned for votes for women and the defense of the German forests. It supported rights for homosexuals and an end to Germany's imperial exploits in Africa, and it debated the "agrarian question."[141] The breadth of the SPD's program did not, of course, wholly stem from Karl Marx but came also from several other currents, including the Lassalleans. Though Marx had tenaciously fought against what he saw as Lassalle's misguided belief in the progressive character of the German state, he nevertheless went out of his way to cultivate Lassalle's acquaintance, gently to warn him of his mistakes, and above all to remain in touch with the tens of thousands of German socialists who were influenced by him. Marx stressed the great potential and attractive power of the working class, but in his "Critique of the Gotha Programme" he combated the idea that labor was the only source of value, insisting that land (by which he meant nature) was a vital source of use values.[142]

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[139] W. Elliot Brownlee, *Federal Taxation in America*, Cambridge 1996, p. 26.

[140] Messer-Kruse in *Yankee International* and Archer in *Why Is There No Labor Party in the United States?* come close to this but ultimately concede that on such questions there was a large gap between Marx and those in the US who regarded themselves as his followers. (These included Samuel Gompers.)

The programmatic scope of the SPD is not the only evidence of the approach favored by Marx and Engels. The program of the French workers party was directly inspired by a conversation with Marx. Its very first clause declared, "the emancipation of the class of producers involves all mankind, without distinction of sex or race."[143] Its immediate program committed it to universal suffrage and equal pay for equal work. No doubt that economism still lurks in it, but in 1879 a platform like this was not such a bad starting point. The idea that trade unions and political organization are mutually exclusive put supposedly Marxian US Socialists and trade unionists at odds with their mentor.

The paternalist ethos of the early socialist movement rendered its commitment to equal rights for women ethereal and abstract.

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[141] I have a very brief discussion of the programmatic ideas of the SPD in "Fin de Siècle: Socialism After the Crash," *New Left Review*, 1:185, January/February 1991. For the evolution of the party's positions on sexuality in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, see David Fernbach, "Biology and Gay Identity," *New Left Review*, 1:228, 1998.

[142] Marx and Engels, "Critique of the Gotha Programme," in Marx, *The First International and After*, pp. 339–59.

[143] "Introduction to the Program of the French Workers Party," *The First International and After*, p. 376.

But as women were drawn into the labor movement in the 1880s, female activists challenged the idea that a woman's place was in the home. While male labor organizers were prone to support the notion that the male worker should earn a "family wage," the socialist organizations, especially those influenced by the German SPD, took a different stance: they urged that women would not be truly emancipated until they entered the world of paid labor on equal terms with men. August Bebel, one of the historic leaders of the SPD, wrote a book on the topic, *Woman Under Socialism* (1879), which was widely read in both German and English. Bebel urged that domestic labor should be lightened, and women's employment promoted, by the provision of free communal child-care facilities and restaurants. Though they did not anticipate twentieth-century feminism and often romanticized patriarchal features of the family, the socialists of this era did pay some attention to the issue of gender equality.[144] Female members of the Socialist Labor Party were able to offer a feminist interpretation of Bebel's ideas and to use them to argue for the importance of organizing women workers. Given the employment of large numbers of women in new branches of the economy, socialist women became a significant force.

In 1887 Engels paid tribute to the giant strides being made by the American workers movement, embracing momentous class battles in Illinois and Pennsylvania, the spread of the Eight Hour Leagues, the growth of the Knights of Labor, the sacrifices that had established May 1 as International Labor Day, and the electoral achievements of the first state-level labor parties.[145] But appreciative as he was, he insisted that the whole movement would lose its way unless it could develop a transformative program: "A new party must have a distinct platform," one adapted to American conditions. Without this, any "new party would have but a rudimentary existence." However, beyond saying that the kernel of this program would have to be public ownership of "land, railways, mines, machinery, etc." he did not speculate as to what problems that program should address. Engels rebuked the doctrinaires of the heavily German American Socialist Labor Party for their hostility to unions and their failure to grapple with American reality. He urged them to "doff every remnant of their foreign garb," "go to the Americans who are the vast majority" and "on all accounts learn English."[146]

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[144] Mari Jo Buhle, *Women and American Socialism*, Urbana 1981, pp. 1–48.

[145] See Frederick Engels, "Preface to the American Edition," *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, New York 1887, reprinted in this volume.

The advice Engels offered, though entirely justified, was also elementary and even simplistic. Programmatic thinking was not entirely lacking in the United States, but it was throttled by the given forms of the labor movement. In many trade unions there was a formal ban on any political discussion, on the grounds that it would prove divisive. The largest working-class organization, the Noble Order of the Knights of Labor, had a similar ban. The Knights of Labor only emerged from clandestinity in 1881 and never entirely shook off its roots as a secret society. Security threats distracted them from public debate of their objectives. Terence Powderley, the Knights' leader, was intensely hostile to foreign-born doctrinaires and strove to exclude or neutralize them. The unions and the Knights made efforts to organize African American and female workers but had no discussion of how to campaign for respect for their rights.[147]

Engels's text was most likely to be read by the members of the Socialist Labor Party, but he did not go far enough in pressing them to become relevant to US conditions. His insistence that the US labor party would have to commit itself to public ownership of the railways and steel was timely—and if it had been heeded by some progressive coalition it might have averted the disaster awaiting these industries in the mid to late twentieth century. His brief list should have included the banks, since they were critical to industry and agriculture. His call for the nationalization of land short-circuited the tangled problems of the county's three million farmers and four million tenants and laborers. By the time of the 1870 census there were 4.9 million wage earners, some of them white-collar, but the agricultural sector was still hugely important. The spread of the Farmers' Alliance in the 1880s and 1890s showed the huge scope there was for mobilizing indebted farmers and rack-rented tenants or sharecroppers, both black and white. Engels endorsed the idea that a US labor party should aim to win a majority in Congress and elect its candidate to the White House, but without an appeal to farmers, tenants, and rural laborers—and many others besides—this was a pipe dream. While Marx and Engels were quite right to shun many of the "Sentimental reformers" with their patented cure-alls, some of these individuals focused on critical issues of taxation and banking, or security and democracy. The milieu of labor reformers had identified and skillfully exploited the issue of the eight-hour day, a programmatic demand that had a mobilizing and universalist impulse (though enforcement was often difficult under US conditions).

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[146] Ibid., p. 14.

[147] Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream*, pp. 30–1.

The London International had cordial relations with Richard Hinton, a labor reformer and organizer of the Washington, D.C., Section. When the German Marxist leader Sorge sought to bring this section under his control, the General Council in London declared that this was going too far and that the Washington Section should run its own affairs. This section refused to back Sorge's expulsion of Section 12. The British-born Hinton was a former companion of John Brown's and officer of the First Kansas Colored Regiment, and he was fascinated by Edward Kellogg's plan for a network of public banks and Osborn Ward's proposals for cooperative agriculture and industry. In late-nineteenth-century conditions the smallholder was on a hiding to nothing—cooperatives with some public support could have made a lot of sense. Hinton's section included many civil servants, who would actually have to implement any massive program of nationalization. They were probably aware that the country only had 60,000 civil servants and any socialist plan must stimulate local publicly or socially owned enterprises and bottom-up initiatives.[148] Hinton was later to be associated with Eugene Debs's Socialist Party, as editor of its magazine.

In his survey Engels developed a very polite critique of the ideas of Henry George, even conceding that the land tax might have some role. Another radical taxation proposal that merited examination was Schuyler Colfax's idea (mentioned above) of a levy on all shareholding capital.[149] Finally, there was the issue of Lincoln's very unfinished revolution in the American South. Prior to the triumph of the ultraracists in 1900 there were several movements which showed that white and black farmers and laborers could support the same goals; these included the Readjusters movement, which gained power in Virginia in the late 1870s, the Farmers' Alliance, the "fusion" movement in North Carolina, and many branches of Populism. It is striking that these moments of interracial cooperation were targeted at the banks, the railroad corporations, and (in the case of Virginia) the large bondholders.[150] The coal mines of Tennessee also witnessed trade union battles that brought together black and white workers opposed to their employers' leasing of convict labor.[151]

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[148] Montgomery, *Beyond Equality*, pp. 387–477.

[149] Brownlee, *Federal Taxation*, p. 26.

The years 1886–96 witnessed the rise and fall of the People's Party, mounting the most serious third party challenge to the post–Civil War US political regime. The Populist movement was born out of bitterness at the depressed condition of farming and at the venality of Wormley House politics. Farmers in all parts of the Union, but most particularly in the Midwest and South, called on the Federal and state authorities to come to the aid of farmers devastated by low prices, high freight rates and expensive credit. Among the demands launched by the movement were nationalization of the railroads, the coining of silver and the setting up of "sub-treasuries" at state and federal level which would serve as marketing boards for the main cash crops. The farmers' produce would be held in public warehouses in each county; against this collateral they would be able to take out publicly-guaranteed, low interest loans. The People's Party proved attractive enough to elect some Senators and Governors, and scores of state level legislators. It did particularly well in the South, especially where it reached tacit agreements with the Republican party to combine forces against the dominant Democrats.The party's standard bearers were white but it received significant black support, partly thanks to tactical deals with the Republicans. The Democratic party responded with alarm and ferocity to Populist success, on the one hand adopting some of its more eye-catching proposals (e.g. monetizing silver in order to avoid "crucifying mankind on a cross of gold") and on the other unleashing a campaign of physical intimidation against Southern Populists (in the Georgia campaign in 1892 fifteen men were killed because of their politics). Carl Degler suggests that the Democrat leaders saw the Populist challenge as a "second Reconstruction" and were determined to stamp it out.[152] The defeat of the Southern Populists was accompanied by a further tightening of racial oppression and the consolidation of the Democrats as the unquestioned ruling party of the South. The Populists did try to reach out to the urban workers. They supported two policies cherished by organized labor—the eight hour agitation and opposition to the leasing of convicts to private employers. A group of Populists wanted Eugene Debs, the labor organizer, to become the party's presidential candidate in the 1896 election but he declined. The Populists did not challenge the racial order and were easily deterred from coming to the defense of blacks. Their leaders sometimes couched their appeals in a stridently Protestant idiom that did not appeal to Catholics. The party's most radical proposal was for the "sub-treasury" scheme but key leaders kept their distance from this. The rise and fall of the Populists showed that the idea of a Farmer-Labor party was not just an ideological figment but it also demonstrated the resilience of the reigning political regime.[153]

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[150] Evans, *Open Wound*, pp. 175–87.

[151] Karen Shapiro, *A New South Rebellion, 1871–1896*, Chapel Hill 1998.

In private correspondence Engels had a poor view of the theoretical grasp of the American Marxists and socialists. However, Engels was hugely impressed by the anthropological studies of Lewis Henry Morgan and Marx took seriously Henry Carey's economic writings. Within a little more or less than a decade of Engels's death, three outstanding works appeared that would very likely have improved his view of critical thought in the United States: Louis Boudin, *The Theoretical System of Karl Marx* (1907); Thorsten Veblen, *The Theory of Business Enterprise* (1904); and W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903).

The eruption of titanic class struggles also had an impact on currents in US intellectual life far removed from Marxism. Eugene Debs's American Railway Union (ARU) broke with the caution of craft unionism and tried to organize the entire railroad industry. In 1892 the ARU forced major concessions from the Northern Union railroad, and its membership grew to 150,000. However, when the ARU showed that it could paralyze one half of the entire rail network, the administration of Grover Cleveland stepped in to break the strike through injunctions and imprisonments. A conversation with an ARU picket had an electrifying impact on the philosopher John Dewey: "My nerves were more thrilled than they had been for years; I felt as if I had better resign my job teaching and follow him round till I got into life. One lost all sense of the right and wrong of things in admiration of his absolute, almost fanatic, sincerity and earnestness, and in admiration of the magnificent combination that was going on. Simply as an aesthetic matter, I don't believe the world has been but few times such a spectacle of magnificent union of men about a common interest, as this strike evinces…The govt is evidently going to take a hand in and the men will be beaten almost to a certainty—but it's a great thing and the beginning of greater."[154]

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[152] Carl Degler, *The Other South: Southern Dissenters in the Nineteenth Century*, Boston 1982, pp. 316–70.

[153] See Lawrence Goodwyn, *Democratic Promise: The Populist Movement in America*, New York 1976; Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion*, Ithaca 1998; Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, London 2005, pp. 200–08; Robert McMath, *American Populism: a Social History, 1877–98*, London 1990.

Eugene Debs was arrested for defying the government injunction, and read Marx's work in jail. Marx's ideas were themselves beginning to influence the culture of US radicalism, just as they were also, in their turn, shaped by the American experience of robber baron capitalism and desperate class struggle. Marx's dark vision clearly supplies the central themes of Jack London's extraordinarily powerful novel *The Iron Heel*, a book read by millions in a large number of languages—and which many claimed had changed their lives. The history of the United States in the Gilded Age had resonated with such epic class struggles that they fleshed out the social imaginary of socialists and other radicals, not just in North America but also in Europe and far beyond—Latin America, Asia, and Africa. The New World had always tapped into European utopian longings, sometimes accompanied by dystopian fears. The United States of the great capitalist trusts and their Congressional marionettes offered an awesome spectacle—but so did the resistance of US workers and farmers. The international day of the working class, May 1, after all, memorializes US workers—the Haymarket martyrs of May 1886. So just as the US capitalist, with his top hat and cigar, typified the boss class, so the US workingman, with his shirt and jeans or overalls, became the image of the proletarian (and Lucy Parsons, Mother Jones, and "Rosie the Riveter" supplied his female counterpart). The set-piece battles in industrial America between the two sides were typically on a larger scale than European industrial disputes. There is, of course, irony in the fact that the iconic US worker was ultimately defeated or contained, while organized labor in Europe and the antipodes secured representation and even some social gains.

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[154] Menand, *The Metaphysical Club*, p. 295; see also Archer, *Why Is There No Labor Party in the United States?*, pp. 112–42.

Albert Parsons, the Haymarket martyr, and his wife, Lucy Parsons, who did so much to defend the memory of her husband and his colleagues, had both participated in the Internationalist movement of the 1870s. They first met in Texas. Albert had volunteered for the Confederate army at the age of 13, but later came to apologize for this. Because of his military experience, he was made colonel of a militia regiment formed to defend Reconstruction. Lucy Parsons was a woman of mixed race (with indigenous, African and European forbears), who may have been born a slave. They moved to Chicago in the mid-1870s, where they were at first active as socialist agitators in the International Working People's Association (IWPA), which saw itself first as a branch of the International and later were self-described anarchists. They were strongly committed to the idea that the workers needed to emancipate themselves. They were subsequently associated with a double attempt to radicalize the program and method of the trade unions. They insisted that the eight-hour day should mean "eight for ten," that is, ten hours' pay for eight hours' work, or an eight-hour day with no loss of pay. This way of shaping the demand had not always been so sharply pursued before. They also propagated the idea that workers should support one another's struggles with boycotts and sympathy strikes.

Albert Parsons was a gifted orator and journalist, but he also assisted in the formation of a workers' militia that would protect political meetings and demonstrations. The Chicago businessmen had already formed their own militia, equipped with carbines and a Gatling gun. However, the famous Haymarket massacre involved neither of these formations. The workers' rally was unarmed and unprotected. An individual, perhaps a provocateur, threw a bomb, and four policemen were killed in the resulting melee. Albert and Lucy, who were unarmed, had taken their children to the rally. The Chicago police responded to the bomb throwing by indiscriminate shooting, killing perhaps a dozen and may have caused some of their own casualties. The anarchist and socialist movement had rhetorically posed the question of revolutionary violence without clearly deciding and explaining the circumstances that might require and justify it.

The eight-hour movement in Chicago had huge support in May 1886, but that support was disoriented by the carefully orchestrated media hysteria claiming an anarchist terror plot. The subsequent trial of the supposed ringleaders of an armed uprising was a judicial lynching rather than a legal process—as the pardons later issued to those who had been imprisoned (rather than hanged) acknowledged and documented. The issuing of this pardon just eight years after the trial illustrates an interesting aspect of the Chicago anarchists: namely, that they did not abstain from electoral politics. Mayor Harrison testified in favor of Albert Parsons, and Parsons urged his followers to vote for Harrison—who lost in 1886 but was reelected in 1893. When Peter Altgelt, the Governor of Illinois, issued pardons to the surviving Haymarket leaders in 1892, he did not suffer electorally.[155] Though generally scornful of politicians, Lucy Parsons expressed her high regard for Altgelt's courage.

Lucy Parsons was a dedicated and accomplished orator, agitator, and organizer, roles that she sustained for half a century after her husband was hanged. She had a special gift for encapsulating the syndicalist worldview. From today's perspective, her identity as a woman and a person of mixed ancestry—Mexican, white and black—makes her a symbol of multiculturalism. However, her own self-conception stressed her identity as a neo-abolitionist exposing "wage slavery." In the 1890s she launched a journal called *The Liberator*, a deliberate echo of William Lloyd Garrison's famous abolitionist magazine. She expressed her horror at Southern lynchings and other attacks on African Americans. But she believed that it was class, not color, that defined the exploited and the oppressed. She urged the Southern blacks to organize and resist without fully registering that white violence was designed to make this impossible. Her anarchist or syndicalist beliefs led her to warn Southern blacks that neither preachers nor politicians would help them. She became a member of Industrial Workers of the World, the syndicalist organization, at its founding conference in Chicago in 1905. For her, the redemptive power of "One Big Union" was needed to crush and scatter the bosses, whether the latter owned factories, railroads, or plantations.[156]

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[155] James Green, *Death in the Haymarket: A Story of Chicago, the First Labor Movement and the Bombing that Divided America*, New York 2006.

Another product of Reconstruction and the International milieu was Timothy Thomas Fortune, a New York journalist who had been born a slave in Florida and freed by the Emancipation Proclamation and who later served as an aide to his father, a Radical Republican. Fortune's writings, especially *White and Black: Land, Labor and Politics in the South* (1884), analyzed the racial formation of class in the postbellum South. Fortune saw racial and class privilege as mutually supportive. His focus on the historic confrontation between "labor and capital" betrayed some Marxist influence, but he was also founder of the Afro-American League, one of the successors to the Black Convention Movement of 1830–70 and a precursor of the NAACP.[157] In the 1890s he worked for Booker T. Washington and advocated measures favorable to black business and a black middle class.

Both color-blindness and conscious racism prevented US labor from taking up the cause of the victims of white oppression in the South. Employers were often able to exploit and foster racial antagonism. Booker T. Washington sometimes urged employers to take on black employees with the argument that they would be good workers who would spurn the troublemakers. Blinkered as they were, the more ideological wing of German American socialism never recanted their commitment to human unity. Even a writer as critical of the German American Marxists as Messer-Kruse concedes that they "never renounced their devotion to the principle of racial equality,"[158] something which cannot be said of several traditions of Anglo-American socialism.[159]

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[156] Lucy Parsons, *Freedom Equality and Solidarity: Writings, and Speeches, 1878–1937*, edited and introduced by Gale Ahrens, Chicago 2004.

[157] T. Thomas Fortune, "Labor and Capital," in *Let Nobody Turn Us Around*, Manning Marable and Leith Mullings, eds., pp. 143–6.

If the nonappearance of a US labor party marked a critical defeat for Karl Marx, the failure of the Republican Party to emerge from Reconstruction and its sequel as a party of bourgeois rectitude and reform registered a spectacular defeat for Lincoln's hopes for his party and country. After dominating Washington for half a century the Republicans were the party of cartels and corruption. The Democrats were also no slouches when it came to ingratiating themselves with Big Money or persecuting social reformers. Both parties failed US capitalism by offering neither honest stewardship nor the regulatory institutions that might have checked abuse and underpinned progressive development. Instead, as Matthew Josephson showed so vividly, venal "politicos" became the handmaidens of the new corporations and the enemies of social improvement.[160] Moreover, no event so well exhibited the vices of the US political class as the Wormley House deal that ended Reconstruction in 1877. The violence of Southern whites was rewarded, the freedmen and women were abandoned, the wishes of the voters were flouted, and railroad contracts were forwarded or thwarted. The participants in these proceedings sought to camouflage their sordid character by claiming that "reform" would be promoted, but this had become a code word for spending cuts, not integrity and authority in Federal administration. The freed people were left on their own, while Republican placemen forced to flee the South were found jobs in the Treasury Department in Washington.[161]

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[158] Messer-Kruse, *Yankee International*, p. 188.

[159] Whatever their other failings, twentieth-century American Marxists, white as well as black, were to make an outstanding contribution to the battle against white racism and for civil rights. No other political current has such an honorable and courageous record. It is to this tradition and a Marxist US New Left that we owe the term *political correctness.* Despite occasional excesses, PC has nevertheless proved to be a hugely progressive force, establishing a basic etiquette of respect and collaboration. Mocked though it sometimes is, its achievement is a noble one. This having been said, Marx—at least in his private correspondence—furnishes a field day for PC critics, though they should notice that his negative characterizations are bestowed impartially on Germans and French, Yankees and South Americans, blacks and Jews. Cherishing universalism, he is excessively hostile to any type of partiality.

[160] Matthew Josephson, *The Politicos*, New York 1963.

But the real problem was that in each recession many banks failed and even in good times the service offered to farmers was miserably inadequate. The modest resources available to the Federal government were also a significant factor in the failure of Reconstruction, as we have seen. Abraham Lincoln gave considerable latitude to his treasury secretaries, but by inclination he favored private sector solutions and was wary of giving too much scope to publicly controlled entities. If the US postbellum record was much weaker than it should have been, the decisions taken—and not taken—by his administration help to explain this. However, it was the retreat from Reconstruction, the granting of virtual autonomy to Southern Dixiecrats, and the blunting of Federal powers by the Supreme Court that gave free rein to robber baron capitalism.

Marx and Engels themselves were often scornful of Republican leaders, including Lincoln, and generally distrusted the machinations of large states. But, with occasional misgivings, they had placed a wager that the Civil War would lead to slave emancipation, and that emancipation would in its turn pose the issue of votes for the freedmen. They further predicted more and larger labor struggles. Their predictions were borne out, although the new unions were eventually contained or defeated. The American Federation of Labor was founded, but it turned its back on the formation of a labor party. The example and watchwords of the Internationalists and of the Haymarket martyrs helped to encourage worker resistance in Shanghai, Petrograd, Calcutta, Havana, Turin, Barcelona, Berlin, Vienna, and Glasgow. In the years before the outbreak of the great slaughter in 1914, socialists, anarchists, and syndicalists worked to oppose imperial war, and to foster internationalism and class solidarity. And though they underestimated the power of nationalism and militarism, they were right about imperialism.

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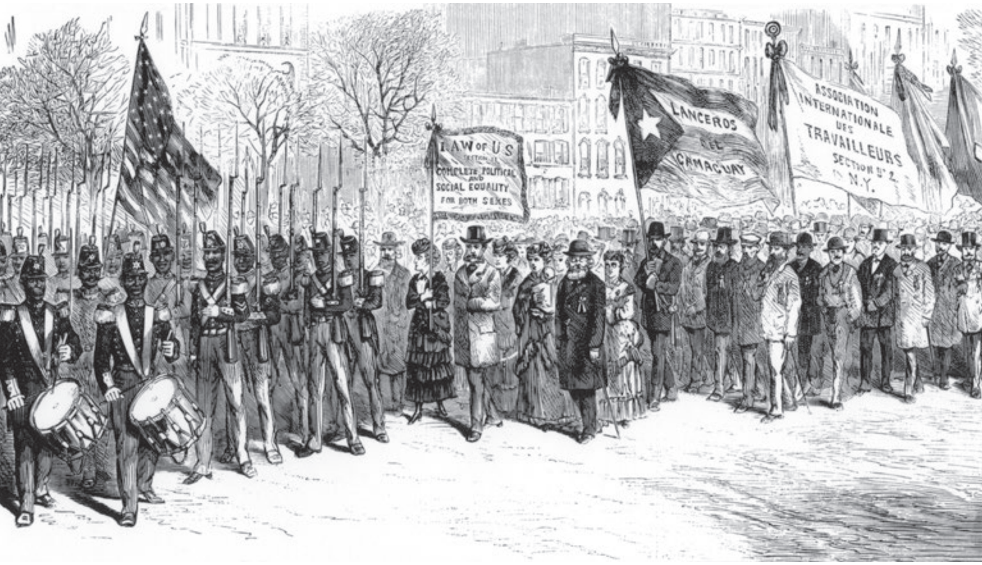
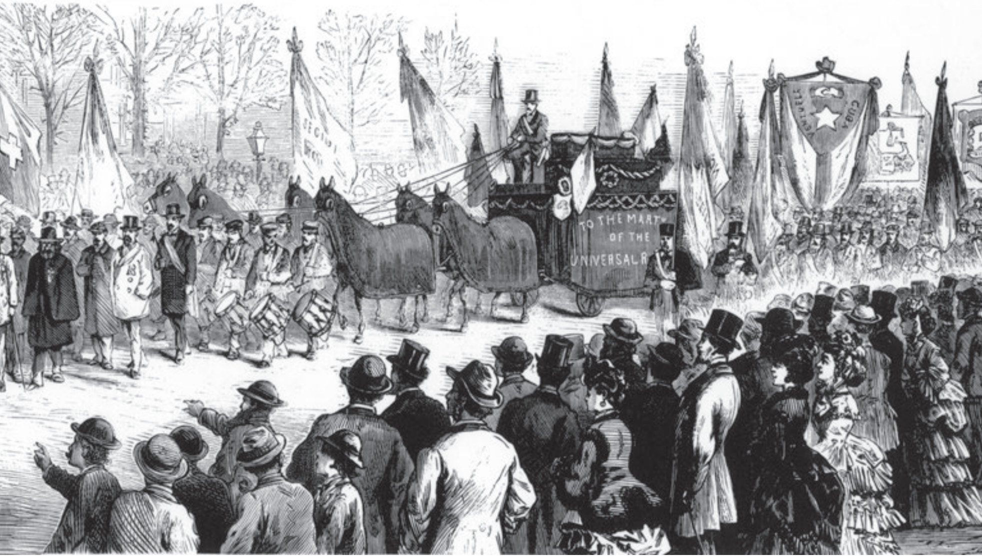
[161] Foner, *Reconstruction*, pp. 580–1; Josephson, *Politicos*, pp. 234–6.


I.A.W. of U.S.
COMPLETE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL EQUALITY FOR BOTH SEXES
LANCEROS DEL CAMAGUAY
ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES TRAVAILLEURS SECTION No 2. N.Y.

New York City IWA parade to commemorate martyrs of the Paris Commune, December 17, 1871 (original woodcut from Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, *New York 1872).*

MARX IN THE US?

It remains only to address a final problem. Karl Marx's conception of history bequeathed a theoretical puzzle to later historical materialists, namely, what is the role of the individual in history? Such powerful writers and thinkers as Georgi Plekhanov, Isaac Deutscher, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Ernest Mandel debated the topic, often drawing attention to the fact that even deep-laid historical processes often depend on highly personal capacities and decisions. Considering the remarkable sequence of events I have surveyed here, it is clear that some individuals are so placed that they can influence the course of history. Lincoln did so with the Emancipation Proclamation. He thereby started a revolution, but he did not live to finish it. The freed people, the former abolitionists of whatever race, sex, or class had to contend with the consequences—angry white men in the South and greedy businessmen in the North. Through



the IWA, Karl Marx had an impact on a generation of American workers and radicals, but despite heroic battles to do so, the IWA proved unable to build a political workers' movement to compare with those in Europe and the antipodes.

This leads me to a final thought. What would have happened if Marx or Engels had themselves sailed from England to make their home in New York or Chicago? It would have provoked a sensation. Marx would have earned good fees as a lecturer, and his family, including his daughters and sons-in-law, would very likely have flourished. Engels was hugely invigorated by the trip he did make to New York and Boston in 1887, but he declined to give public lectures there, and he did not return.[162]

But the truly tantalizing issue is whether they would have been able to find a more promising path for the American left. Obviously, there is no real way of knowing. But if their conduct in Germany in 1848–9, or in the 1860s, is any guide, Marx and Engels would have strongly opposed any policy of subordinating the real movement to some socialist shibboleth. They might well have helped to consolidate the International's achievements. They would very likely have favored opening the unions to the generality of workers and they would surely have given exceptional importance to curbing the freelance violence of the Southern "rifle clubs" and Northern company goons. Marx would have urged workers to develop their own organizations. But, just as he saw the importance of the slavery issue at the start of the Civil War, so he would surely have focused on "winning the battle of democracy," securing the basic rights of the producers—including the freedmen—in all sections as preparation for an ensuing social revolution. Eschewing reactionary socialism or the counterfeit anti-imperialism of some Southern slaveholders, Marx and Engels would have insisted that only the socialization of the great cartels and financial groups could enable the producers and their social allies to confront the challenges of modern society and to aspire to a society in which the free development of each is the precondition for the free development of all.

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[162] Eleanor Marx and Edward Aveling also visited the US in 1887, and their combined lecture tour was very well received by the public. However, the visit was to be marred by controversies over the expenses claimed by Aveling. See Yvonne Kapp, *Eleanor Marx*, volume 2, London 1976, pp. 141–91.

Abraham Lincoln

First Inaugural Address

Fellow Citizens of the United States:

In compliance with a custom as old as the Government itself, I appear before you to address you briefly and to take in your presence the oath prescribed by the Constitution of the United States to be taken by the President before he enters on the execution of this office.

I do not consider it necessary at present for me to discuss those matters of administration about which there is no special anxiety or excitement.

Apprehension seems to exist among the people of the Southern States that by the accession of a Republican Administration their property and their peace and personal security are to be endangered. There has never been any reasonable cause for such apprehension. Indeed, the most ample evidence to the contrary has all the while existed and been open to their inspection. It is found in nearly all the published speeches of him who now addresses you. I do but quote from one of those speeches when I declare that I have no purpose directly or indirectly to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so.

Those who nominated and elected me did so with full knowledge that I had made this and many similar declarations and had never recanted them; and more than this, they placed in the platform for my acceptance, and as a law to themselves and to me, the clear and emphatic resolution which I now read:

> Resolved, that the maintenance inviolate of the rights of the States, and especially the right of each State to order and control its own domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively, is essential to that balance of power on which the perfection and endurance of our political fabric depend, and we denounce the lawless invasion by armed force of the soil of any State or Territory, no matter what pretext, as among the gravest of crimes.

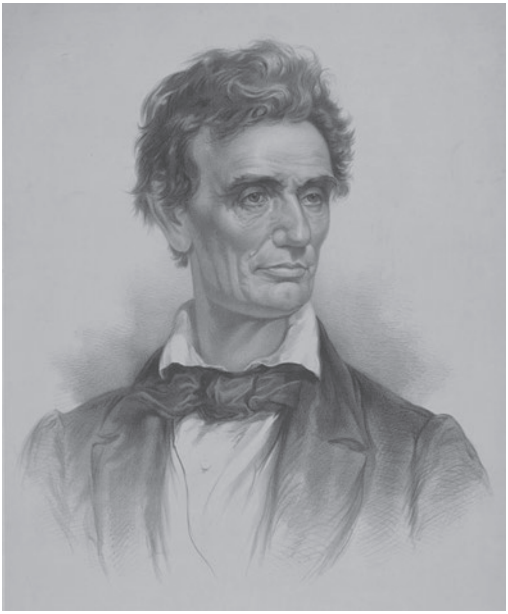
I now reiterate these sentiments, and in doing so I only press upon the public attention the most conclusive evidence of which the case is susceptible that the property, peace, and security of no section are to be in any wise endangered by the now incoming Administration. I add, too, that all the protection which, consistently with the Constitution and the laws, can be given will be cheerfully given to all the States when lawfully demanded, for whatever cause—as cheerfully to one section as to another.

There is much controversy about the delivering up of fugitives from service or labor. The clause I now read is as plainly written in the Constitution as any other of its provisions:

No person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall in consequence of any law or regulation therein be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due.

It is scarcely questioned that this provision was intended by those who made it for the reclaiming of what we call fugitive slaves, and the intention of the lawgiver is the law. All members of Congress swear their support to the whole Constitution—to this provision as much as to any other. To the proposition, then, that slaves whose cases come within the terms of this clause "shall be delivered up" their oaths are unanimous. Now, if they would make the effort in good temper, could they not with nearly equal unanimity frame and pass a law by means of which to keep good that unanimous oath?

There is some difference of opinion whether this clause should be enforced by national or by State authority, but surely that difference is not a very material one. If the slave is to be surrendered, it can be of but little consequence to him or to others by which authority it is done. And should anyone in any case be content that his oath



Abraham Lincoln, 1860

shall go unkept on a merely unsubstantial controversy as to how it shall be kept?

Again: In any law upon this subject ought not all the safeguards of liberty known in civilized and humane jurisprudence to be introduced, so that a free man be not in any case surrendered as a slave? And might it not be well at the same time to provide by law for the enforcement of that clause in the Constitution which guarantees that "the citizens of each State shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States"?

I take the official oath today with no mental reservations and with no purpose to construe the Constitution or laws by any hypercritical rules; and while I do not choose now to specify particular acts of Congress as proper to be enforced, I do suggest that it will be much safer for all, both in official and private stations, to conform to and abide by all those acts which stand unrepealed than to violate any of them trusting to find impunity in having them held to be unconstitutional.

It is seventy-two years since the first inauguration of a President under our National Constitution. During that period fifteen different and greatly distinguished citizens have in succession administered the executive branch of the Government. They have conducted it through many perils, and generally with great success. Yet, with all this scope of precedent, I now enter upon the same task for the brief constitutional term of four years under great and peculiar difficulty. A disruption of the Federal Union, heretofore only menaced, is now formidably attempted.

I hold that in contemplation of universal law and of the Constitution the Union of these States is perpetual. Perpetuity is implied, if not expressed, in the fundamental law of all national governments. It is safe to assert that no government proper ever had a provision in its organic law for its own termination. Continue to execute all the express provisions of our National Constitution, and the Union will endure forever, it being impossible to destroy it except by some action not provided for in the instrument itself.

Again: If the United States be not a government proper, but an association of States in the nature of contract merely, can it, as a contract, be peaceably unmade by less than all the parties who made it? One party to a contract may violate it—break it, so to speak—but does it not require all to lawfully rescind it?

Descending from these general principles, we find the proposition that in legal contemplation the Union is perpetual confirmed by the history of the Union itself. The Union is much older than the Constitution. It was formed, in fact, by the Articles of Association in 1774. It was matured and continued by the Declaration of Independence in 1776. It was further matured, and the faith of all the then thirteen States expressly plighted and engaged that it should be perpetual, by the Articles of Confederation in 1778. And finally, in 1787, one of the declared objects for ordaining and establishing the Constitution was "to form a more perfect Union."

But if destruction of the Union by one or by a part only of the States be lawfully possible, the Union is less perfect than before the Constitution, having lost the vital element of perpetuity.

It follows from these views that no State upon its own mere motion can lawfully get out of the Union; that resolves and ordinances to that effect are legally void; and that acts of violence within any State or States against the authority of the United States are insurrectionary or revolutionary, according to circumstances.

I therefore consider that in view of the Constitution and the laws the Union is unbroken, and to the extent of my ability I shall take care, as the Constitution itself expressly enjoins upon me, that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all the States. Doing this I deem to be only a simple duty on my part, and I shall perform it so far as practicable unless my rightful masters, the American people, shall withhold the requisite means or in some authoritative manner direct the contrary. I trust this will not be regarded as a menace, but only as the declared purpose of the Union that it will constitutionally defend and maintain itself.

In doing this there needs to be no bloodshed or violence, and there shall be none unless it be forced upon the national authority. The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the Government and to collect the duties and imposts; but beyond what may be necessary for these objects, there will be no invasion, no using of force against or among the people anywhere. Where hostility to the United States in any interior locality shall be so great and universal as to prevent competent resident citizens from holding the Federal offices, there will be no attempt to force obnoxious strangers among the people for that object. While the strict legal right may exist in the Government to enforce the exercise of these offices, the attempt to do so would be so irritating and so nearly impracticable withal that I deem it better to forego for the time the uses of such offices.

The mails, unless repelled, will continue to be furnished in all parts of the Union. So far as possible the people everywhere shall have that sense of perfect security which is most favorable to calm thought and reflection. The course here indicated will be followed unless current events and experience shall show a modification or change to be proper, and in every case and exigency my best discretion will be exercised, according to circumstances actually existing and with a view and a hope of a peaceful solution of the national troubles and the restoration of fraternal sympathies and affections.

That there are persons in one section or another who seek to destroy the Union at all events and are glad of any pretext to do it I will neither affirm nor deny, but if there be such, I need address no word to them. To those, however, who really love the Union may I not speak?

Before entering upon so grave a matter as the destruction of our national fabric, with all its benefits, its memories, and its hopes, would it not be wise to ascertain precisely why we do it? Will you hazard so desperate a step while there is any possibility that any portion of the ills you fly from have no real existence? Will you, while the certain ills you fly to are greater than all the real ones you fly from, will you risk the commission of so fearful a mistake?

All profess to be content in the Union if all constitutional rights can be maintained. Is it true, then, that any right plainly written in the Constitution has been denied? I think not. Happily, the human mind is so constituted that no party can reach to the audacity of doing this. Think, if you can, of a single instance in which a plainly written provision of the Constitution has ever been denied. If by the mere force of numbers a majority should deprive a minority of any clearly written constitutional right, it might in a moral point of view justify revolution—certainly would if such right were a vital one. But such is not our case. All the vital rights of minorities and of individuals are so plainly assured to them by affirmations and negations, guarantees and prohibitions in the Constitution that controversies never arise concerning them. But no organic law can ever be framed with a provision specifically applicable to every question which may occur in practical administration. No foresight can anticipate nor any document of reasonable length contain express provisions for all possible questions. Shall fugitives from labor be surrendered by national or by State authority? The Constitution does not expressly say. May Congress prohibit slavery in the Territories? The Constitution does not expressly say. Must Congress protect slavery in the Territories? The Constitution does not expressly say.

From questions of this class spring all our constitutional controversies, and we divide upon them into majorities and minorities. If the minority will not acquiesce, the majority must, or the Government must cease. There is no other alternative, for continuing the Government is acquiescence on one side or the other. If a minority in such case will secede rather than acquiesce, they make a precedent which in turn will divide and ruin them, for a minority of their own will secede from them whenever a majority refuses to be controlled by such minority. For instance, why may not any portion of a new confederacy a year or two hence arbitrarily secede again, precisely as portions of the present Union now claim to secede from it? All who cherish disunion sentiments are now being educated to the exact temper of doing this.

Is there such perfect identity of interests among the States to compose a new union as to produce harmony only and prevent renewed secession?

Plainly the central idea of secession is the essence of anarchy. A majority held in restraint by constitutional checks and limitations and always changing easily with deliberate changes of popular opinions and sentiments is the only true sovereign of a free people. Whoever rejects it does of necessity fly to anarchy or to despotism. Unanimity is impossible. The rule of a minority, as a permanent arrangement, is wholly inadmissible; so that, rejecting the majority principle, anarchy or despotism in some form is all that is left.

I do not forget the position assumed by some that constitutional questions are to be decided by the Supreme Court, nor do I deny that such decisions must be binding in any case upon the parties to a suit as to the object of that suit, while they are also entitled to very high respect and consideration in all parallel cases by all other departments of the Government. And while it is obviously possible that such decision may be erroneous in any given case, still the evil effect following it, being limited to that particular case, with the chance that it may be overruled and never become a precedent for other cases, can better be borne than could the evils of a different practice. At the same time, the candid citizen must confess that if the policy of the Government upon vital questions affecting the whole people is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court, the instant they are made in ordinary litigation between parties in personal actions, the people will have ceased to be their own rulers, having to that extent practically resigned their Government into the hands of that eminent tribunal. Nor is there in this view any assault upon the court or the judges. It is a duty from which they may not shrink to decide cases properly brought before them, and it is no fault of theirs if others seek to turn their decisions to political purposes.

One section of our country believes slavery is right and ought to be extended, while the other believes it is wrong and ought not to be extended. This is the only substantial dispute. The fugitive-slave clause of the Constitution and the law for the suppression of the foreign slave trade are each as well enforced, perhaps, as any law can ever be in a community where the moral sense of the people imperfectly supports the law itself. The great body of the people abide by the dry legal obligation in both cases, and a few break over in each. This, I think, cannot be perfectly cured, and it would be worse in both cases after the separation of the sections than before. The foreign slave trade, now imperfectly suppressed, would be ultimately revived without restriction in one section, while fugitive slaves, now only partially surrendered, would not be surrendered at all by the other.

Physically speaking, we cannot separate. We cannot remove our respective sections from each other nor build an impassable wall between them. A husband and wife may be divorced and go out of the presence and beyond the reach of each other, but the different parts of our country cannot do this. They cannot but remain face to face, and intercourse, either amicable or hostile, must continue between them. Is it possible, then, to make that intercourse more advantageous or more satisfactory after separation than before? Can aliens make treaties easier than friends can make laws? Can treaties be more faithfully enforced between aliens than laws can among friends? Suppose you go to war: you cannot fight always, and when, after much loss on both sides and no gain on either, you cease fighting, the identical old questions, as to terms of intercourse, are again upon you.

This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing Government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it. I cannot be ignorant of the fact that many worthy and patriotic citizens are desirous of having the National Constitution amended. While I make no recommendation of amendments, I fully recognize the rightful authority of the people over the whole subject, to be exercised in either of the modes prescribed in the instrument itself, and I should, under existing circumstances, favor rather than oppose a fair opportunity being afforded the people to act upon it. I will venture to add that to me the convention mode seems preferable, in that it allows amendments to originate with the people themselves, instead of only permitting them to take or reject propositions originated by others, not especially chosen for the purpose, and which might not be precisely such as they would wish to either accept or refuse. I understand a proposed amendment to the Constitution—which amendment, however, I have not seen—has passed Congress, to the effect that the Federal Government shall never interfere with the domestic institutions of the States, including that of persons held to service. To avoid misconstruction of what I have said, I depart from my purpose not to speak of particular amendments so far as to say that, holding such a provision to now be implied constitutional law, I have no objection to its being made express and irrevocable.

The Chief Magistrate derives all his authority from the people, and they have referred none upon him to fix terms for the separation of the States. The people themselves can do this if also they choose, but the Executive as such has nothing to do with it. His duty is to administer the present Government as it came to his hands and to transmit it unimpaired by him to his successor.

Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? Is there any better or equal hope in the world? In our present differences, is either party without faith of being in the right? If the Almighty Ruler of Nations, with His eternal truth and justice, be on your side of the North, or on yours of the South, that truth and that justice will surely prevail by the judgment of this great tribunal of the American people.

By the frame of the Government under which we live this same people have wisely given their public servants but little power for mischief, and have with equal wisdom provided for the return of that little to their own hands at very short intervals. While the people retain their virtue and vigilance no Administration by any extreme of wickedness or folly can very seriously injure the Government in the short space of four years.

My countrymen, one and all, think calmly and well upon this whole subject. Nothing valuable can be lost by taking time. If there be an object to hurry any of you in hot haste to a step which you would never take deliberately, that object will be frustrated by taking time, but no good object can be frustrated by it. Such of you as are now dissatisfied still have the old Constitution unimpaired, and, on the sensitive point, the laws of your own framing under it, while the new Administration will have no immediate power, if it would, to change either. If it were admitted that you who are dissatisfied hold the right side in the dispute, there still is no single good reason for precipitate action. Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land are still competent to adjust in the best way all our present difficulty.

In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the Government, while I shall have the most solemn one to "preserve, protect, and defend it."

I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

March 4, 1861

Emancipation Proclamation

Whereas, on the twenty-second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:

> That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.
>
> That the Executive will, on the first day of January aforesaid, by proclamation designate the States and parts of States, if any, in which the people thereof, respectively, shall then be in rebellion against the United States; and the fact that any State, or the people thereof, shall on that day be, in good faith, represented in the Congress of the United States by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such State shall have participated, shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State, and the people thereof, are not then in rebellion against the United States.

Now, therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander in Chief of the

Army and Navy of the United States in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do on this first day of January in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days from the day first above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof respectively are this day in rebellion against the United States, the following, to wit:

> Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana (except the Parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James Ascension, Assumption, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the City of New Orleans), Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Ann, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth, and which excepted parts, are for the present, left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued).

And by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States, and parts of States, are, and henceforward shall be free; and that the Executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defense; and I recommend to them that in all cases when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

And I further declare and make known, that such persons of suitable condition will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this first day of January in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the eighty-seventh. By the President: ABRAHAM LINCOLN WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State.

January 1, 1863

Gettysburg Address

Fourscore and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us: that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.

November 19, 1863

Second Inaugural Address

Fellow Countrymen:

At this second appearing to take the oath of the Presidential office there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement somewhat in detail of a course to be pursued seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself, and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it; all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union and divide effects by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war, but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive, and the other would accept war rather than let it perish, and the war came.

One eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union but localized in the southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was somehow the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union even by war, while the Government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it. Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces, but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

March 4, 1865

Karl Marx

The North American Civil War

London, October 20, 1861

For months now, the leading London papers, both weekly and daily, have been repeating the same litany on the American Civil War. While they insult the free states of the North, they anxiously defend themselves against the suspicion of sympathizing with the slave states of the South. In fact, they continually write two articles: one in which they attack the North, another in which they excuse their attacks on the North. *Qui s'excuse, s'accuse*.

Their extenuating arguments are basically as follow. The war between North and South is a tariff war. Furthermore, the war is not being fought over any issue of principle; it is not concerned with the question of slavery but in fact centers on the North's lust for sovereignty. In the final analysis, even if justice is on the side of the North, does it not remain a futile endeavor to subjugate eight million Anglo-Saxons by force! Would not a separation from the South release the North from all connection with Negro slavery and assure to it, with its 20 million inhabitants and its vast territory, a higher level of development up to now scarcely dreamed of? Should the North not then welcome secession as a happy event, instead of wanting to crush it by means of a bloody and futile civil war?

Let us examine point by point the case made out by the English press.

The war between North and South—so runs the first excuse—is merely a tariff war, a war between a protectionist system and a free-trade system, and England, of course, is on the side of free trade. Is the slave owner to enjoy the fruits of slave labor to the full, or is he to be cheated of part of these fruits by the Northern protectionists? This is the question at issue in the war. It was reserved for the *Times* to make this brilliant discovery; the *Economist*, *Examiner*, *Saturday Review* and the like have elaborated on the same theme. It is characteristic that this discovery was made not in Charleston, but in London. In America everyone knew, of course, that between 1846 and 1861 a system of free trade prevailed and that Representative Morrill only carried his protectionist tariff through Congress after the rebellion had already broken out. Secession did not take place, therefore, because Congress had passed the Morrill tariff; at most, the Morrill tariff was passed by Congress because secession had taken place. To be sure, when South Carolina had its first attack of secessionism, in 1832, the protectionist tariff of 1828 served as a pretext; but that a pretext is all it was is shown by a statement made by General Jackson. This time, however, the old pretext has in fact not been repeated. In the secession Congress at Montgomery,[1] every mention of the tariff question was avoided, because in Louisiana, one of the most influential Southern states, the cultivation of sugar is based entirely on protection.

But, the London press pleads further, the war in the United States is nothing but a war aimed at preserving the Union by force. The Yankees cannot make up their minds to strike off fifteen stars from their banner.[2] They want to cut a colossal figure on the world stage. Indeed, it would be quite a different matter if the war were being fought in order to abolish slavery. But the slavery question, as the *Saturday Review*, among others, categorically declares, has absolutely nothing to do with this war.

It must be remembered above all that the war was started not by the North but by the South. The North is on the defensive. For months it had quietly stood by and watched while the secessionists took possession of forts, arsenals, shipyards, customs houses, pay offices, ships, and stores of arms belonging to the Union, insulted

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[1] On February 4, 1861, the Congress of Montgomery founded the Confederate States of America, with eleven member states under the presidency of Jefferson Davis.

[2] This total includes the contested border states that the South also claimed.

Karl Marx, 1849

its flag, and took Northern troops prisoner. The secessionists finally decided to force the Union government out of its passive stance by means of a blatant act of war; *for no other reason than this* they proceeded to bombard Fort Sumter near Charleston. On April 11 [1861] their General Beauregard had learned in a meeting with Major Anderson, the commander of Fort Sumter, that the fort only had rations for three more days and that it would therefore have to be surrendered peacefully after this period. In order to forestall this peaceful surrender the secessionists opened the bombardment early the next morning (April 12), bringing about the fall of the place after a few hours. Hardly had this news been telegraphed to Montgomery, the seat of the secession Congress, when War Minister Walker declared publicly, in the name of the new Confederacy, "No man can say where *the war opened today* will end." At the same time he prophesied that before the first of May the flag of the Southern Confederacy would wave from the dome of the old Capitol in Washington and within a short time perhaps also from the Faneuil

Hall in Boston. Only then did Lincoln issue the proclamation summoning 75,000 men to protect the Union. The bombardment of Fort Sumter cut off the only possible constitutional way out: the summoning of a general convention of the American people, as Lincoln had proposed in his inaugural address. As it was, Lincoln was left with the choice of fleeing from Washington, evacuating Maryland and Delaware, surrendering Kentucky, Missouri, and Virginia, or of answering war with war.

The question as to the principle underlying the American Civil War is answered by the battle slogan with which the South broke the peace. [Alexander H.] Stephens, the Vice President of the Southern Confederacy, declared in the secession Congress that what fundamentally distinguished the constitution recently hatched in Montgomery from that of Washington and Jefferson was that slavery was now recognized for the first time as an institution good in itself and as the foundation of the whole political edifice, whereas the revolutionary fathers, men encumbered by the prejudices of the eighteenth century, had treated slavery as an evil imported from England and to be eradicated in the course of time. Another Southern matador, Mr. Spratt, declared, "For us it is a question of the foundation of a great slave republic." Thus if the North drew its sword only in defense of the Union, had not the South already declared that the continuance of slavery was no longer compatible with the continuance of the Union?

Just as the bombardment of Fort Sumter gave the signal for the opening of the war, the electoral victory of the Northern Republican party, Lincoln's election to the presidency, had given the signal for secession. Lincoln was elected on November 6, 1860. On November 8 the message was telegraphed from South Carolina, "Secession is regarded here as an accomplished fact"; on November 10, the Georgia legislature occupied itself with plans for secession, and on November 13 a special sitting of the Mississippi legislature was called to consider secession. But Lincoln's election was itself only the result of a split in the Democratic camp. During the election campaign the Northern Democrats concentrated their votes on Douglas, the Southern Democrats on [John C.] Breckinridge; the Republican party owed its victory to this split in the Democratic vote. How, on the one hand, did the Republican party achieve this dominant position in the North; how, on the other hand, did this division arise *within* the Democratic party, whose members, North and South, had operated in conjunction for more than half a century?

Buchanan's presidency[3] saw the control which the South had gradually usurped over the Union, as a result of its alliance with the Northern Democrats, reach its peak. The last Continental Congress of 1787 and the first constitutional Congress of 1789–90 had legally excluded slavery from all territories of the republic northwest of Ohio. (Territories are the colonies lying within the United States which have not yet achieved the population level laid down in the Constitution for the formation of autonomous states.) The so-called Missouri Compromise (1820), as a result of which Missouri entered the ranks of the United States as a slave-owning state, excluded slavery from all other territories north of 36° 30´ latitude and west of the Missouri [River]. As a result of this compromise the area of slavery was extended by several degrees of longitude while, on the other hand, quite definite geographical limits seemed to be placed on its future propagation. This geographical barrier was in turn torn down by the so-called Kansas-Nebraska Bill, whose author, Stephen A. Douglas, was at the time leader of the Northern Democrats. This bill, which passed both Houses of Congress, repealed the Missouri Compromise, placed slavery and freedom on an equal footing, enjoined the Union government to treat both with indifference, and left it to the sovereign people to decide whether slavery was to be introduced in a territory or not. Thus, for the first time in the history of the United States, every geographical and legal barrier in the way of an extension of slavery in the territories was removed. Under this new legislation the hitherto free territory of New Mexico, an area five times greater than New York State, was transformed into a slave territory, and the area of slavery was extended from the Mexican republic to latitude 38° north. In 1859 New Mexico was given a legal slave code which vies in barbarity with the statute books of Texas and Alabama. However, as the 1860 census shows, New Mexico does not yet have fifty slaves in a population of about 100,000. The South therefore only had to send over the border a few adventurers with some slaves and, with the help of the central government in Washington, get its officials and contractors to drum up a sham representative body in New Mexico, in order to impose slavery and the rule of the slaveholders on the territory.

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[3] James Buchanan was US president from 1857 to 1861.

However, this convenient method proved inapplicable in the other territories. The South, therefore, went one step further and appealed from Congress to the Supreme Court of the United States. This Supreme Court, which numbers nine judges, five of whom are Southerners, had long been the most amenable instrument of the slaveholders. In 1857, in the notorious Dred Scott case, it decided that every American citizen had the right to take with him into any territory any property recognized by the Constitution. The Constitution recognizes slaves as property and commits the Union government to the protection of this property. Consequently, on the basis of the Constitution, slaves could be forced by their owners to work in the territories, and thus every individual slaveholder was entitled to introduce slavery into territories hitherto free against the will of the majority of the settlers. The territorial legislatures were denied the right to exclude slavery, and Congress and the Union government were charged with the duty of protecting the pioneers of the slave system.

While the Missouri Compromise of 1820 had extended the geographical boundaries of slavery in the territories, and while the Kansas-Nebraska Bill of 1854 had eliminated all geographical boundaries and replaced them by a political barrier, the will of the majority of the settlers, the Supreme Court's decision of 1857 tore down even this political barrier and transformed all territories of the republic, present and future, from nurseries of free states into nurseries of slavery.

At the same time, under Buchanan's administration, the more severe law of 1850 on the extradition of fugitive slaves was ruthlessly carried out in the Northern states. It seemed to be the constitutional calling of the North to play slave-catcher for the Southern slaveholders. On the other hand, in order to hinder as far as possible the colonization of the territories by free settlers, the slaveholders' party frustrated all so-called free-soil measures, that is, measures intended to guarantee the settlers a fixed amount of uncultivated public land free of charge.

As in domestic policy, so also in the foreign policy of the United States the interests of the slaveholders served as the guiding star. Buchanan had in fact purchased the presidential office by issuing the Ostend Manifesto,[4] in which the acquisition of Cuba, whether by payment or by force of arms, is proclaimed as the great political task of the nation. Under his administration northern Mexico had already been divided up among American land speculators, who were impatiently awaiting the signal to fall upon Chihuahua, Coahuila, and Sonora. The incessant piratical filibusters against the Central American states were no less carried out under the direction of the White House in Washington.[5] Closely connected with this foreign policy, which was manifestly aimed at conquering new territory for the expansion of slavery and the rule of the slaveholders, was the *resumption of the slave trade*, secretly supported by the Union government. Stephen A. Douglas himself declared in the American Senate on August 20, 1859, that during the previous year more Negroes had been requisitioned from Africa than ever before in any single year, even at the time when the slave trade was still legal. The number of slaves imported in the last year amounted to 15,000.

Armed propaganda abroad on behalf of slavery was the avowed aim of national policy; the Union had in fact become the slave of the 300,000 slaveholders who rule the South. This state of affairs had been brought about by a series of compromises which the South owed to its alliance with the Northern Democrats. All the periodic attempts made since 1817 to resist the ever increasing encroachments of the slaveholders had come to grief against this alliance. Finally, there came a turning point.

Hardly had the Kansas-Nebraska Bill been passed, erasing the geographical boundary of slavery and making its introduction into new territories subject to the will of the majority of the settlers, when armed emissaries of the slaveholders, border rabble from Missouri and Arkansas, fell upon Kansas, a bowie-knife in one hand and a revolver in the other, and with the most atrocious barbarity tried to drive out its settlers from the territory which they had colonized. As these raids were supported by the central government in Washington, a tremendous reaction ensued. In the whole of the North, but particularly in the Northwest, a relief organization was formed to provide support for Kansas in the shape of men, weapons, and money. Out of this relief organization grew the Republican party, which thus has its origins in the struggle for Kansas. After the failure of the attempts to transform Kansas into a slave territory by force of arms, the South tried to achieve the same result by way of political intrigue. Buchanan's administration, in particular, did its utmost to maneuver Kansas into the ranks of the United States as a slave state by the imposition of a slave constitution. Hence a new struggle took place, this time conducted for the most part in the Washington Congress. Even Stephen A. Douglas, leader of the Northern Democrats, now (1857–8) entered the lists, against the administration and against his Southern allies, because the imposition of a slave constitution would contradict the principle of settlers' sovereignty passed in the Nebraska Bill of 1854. Douglas, senator for Illinois, a northwestern state, would naturally have forfeited all his influence if he had wanted to concede to the South the right to steal by force of arms or acts of Congress the territories colonized by the North. Thus while the struggle for Kansas gave birth to the Republican party, it simultaneously gave rise to the first split within the Democratic party itself.

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[4] The Ostend Manifesto was issued in 1854 by the United States ambassadors to Spain, France, and England (the latter being Buchanan); it contained an offer to purchase Cuba from Spain and threatened to seize it by force if Spain refused.

[5] Nicaragua was the particular object of these expeditions.

The Republican party issued its first program for the presidential election of 1856. Although its candidate, John Frémont, did not win, the huge number of votes cast for him demonstrated the rapid growth of the party, particularly in the Northwest. In their second national convention for the presidential election (May 17, 1860), the Republicans repeated their program of 1856, enriched by only a few additional points. Its main contents were that not a foot of new territory would be conceded to slavery, and that the filibustering[6] policy abroad must cease; the resumption of the slave trade was condemned, and lastly, free-soil laws would be enacted in order to further free colonization.

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[6] The term "filibuster" here denotes American insurrectionist activities carried out in a foreign country.

The point of decisive importance in this program was that slavery was not to be conceded another foot of new ground; rather, it was to remain confined once and for all within the limits of the states where it already legally existed. Slavery was thus to be interned for good. However, permanent territorial expansion and the continual extension of slavery beyond its old borders is a law of existence for the slave states of the Union.

The cultivation of the Southern export crops, i.e., cotton, tobacco, sugar, etc., by slaves is only profitable so long as it is conducted on a mass scale by large gangs of slaves and in wide areas of naturally fertile soil requiring only simple labor. Intensive cultivation, which depends less on the fertility of the soil and more on capital investment and on intelligent and energetic labor, runs contrary to the nature of slavery. Hence the rapid transformation of states such as Maryland and Virginia, which in earlier times employed slavery in the production of export commodities, into states which raise slaves in order to export them to states lying further south. Even in South Carolina, where slaves form four-sevenths of the population, the cultivation of cotton has remained almost stationary for years, due to the exhaustion of the soil. Indeed, South Carolina has become partly transformed into a slave-raising state by pressure of circumstances insofar as it already sells slaves to the states of the deep South and Southwest to a value of four million dollars annually. As soon as this point is reached, the acquisition of new territory becomes necessary, so that one section of the slaveholders can introduce slave labor into new fertile estates and thus create a new market for slave raising and the sale of slaves by the section it has left behind. There is not the least doubt, for example, that without the acquisition of Louisiana, Missouri, and Arkansas by the United States, slavery would long ago have disappeared in Virginia and Maryland. In the secession Congress at Montgomery, one of the Southern spokesmen, Senator Toombs, strikingly formulated the economic law that necessitates the constant expansion of the slave territory. “In fifteen years more,” he said, “without a great increase in slave territory, either the slaves must be permitted to flee from the whites, or the whites must flee from the slaves.”

As is well known, individual states are represented in the Congressional House of Representatives according to the size of their respective populations. Since the population of the free states is growing incomparably more quickly than that of the slave states, the number of Northern representatives has inevitably overtaken the number of Southerners. The actual seat of Southern political power, therefore, is being transferred more and more to the American Senate, where every state, whether its population is great or small, is represented by two senators. In order to assert its influence in the Senate and, through the Senate, its hegemony over the United States, the South thus needed a continual formation of new slave states. But this could only be brought about by conquering foreign countries, as in the case of Texas, or by transforming the United States territories first into slave territories, later into slave states, as in the case of Missouri, Arkansas, etc. John Calhoun, whom the slaveholders admire as their statesman *par excellence*, declared in the Senate as early as February 19, 1847 that only the Senate offered the South the means of restoring a balance of power between South and North, that the extension of the slave territory was necessary to restore this balance, and that therefore the attempts of the South to create new slave states by force were justified.

When it comes down to it, the number of actual slaveholders in the South of the Union is not more than 300,000, an exclusive oligarchy confronted by the many million so-called poor whites, whose number has constantly grown as a result of the concentration of landed property, and whose situation can only be compared with that of the Roman plebeians in the direst period of Rome's decline. Only with the acquisition of new territories, the prospect of such acquisition, and filibustering expeditions is it possible to harmonize the interests of these "poor whites" successfully with those of the slaveholders, to channel their restless thirst for action in a harmless direction, and to tempt them with the prospect of becoming slaveholders themselves one day.

As a result of economic laws, then, to confine slavery to the limits of its old terrain would inevitably have led to its gradual extinction; politically it would have destroyed the hegemony exercised by the slave states by way of the Senate; and finally it would have exposed the slaveholding oligarchy to ominous dangers within their own states from the "poor whites." With the principle that every further extension of slave territories was to be prohibited by law, the Republicans therefore mounted a radical attack on the rule of the slaveholders. Consequently, the Republican election victory could not help but lead to open struggle between North and South. However, as has already been mentioned, this election victory was itself conditioned by the split in the Democratic camp.

The Kansas struggle had already provoked a split between the slave party and its Democratic allies in the North. The same quarrel now broke out again in a more general form with the presidential election of 1860. The Northern Democrats, with Douglas as their candidate, made the introduction of slavery into the territories dependent upon the will of the majority of settlers. The slaveholders' party, with Breckinridge as its candidate, asserted that the Constitution of the United States, as the Supreme Court had also declared, made legal provision for slavery; slavery was in actual fact already legal in all territories and did not require special naturalization. Thus, while the Republicans prohibited any growth of slave territories, the Southern party laid claim to all territories as legally warranted domains. What they had tried, for instance, with Kansas—imposing slavery on a territory against the will of the settlers themselves, by way of the central government—they now held up as a law for all Union territories. Such a concession lay beyond the power of the Democratic leaders and would only have caused their army to desert to the Republican camp. On the other hand, Douglas's "settlers' sovereignty" could not satisfy the slaveholders' party. What the slaveholders wanted to achieve had to be brought about in the next four years under the new President; it could only be brought about by means of the central government and could not be delayed any longer. It did not escape the slaveholders' notice that a new power had arisen, the Northwest, whose population, which had almost doubled between 1850 and 1860, was already more or less equal to the white population of the slave states—a power which neither by tradition, temperament, nor way of life was inclined to let itself be dragged from compromise to compromise in the fashion of the old Northern states. The Union was only of value for the South insofar as it let it use federal power as a means of implementing its slave policy. If it did not, it was better to break now than to watch the development of the Republican party and the rapid growth of the Northwest for another four years, and to begin the struggle under less favorable conditions. The slaveholders' party, therefore, now staked its all! When the Northern Democrats refused to play the role of the Southern "poor whites" any longer, the South brought about Lincoln's victory by splitting the votes and used this victory as an excuse for drawing the sword.

As is clear, the whole movement was and is based on the *slave question*. Not in the sense of whether the slaves within the existing slave states should be directly emancipated or not, but whether the twenty million free Americans of the North should subordinate themselves any longer to an oligarchy of 300,000 slaveholders; whether the vast territories of the Republic should become the nurseries of free states or of slavery; finally, whether the foreign policy of the Union should take the armed propaganda of slavery as its device throughout Mexico and Central and South America.

In a foreign article we shall examine the assertion of the London press that the North should sanction secession as the most favorable and only possible solution of the conflict.[7]

Die Presse, October 25, 1861

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[7] See the following chapter, "The American Question in England."

The American Question in England

London, September 18, 1861

Mrs. Beecher Stowe's letter to Lord Shaftesbury, whatever its intrinsic merit may be, has done a great deal of good, by forcing the anti-Northern organs of the London press to speak out and lay before the general public the ostensible reasons for their hostile tone against the North and their ill-concealed sympathies with the South, which looks rather strange on the part of people affecting an utter horror of slavery. Their first and main grievance is that the present American war is "not one for the abolition of slavery," and that therefore the high-minded Britisher, used to undertaking wars of his own, and interesting himself in other people's wars only on the basis of "broad humanitarian principles," cannot be expected to feel any sympathy with his Northern cousins. "In the first place," says the *Economist*, "the assumption that the quarrel between the North and South is a quarrel between Negro freedom on the one side, and Negro slavery on the other, is as impudent as it is untrue." "The North," says the *Saturday Review*, "does not proclaim abolition, and never pretended to fight for antislavery. The North has not hoisted for its oriflamme the sacred symbol of justice to the Negro; its *cri de guerre*[1] is not unconditional abolition." "If," says the *Examiner*, "we have been deceived about the real significance of the sublime movement, who but the Federalists themselves have to answer for the deception?"

Now, in the first instance, the premise must be conceded. The war has not been undertaken with a view to putting down slavery, and the United States authorities themselves have taken the greatest pains to protest against any such idea. But then, it ought to be remembered that it was not the North but the South which undertook this war, the former acting only on the defense. If it be true that the North, after long hesitation and an exhibition of forbearance unknown in the annals of European history, drew at last the sword not for crushing slavery, but for saving the Union, the South, on its part, inaugurated the war by loudly proclaiming "the peculiar institution" as the only and main end of the rebellion. It confessed to fighting for the liberty of enslaving other people, a liberty which, despite the Northern protests, it asserted to be put in danger by the victory of the Republican Party and the election of Mr. Lincoln to the Presidential chair. The Confederate Congress boasted that its newfangled Constitution, as distinguished from the Constitution of the Washingtons, Jeffersons, and Adamses, had recognized for the first time slavery as a thing good in itself, a bulwark of civilization, and a divine institution. If the North professed to fight but for the Union, the South gloried in rebellion for the supremacy of slavery. If antislavery and idealistic England felt not attracted by the profession of the North, how came it to pass that it was not violently repulsed by the cynical confessions of the South?

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[1] War cry.

The *Saturday Review* helps itself out of this ugly dilemma by disbelieving the declarations of the seceders themselves. It sees deeper than this, and discovers "*that slavery had very little to do with secession,*" the declarations of Jeff [erson] Davis and company to the contrary being mere "conventionalisms" with "about as much meaning as the conventionalisms about violated altars and desecrated hearths, which always occur in such proclamations."

The staple of argument on the part of the anti-Northern papers is very scanty, and throughout all of them we find almost the same sentences recurring, like the formulas of a mathematical series, at certain intervals, with very little art of variation or combination. "Why," exclaims the *Economist*, "it is only yesterday, when the Secession movement first gained serious head, on the first announcement of Mr. Lincoln's election, that the Northerners offered to the South, if they would remain in the Union, every conceivable security for the performance and inviolability of the obnoxious institution—that they disavowed in the most solemn manner all intention of interfering with it—that their leaders proposed compromise after compromise in Congress, all based upon the concession that slavery should not be meddled with." "How happens it," says the *Examiner*, "that the North was ready to compromise matters by the largest concessions to the South as to slavery? How was it that a certain geographical line was proposed in Congress within which slavery was to be recognized as an essential institution? The Southern states were not content with this."

What the *Economist* and the *Examiner* had to ask was not only why the Crittenden and other compromise measures were *proposed* in Congress, but why they were not *passed*? They affect to consider those compromise proposals as accepted by the North and rejected by the South, while in point of fact they were baffled by the Northern party that had carried the Lincoln election. Proposals never matured into resolutions, but always remaining in the embryo state of *pia desideria,*[2] the South had of course never any occasion either of rejecting or acquiescing. We come nearer to the pith of the question by the following remark of the *Examiner*:

> Mrs. Stowe says: "The slave party, finding they could no longer use the Union for their purposes, resolved to destroy it." There is here an admission that up to that time the slave party had used the Union for their purposes, and it would have been well if Mrs. Stowe could have distinctly shown where it was that the North began to make its stand against slavery.

One might suppose that The *Examiner* and the other oracles of public opinion in England had made themselves sufficiently familiar with the contemporaneous history to not need Mrs. Stowe's information on such all-important points. The progressive abuse of the Union by the slave power, working through its alliance with the Northern Democratic Party, is, so to say, the general formula of United States history since the beginning of this century. The successive compromise measures mark the successive degrees of the encroachment by which the Union became more and more transformed into the slave of the slave owner. Each of these compromises denotes a new encroachment of the South, a new concession of the

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[2] Pious wishes.

North. At the same time none of the successive victories of the South was carried but after a hot contest with an antagonistic force in the North, appearing under different party names with different watchwords and under different colors. If the positive and final result of each single contest told in favor of the South, the attentive observer of history could not but see that every new advance of the slave power was a step forward to its ultimate defeat. Even at the time of the Missouri Compromise, the contending forces were so evenly balanced that Jefferson, as we see from his memoirs, apprehended the Union to be in danger of splitting on that deadly antagonism. The encroachments of the slaveholding power reached their maximum point, when by the Kansas-Nebraska bill, for the first time in the history of the United States—as Mr. Douglas himself confessed—every legal barrier to the diffusion of slavery within the United States territories was broken down; when afterward a Northern candidate bought his presidential nomination by pledging the Union to conquer or purchase in Cuba a new field of dominion for the slaveholder; when later on by the Dred Scott decision diffusion of slavery by the Federal power was proclaimed as the law of the American Constitution; and lastly, when the African slave trade was de facto reopened on a larger scale than during the times of its legal existence. But concurrently with this climax of southern encroachments, carried by the connivance of the Northern Democratic Party, there were unmistakable signs of Northern antagonistic agencies having gathered such strength as must soon turn the balance of power. The Kansas war, the formation of the Republican party, and the large vote cast for Mr. Frémont during the Presidential election of 1856 were so many palpable proofs that the North had accumulated sufficient energies to rectify the aberrations which United States history, under the slave owners' pressure, had undergone for half a century, and to make it return to the true principles of its development. Apart from those political phenomena, there was one broad statistical and economical fact indicating that the abuse of the Federal Union by the slave interest had approached the point from which it would have to recede forcibly or *de bonne grace.*[3] That fact was the growth of the Northwest, the immense strides its population had made from 1850 to 1860, and the new and reinvigorating influence it could not but bear on the destinies of the United States.

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[3] With good grace.

Now, was all this a secret chapter of history? Was "the admission" Mrs. Beecher Stowe wanted to reveal to the *Examiner* and the other political illuminati of the London press the carefully hidden truth that "up to that time the slave party had used the Union for their purposes?" Is it the fault of the American North that the English pressmen were taken quite unawares by the violent clash of the antagonistic forces, the friction of which was the moving power of its history for half a century? Is it the fault of the Americans that the English press mistake for the fanciful crotchet hatched in a single day what was in reality the matured result of long years of struggle? The very fact that the formation and progress of the Republican Party in America have hardly been noticed by the London press speaks volumes as to the hollowness of its antislavery tirades. Take, for instance, the two antipodes of the London press, the London *Times* and *Reynolds's Weekly Newspaper*, the one the great organ of the respectable classes and the other the only remaining organ of the working class. The former, not long before Mr. Buchanan's career drew to an end, published an elaborate apology for his Administration and a defamatory libel against the Republican movement. Reynolds, on his part, was during Mr. Buchanan's stay at London one of his minions, and since that time never missed an occasion to write him up and to write his adversaries down. How did it come to pass that the Republican Party, whose platform was drawn up on the avowed antagonism to the encroachments of the slaveocracy and the abuse of the Union by the slave interest, carried the day in the North? How, in the second instance, did it come to pass that the great bulk of the Northern Democratic party, flinging aside its old connections with the leaders of slaveocracy, setting at naught its traditions of half a century, sacrificing great commercial interests and greater political prejudices, rushed to the support of the present Republican Administration and offered it men and money with an unsparing hand? Instead of answering these questions, the *Economist* exclaims:

> Can we forget that Abolitionists have habitually been as ferociously persecuted and maltreated in the North and West as in the South? Can it be denied that the testiness and halfheartedness, not to say insincerity, of the Government at Washington have for years supplied the chief impediment which has thwarted our efforts for the effectual suppression of the slave trade on the coast of Africa, while a vast proportion of the clippers actually engaged in that trade have been built with Northern capital, owned by Northern merchants, and manned by Northern seamen?

This is, in fact, a masterly piece of logic. Antislavery England cannot sympathize with the North breaking down the withering influence of slaveocracy because she cannot forget that the North, while bound by that influence, supported the slave trade, mobbed the Abolitionists, and had its Democratic institutions tainted by the slave driver's prejudices. She cannot sympathize with Mr. Lincoln's Administration because she had to find fault with Mr. Buchanan's Administration. She must needs sullenly cavil at the present movement of the Northern resurrection, cheer up the Northern sympathizers with the slave trade, branded in the Republican platform, and coquet with the Southern slaveocracy setting up an empire of its own, because she cannot forget that the North of yesterday was not the North of today. The necessity of justifying its attitude by such pettifogging Old Bailey[4] pleas proves more than anything else that the anti-Northern part of the English press is instigated by hidden motives, too mean and dastardly to be openly avowed.

As it is one of its pet maneuvers to taunt the present Republican Administration with the doings of its proslavery predecessors, so it tries hard to persuade the English people that the *New York Herald* ought to be considered the only authentic expositor of Northern opinion. The London *Times* having given out the cue in this direction, the *servum pecus*[5] of the other anti-Northern organs, great and small, persist in beating the same bush. So says the *Economist*: "In the light of the strife, New York papers and New York politicians were not wanting who exhorted the combatants, now that they had large armies in the field, to employ them not against each other but against Great Britain—to compromise the internal quarrel, the slave question included, and invade the British territory without notice and with overwhelming force." The *Economist* knows perfectly well that the *N.Y. Herald*'s efforts, which were eagerly supported by the London *Times*, at embroiling the United States into a war with England only intended securing the success of Secession and thwarting the movement of Northern regeneration.

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[4] Seat of the Central Criminal Court in London.

[5] Slavish herd.

Still, there is one concession made by the anti-Northern English press. The *Saturday* [*Review*] snob tells us, "What was at issue in Lincoln's election, and what has precipitated the convulsion, was merely *the limitation of the institution of slavery to states where that institution already exists.*" And the *Economist* remarks:

> It is true enough that it was the aim of the Republican Party which elected Mr. Lincoln to prevent slavery from spreading into the unsettled Territories … It may be true that the success of the North, if complete and unconditional, would enable them to confine slavery within the fifteen states which have already adopted it, and might thus lead to its eventual extinction—though this is rather probable than certain.

In 1859, on the occasion of John Brown's Harper's Ferry expedition, the very same *Economist* published a series of elaborate articles with a view to prove that by dint of an *economical law,* American slavery was doomed to gradual extinction from the moment it should be deprived of its power of expansion. That "economical law" was perfectly understood by the slaveocracy. "In 15 years more," said Toombs, "without a great increase in Slave territory, either the slaves must be permitted to flee from the whites, or the whites must flee from the slaves." The limitation of slavery to its constitutional area, as proclaimed by the Republicans, was the distinct ground upon which the menace of Secession was first uttered in the House of Representatives, on December 19, 1859. Mr. Singleton (Mississippi) having asked Mr. Curtis (Iowa), "if the Republican Party would never let the South have another foot of slave territory while it remained in the Union," and Mr. Curtis having responded in the affirmative, Mr. Singleton *said this would dissolve the Union.* His advice to Mississippi was the sooner it got out of the Union the better—"gentlemen should recollect that Jefferson Davis led our forces in Mexico, and still he lives, perhaps to lead the Southern army."[6] Quite apart from the *economical law* which makes the diffusion of slavery a vital condition for its maintenance within its constitutional areas, the leaders of the South had never deceived themselves as to its necessity for keeping up their *political* sway over the United States. John Calhoun, in the defense of his propositions to the Senate, stated distinctly on Feb. 19, 1847, "that the Senate was the only balance of power left to the South in the Government," and that the creation of new slave states had become necessary "for the retention of the equipoise of power in the Senate." Moreover, the Oligarchy of the 300,000 slave owners could not even maintain their sway at home save by constantly throwing out to their white plebeians the bait of prospective conquests within and without the frontiers of the United States. If, then, according to the oracles of the English press, the North had arrived at the fixed resolution of circumscribing slavery within its present limits and of thus extinguishing it in a constitutional way, was this not sufficient to enlist the sympathies of antislavery England?

But the English Puritans seem indeed not to be contented save by an explicit Abolitionist war. "This," says the *Economist*, "therefore, not being a war for the emancipation of the Negro race, on what other ground can we be fairly called upon to sympathize so warmly with the Federal cause?" "There was a time," says the *Examiner*, "when our sympathies were with the North, thinking that it was really in earnest in making a stand against the encroachments of the slave states" and in adopting "emancipation as a measure of justice to the black race."

However, in the very same numbers in which these papers tell us that they cannot sympathize with the North because its war is no Abolitionist war, we are informed that "the desperate expedient" of proclaiming Negro emancipation and summoning the slaves to a general insurrection is a thing "the mere conception of which is repulsive and dreadful" and that "a compromise" would be "far preferable to success purchased at such a cost and *stained by such a crime*."

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[6] For Singleton's speech of December 19, 1859, see the Appendix to the *Congressional Globe*, *First Session 36th Congress, Part IV* (Washington 1860), pp. 47–54.

Thus the English eagerness for the Abolitionist war is all cant. The cloven foot peeps out in the following sentences: "Lastly," says the *Economist*, "is the Morrill tariff a title to our gratitude and to our sympathy, or is the certainty that, in case of Northern triumph, that tariff should be extended over the whole Republic a reason why we ought to be clamorously anxious for their success?" "The North Americans," says the *Examiner*, "are in earnest about nothing but a selfish protective tariff…The southern states were tired of being robbed of the fruits of their slave labor by the protective tariff of the North."

The *Examiner* and The *Economist* complement each other. The latter is honest enough to confess at last that with him and his followers sympathy is a mere question of tariff, while the former reduces the war between North and South to a tariff war, to a war between Protection and Free Trade. The *Examiner* is perhaps not aware that even the South Carolina Nullifiers of 1832, as General Jackson testifies, used Protection only as a pretext for secession, but even the *Examiner* ought to know that the present rebellion did not wait upon the passing of the Morrill tariff for breaking out. In point of fact, the Southerners could not have been tired of being robbed of the fruits of their slave labor by the Protective tariff of the North, considering that from 1846–1861 a Free Trade tariff had obtained.

The *Spectator* characterizes in its last number the secret thought of some of the anti-Northern organs in the following striking manner:

> What, then, do the anti-Northern organs really profess to think desirable, under the justification of this plea of deferring to the inexorable logic of facts? They argue that disunion is desirable just because, as we have said, it is the only possible step to a conclusion of this "causeless and fratricidal strife," and next, of course—only as an afterthought, and as a humble apology for Providence and "justification of the ways of God to man," now that the inevitable necessity stands revealed—for further reasons discovered as beautiful adaptations to the moral exigencies of the country, when once the issue is discerned. It is discovered that it will be very much for the advantage of the states to be dissolved into rival groups. They will mutually check each other's ambition; they will neutralize each other's power; and if ever England should get into a dispute with

> one or more of them, more jealousy will bring the antagonistic groups to our aid. This will be, it is urged, a very wholesome state of things, for it will relieve us from anxiety and it will encourage political "competition," that great safeguard of honesty and purity, among the states themselves.

Such is the case—very gravely urged—of the numerous class of Southern sympathizers now springing up among us. Translated into English—and we grieve that an English argument on such a subject should be of a nature that requires translating—it means that we deplore the present great scale of this "fratricidal" war because it may concentrate in one fearful spasm a series of chronic petty wars and passions and jealousies among groups of rival states in times to come. The real truth is, and this very un-English feeling distinctly discerns this truth, though it cloaks it in decent phrases, that rival groups of American states could not live together in peace or harmony. The chronic condition would be one of malignant hostility rising out of the very causes which have produced the present contest. It is asserted that the different groups of states have different tariff interests. These different tariff interests would be the sources of constant petty wars if the states were once dissolved, and slavery, the root of all the strife, would be the spring of innumerable animosities, discords, and campaigns. No stable equilibrium could ever again be established among the rival states. And yet it is maintained that this long future of incessant strife is the providential solution of the great question now at issue—the only real reason why it is looked upon favorably being this: that whereas the present great-scale conflict may issue in a restored and stronger political unity, the alternative of infinitely multiplied small-scale quarrels will issue in a weak and divided continent that England cannot fear.

Now we do not deny that the Americans themselves sowed the seeds of this petty and contemptible state of feeling by the unfriendly and bullying attitude they have so often manifested to England, but we do say that the state of feeling on our part is petty and contemptible. We see that in a deferred issue there is no hope of a deep and enduring tranquility for America, that it means a decline and fall of the American nation into quarrelsome clans and tribes, and yet we hold up our hands in horror at the present "fratricidal" strife because it holds out hopes of finality. We exhort them to look favorably on the indefinite future of small strifes, equally fratricidal and probably far more demoralizing, because the latter would draw out of our side the thorn of American rivalry.

New York Daily Tribune, October 11, 1861

The Civil War in The United States

"Let him go, he is not worth thine ire!"[1] This advice from Leporello to Don Juan's deserted love is now the repeated call of English statesmanship to the North of the United States—recently voiced anew by Lord John Russell. If the North lets the South go, it will free itself from any complicity in slavery—its historical original sin—and it will create the basis for a new and higher stage of development.

Indeed, if North and South formed two autonomous countries like England and Hanover, for instance, their separation would be no more difficult than was the separation of England and Hanover. "The South," however, is neither geographically clearly separate from the North nor is it a moral entity. It is not a country at all, but a battle cry.

The advice of an amicable separation presupposes that the Southern Confederacy, although it took the offensive in the Civil War, is at least conducting it for defensive purposes. It presupposes that the slaveholders' party is concerned only to unite the areas it has controlled up till now into an autonomous group of states, and to release them from the domination of the Union. Nothing could be more wrong. "*The South needs its entire territory*. It will and must have it." This was the battle cry with which the secessionists fell upon Kentucky. By their "entire territory" they understand primarily all the so-called *border states*: Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, and Arkansas. Moreover, they claim the whole territory south of the line which runs from the northwest corner of Missouri to the Pacific Ocean. Thus what the slaveholders call "the South" covers more than three quarters of the present area of the Union. A large part of the territory which they claim is still in the possession of the Union and would first have to be conquered from it. But none of the so-called border states, including those in Confederate possession, was ever *an actual slave state*. The border states form, rather, that area of the United States where the system of slavery and the system of free labor exist side by side and struggle for mastery: the actual battleground between South and North, between slavery and freedom. The war waged by the Southern Confederacy is, therefore, not a war of defense but a war of conquest, aimed at extending and perpetuating slavery.

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[1] From Byron's *Don Juan*. Leporello's advice was mischievous in its intent.

The chain of mountains which begins in Alabama and stretches North to the Hudson River—in a manner of speaking the spinal column of the United States—cuts the so-called South into three parts. The mountainous country formed by the Allegheny Mountains with their two parallel ranges, the Cumberland Range to the west and the Blue Ridge Mountains to the east, forms a wedgelike division between the lowlands along the western coast of the Atlantic Ocean and the lowlands of the southern valleys of the Mississippi. The two lowland regions separated by this mountain country form, with their vast rice swamps and wide expanses of cotton plantations, the actual area of slavery. The long wedge of mountain country which penetrates into the heart of slavery, with its correspondingly freer atmosphere, invigorating climate, and soil rich in coal, salt, limestone, iron ore, and gold—in short, every raw material necessary for diversified industrial development—is for the most part already a free country. As a result of its physical composition, the soil here can only be successfully cultivated by free small farmers. The slave system vegetates here only as a sporadic growth and has never struck roots. In the largest part of the so-called border states it is the inhabitants of these highland regions who comprise the core of the free population, which out of self-interest, if nothing else, has sided with the Northern party.

Let us consider the contested area in detail.

Delaware, the northeasternmost of the border states, belongs to the Union both morally and in actual fact. Since the beginning of the war all attempts on the part of the secessionists to form even a faction favorable to them have come to grief against the unanimity of the population. The slave element in this state has long been dying out. Between 1850 and 1860 alone the number of slaves declined by a half, so that Delaware now has only 1,798 slaves out of a total population of 112,218. Nevertheless, the Southern Confederacy lays claim to Delaware, and it would in fact be militarily untenable as soon as the South took control of Maryland.

Maryland exhibits the abovementioned conflict between highlands and lowlands. Out of a total population of 687,034 there are in Maryland 87,188 slaves. The recent general elections to the Washington Congress have again forcefully proved that the overwhelming majority of the people sides with the Union. The army of 30,000 Union troops at present occupying Maryland is not only to serve as a reserve for the army on the Potomac, but also to hold the rebellious slaveholders in the interior of the state in check. Here a phenomenon can be seen similar to those in other border states, i.e., that the great mass of the people sides with the North and a numerically insignificant slaveholders' party sides with the South. What the slaveholders' party lacks in numbers it makes up for in the instruments of power, secured by many years' possession of all state offices, hereditary preoccupation with political intrigue, and the concentration of great wealth in a few hands.

Virginia at present forms the great cantonment where the main secessionist army and the main Unionist army confront each other. In the northwest highlands of Virginia the slaves number 15,000, while the free majority, which is twenty times as large, consists for the most part of independent farmers. The eastern lowlands of Virginia, on the other hand, have almost half a million slaves. The raising and selling of Negroes represents its main source of income. As soon as the lowland ringleaders had carried through the secession ordinance in the state legislature at Richmond, by means of intrigue, and had in all haste thrown open the gates of Virginia to the Southern army, northwestern Virginia seceded from the secession and formed a new state; it took up arms under the banner of the Union and is now defending its territory against the Southern invaders.

Tennessee, with 1,109,847 inhabitants, of whom 275,784 are slaves, is in the hands of the Southern Confederacy, which has placed the whole state under martial law and imposed a system of proscription which recalls the days of the Roman triumvirate. In the winter of 1860–61, when the slaveholders suggested a general people's convention to vote on the question of secession, the majority of the people turned down a convention in order to forestall any pretext for the secessionist movement. Later, when Tennessee had been militarily overrun by the Southern Confederacy and had been subjected to a system of terror, a third of the voters in the elections still declared themselves in favor of the Union. As in most of the border states, the actual center of resistance to the slaveholders' party here is to be found in the mountainous country, in east Tennessee. On June 17, 1861, a general convention of the people of east Tennessee assembled in Greenville, declared itself for the Union, delegated the former Governor of the state, Andrew Johnson, one of the most ardent Unionists, to the Senate in Washington, and published a "declaration of grievances" which exposes all the deception, intrigue and terror used to "vote out" Tennessee from the Union. Since then the secessionists have held east Tennessee in check by force of arms.

Similar situations to those in West Virginia and east Tennessee are to be found in the north of Alabama, northwest Georgia, and the north of North Carolina.

Farther west, in the border state of Missouri, whose population of 1,173,317 includes 114,965 slaves—the latter mostly concentrated in the northwestern area of the state—the people's convention of August 1861 decided in favor of the Union. Jackson, the Governor of the state and tool of the slaveholders' party, rebelled against the Missouri legislature and was outlawed; he then put himself at the head of the armed hordes which fell upon Missouri from Texas, Arkansas, and Tennessee in order to bring it to its knees before the Confederacy and to sever its bond with the Union by the sword. Next to Virginia, Missouri represents the main theater of the civil war at the moment.

New Mexico—not a state, but merely a territory, whose twenty-five slaves were imported under Buchanan's presidency so that a slave constitution could be sent after them from Washington—has felt no enthusiasm for the South, as even the South concedes. But the South's enthusiasm for New Mexico caused it to spew a band of armed adventurers over the border from Texas. New Mexico has entreated the Union government for protection against these liberators.

As will have been noticed, we lay particular stress on the numerical proportion of slaves to free citizens in the individual border states. This proportion is in fact of decisive importance. It is the thermometer with which the vitality of the slave system must be measured. The very soul of the whole secessionist movement is to be found in South Carolina. It has 402,541 slaves to 301,271 free men. Second comes Mississippi, which gave the Southern Confederacy its dictator, Jefferson Davis. It has 436,696 slaves to 354,699 free men. Third comes Alabama, with 435,132 slaves to 529,164 free men.

The last of the contested border states which we still have to mention is Kentucky. Its recent history is particularly characteristic of the policy of the Southern Confederacy. Kentucky, with 1,135,713 inhabitants, has 225,490 slaves. In three successive general elections (in winter 1860–61, when delegates were elected for a congress of the border states; in June 1861, when the elections for the Washington Congress were held; and finally in August 1861 in the elections for the Kentucky state legislature), an increasing majority decided in favor of the Union. On the other hand, Magoffin, the Governor of Kentucky, and all the state dignitaries are fanatical supporters of the slaveholders' party, as is Breckinridge, Kentucky's representative in the Senate at Washington, Vice-President of the United States under Buchanan, and presidential candidate of the slaveholders' party in 1860. Although the influence of the slaveholders' party was too weak to win Kentucky for secession, it was powerful enough to tempt it into a declaration of neutrality at the outbreak of war. The Confederacy recognized its neutrality as long as it suited its purpose, as long as it was busy crushing the resistance in east Tennessee. No sooner had this been achieved when it hammered on the gates of Kentucky with the butt-end of a gun: "*The South needs its entire territory*. It will and must have it!"

At the same time, a corps of Confederate freebooters invaded the "neutral" state from the southwest and southeast. Kentucky awoke from its dream of neutrality; its legislature openly sided with the Union, surrounded the treacherous Governor with a committee of public safety, called the people to arms, outlawed Breckinridge, and ordered the secessionists to withdraw immediately from the area which they had invaded. This was the signal for war. A Confederate army is moving in on Louisville while volunteers stream in from Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio to save Kentucky from the armed missionaries of slavery.

The attempts made by the Confederacy to annex Missouri and Kentucky, for example, expose the hollowness of the pretext that it is fighting for the rights of the individual states against the encroachment of the Union. To be sure, it acknowledges the right of the individual states which it counts as belonging to the "South" to break away from the Union, but by no means their right to remain in the Union.

No matter how much slavery, the war without, and military dictatorship within give the actual slave states a temporary semblance of harmony, even they are not without dissident elements. Texas, with 180,388 slaves out of 601,039 inhabitants, is a striking example. The law of 1845, by virtue of which Texas entered the ranks of the United States as a slave state, entitled it to form not just one but five states out of its territory. As a result the South would have won ten instead of two new votes in the American Senate; and an increase in the number of its votes in the Senate was a major political objective at that time. From 1845 to 1860, however, the slaveholders found it impracticable to split up Texas—where the German population plays a great part[2]—into even two states without giving the party of free labor the upper hand over the party of slavery. This is the best proof of how strong the opposition to the slaveholders' oligarchy is in Texas itself.

Georgia is the biggest and most populous of the slave states. With a total of 1,057,327 inhabitants, it has 462,230 slaves; that is, nearly half the population. Nevertheless, the slaveholders' party has not yet succeeded in having the constitution which it imposed on the South at Montgomery sanctioned in Georgia by a general vote of the people.

In the Louisiana state convention, which met on March 21, 1861, at New Orleans, Roselius, the state's political veteran, declared: "The

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[2] The German Texans, who formed in the 1850s about one fifth of the state's white population, included a large proportion of refugees from the 1848 revolution.

Montgomery constitution is not a constitution, but a conspiracy. It does not inaugurate a government by the people, but *a detestable and unrestricted oligarchy*. The people were not permitted to play any part in this matter. The Convention of Montgomery has dug the grave of political liberty, and now we are summoned to attend its burial."

The oligarchy of 300,000 slaveholders used the Montgomery Congress not only to proclaim the separation of the South from the North; it also exploited the Congress to overturn the internal system of government of the slave states, to completely subjugate that part of the white population which had still maintained some degree of independence under the protection of the democratic Constitution of the Union. Even between 1856 and 1860 the political spokesmen, lawyers, moralists, and theologians of the slaveholders' party had tried to prove not so much that Negro slavery is justified but rather that color is immaterial and that slavery is the lot of the working class everywhere.

It can be seen, then, that the war of the Southern Confederacy is, in the truest sense of the word, a war of conquest for the extension and perpetuation of slavery. The larger part of the border states and territories are still in the possession of the Union, whose side they have taken first by way of the ballot box and then with arms. But for the Confederacy they count as "the South," and it is trying to conquer them from the Union. In the border states which the Confederacy has for the time being occupied it holds the relatively free highland areas in check by means of martial law. Within the actual slave states themselves it is supplanting the democracy which existed hitherto by the unbridled oligarchy of 300,000 slaveholders.

By abandoning its plans for conquest, the Southern Confederacy would abandon its own economic viability and the very purpose of secession. Indeed, secession only took place because it no longer seemed possible to bring about the transformation of the border states and territories within the Union. On the other hand, with a peaceful surrender of the contested area to the Southern Confederacy the North would relinquish more than three quarters of the entire territory of the United States to the slave republic. The North would lose the Gulf of Mexico completely, the Atlantic

Ocean with the exception of the narrow stretch from the Penobscot estuary to Delaware Bay, and would even cut itself off from the Pacific Ocean. Missouri, Kansas, New Mexico, Arkansas, and Texas would be followed by California. Unable to wrest the mouth of the Mississippi from the hands of the strong, hostile slave republic in the South, the great agricultural states in the basin between the Rocky Mountains and the Alleghenies, in the valleys of the Mississippi, Missouri, and Ohio, would be forced by economic interests to secede from the North and to join the Southern Confederacy. These Northwestern states would in turn draw the other Northern states lying further east after them—with the possible exception of New England—into the same vortex of secession.

The Union would thus not in fact be dissolved, but rather *reorganized, a reorganization on the basis of slavery,* under the acknowledged control of the slaveholding oligarchy. The plan for such a reorganization was openly proclaimed by the leading Southern spokesmen at the Montgomery Congress and accounts for the article of the new constitution which leaves open the possibility of each state of the old Union joining the new Confederacy. The slave system would thus infect the whole Union. In the Northern states, where Negro slavery is, in practice, inoperable, the whole working class would be gradually reduced to the level of helotry. This would be in full accord with the loudly proclaimed principle that only certain races are capable of freedom, and as in the South actual labor is the lot of the Negroes, so in the North it is the lot of the Germans and Irish or their direct descendants.

The present struggle between South and North is thus nothing less than a struggle between two social systems: the system of slavery and the system of free labor. The struggle has broken out because the two systems can no longer peacefully coexist on the North American continent. It can only be ended by the victory of one system or the other.

While the border states, the contested areas in which the two systems have so far fought for control, are a thorn in the flesh of the South, it cannot, on the other hand, be overlooked that they have formed the North's main weak point in the course of the war. Some of the slaveholders in these districts feigned loyalty to the North at the bidding of the Southern conspirators; others indeed found that it accorded with their real interests and traditional outlook to side with the Union. Both groups have equally crippled the North. Anxiety to keep the "loyal" slaveholders of the border states in good humor and fear of driving them into the arms of the secession—in a word, a tender regard for the interests, prejudices, and sensibilities of these ambiguous allies—have afflicted the Union government with incurable paralysis since the beginning of the war, driven it to take half measures, forced it to hypocritically disavow the principle at issue in the war and to spare the enemy's most vulnerable spot—the root of the evil—*slavery itself*.

When Lincoln recently was faint-hearted enough to revoke Frémont's Missouri proclamation emancipating Negroes belonging to the rebels,[3] this was only in deference to the loud protest of the "loyal" slaveholders of Kentucky. However, a turning point has already been reached. With Kentucky, the last border state has been pressed into the series of battlefields between South and North. With the real war for the border states being conducted in the border states themselves, the question of winning or losing them has been withdrawn from the sphere of diplomatic and parliamentary negotiations. One section of the slaveholders will cast off its loyalist mask; the other will content itself with the prospect of compensation, such as Great Britain gave the West Indian planters.[4] Events themselves demand that the decisive pronouncement be made: *the emancipation of the slaves*.

Several recent declarations demonstrate that even the most obdurate Northern Democrats and diplomats feel themselves drawn to this point. In an open letter General Cass, War Minister under Buchanan and hitherto one of the South's most ardent allies, declares the emancipation of the slaves to be the *sine qua non* for the salvation of the Union. Dr. Brownson, the spokesman of the Northern Catholic party, and according to his own admission the most energetic opponent of the emancipation movement between

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[3] General Frémont, the first Republican candidate for the presidency in 1856, issued this proclamation in August 1861 and began granting freedom to slaves on his military authority. Lincoln soon ordered Frémont to stop these measures.

[4] In 1833 the British government paid West Indian planters £2 for every slave set free.

1836 and 1860, published in his last *Review* for October an article *in favor of* abolition. Among other things he says, "If we have opposed Abolition heretofore because we would preserve the Union, we must *a fortiori* now oppose slavery whenever, in our judgment, its continuance becomes incompatible with the maintenance of the Union, or of the nation as a free republican state."[5]

Finally, the *World*, a New York organ of the Washington Cabinet's diplomats, closes one of its latest tirades against the abolitionists with these words: "On the day when it shall be decided that either slavery or the Union must go down, on that day sentence of death is passed on slavery. If the North cannot triumph *without* emancipation, it will triumph *with* emancipation."

Die Presse, November 7, 1861

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[5] *Brownson's Quarterly Review*, Third New York Series, New York, 1861, Vol. II, 510–46.

The American Civil War

PART I

From whatever standpoint one regards it, the American Civil War presents a spectacle without parallel in the annals of military history. The vast extent of the disputed territory; the far-flung front of the lines of operation; the numerical strength of the hostile armies, the creation of which drew barely any support from a prior organizational basis; the fabulous costs of these armies; the manner of leading them; and the general tactical and strategical principles in accordance with which the war is waged are all new in the eyes of the European onlooker.

The secessionist conspiracy, organized, patronized, and supported long before its outbreak by Buchanan's administration, gave the South an advantage by which alone it could hope to achieve its aim. Endangered by its slave population and by a strong Unionist element among the whites themselves, with a number of free men two-thirds smaller than the North, but readier to attack, thanks to the multitude of adventurous idlers that it harbors—for the South everything depended on a swift, bold, almost foolhardy offensive. If the Southerners succeeded in taking St. Louis, Cincinnati, Washington, Baltimore, and perhaps Philadelphia, they might then count on a panic, during which diplomacy and bribery could secure recognition of the independence of all the slave states. If this first onslaught failed, at least at the decisive points, their position must then become daily worse, simultaneously with the development of the strength of the North. This point was rightly understood by the men who in truly Bonapartist spirit had organized the secessionist conspiracy. They opened the campaign in corresponding manner. Their bands of adventurers overran Missouri and Tennessee, while their more regular troops invaded east Virginia and prepared a *coup de main* against Washington. With the miscarriage of this coup, the Southern campaign was, from the *military standpoint*, lost.

The North came to the theater of war reluctantly, sleepily, as was to be expected with its higher industrial and commercial development. The social machinery was here far more complicated than in the South, and it required far more time to give its motion this unwonted direction. The enlistment of the volunteers for three months was a great but perhaps unavoidable mistake. It was the policy of the North to remain on the defensive in the beginning at all decisive points, to organize its forces, to train them through operations on a small scale and without the risk of decisive battles, and as soon as the organization was sufficiently strengthened and the traitorous element simultaneously more or less removed from the army to pass finally to an energetic, unflagging offensive and, above all, to reconquer Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and North Carolina. The transformation of the civilians into soldiers was bound to take more time in the North than in the South. Once effected, one could count on the individual superiority of the Northern man.

By and large, and allowing for mistakes which sprang more from political than from military sources, the North acted in accordance with those principles. The guerrilla warfare in Missouri and West Virginia, while it protected the Unionist populations, accustomed the troops to field service and to fire without exposing them to decisive defeats. The great disgrace of Bull Run was to some extent the result of the earlier error of enlisting volunteers for three months. It was senseless to allow a strong position, on difficult terrain and in possession of a foe little inferior in numbers, to be attacked by raw recruits in the front ranks. The panic which took possession of the Union army at the decisive moment, the cause of which has still not been clarified, could surprise no one who was in some degree familiar with the history of peoples' wars. Such things happened to the French troops very often from 1792 to 1795; they did not, however, prevent these same troops from winning the battles of Jemappes and Fleurus, Moutenotte, Castiglione, and Rivoli. The jests of the European press over the Bull Run panic had only one excuse for their silliness—the previous bragging of a section of the North American press.

The six months' respite that followed the defeat of Manassas was utilized by the North better than by the South. Not only were the Northern ranks recruited in greater measure than the Southern. Their officers received better instructions; the discipline and training of the troops did not encounter the same obstacles as in the South. Traitors and incompetent interlopers were more and more removed, and the period of the Bull Run panic already belongs to the past. The armies on both sides are naturally not to be measured by the standard of great European armies or even of the former regular army of the United States. Napoleon could in fact drill battalions of raw recruits in the depots during the first month, have them on the march during the second, and during the third lead them against the foe, but then every battalion received a sufficient stiffening of officers and noncommissioned officers, every company some old soldiers, and on the day of the battle the new troops were brigaded together with veterans and, so to speak, framed by the latter. All these conditions were lacking in America. Without the considerable mass of military experience that emigrated to America in consequence of the European revolutionary commotions of 1848–1849, the organization of the Union Army would have required a much longer time still. The very small number of the killed and wounded in proportion to the sum total of the troops engaged (customarily one in twenty) proves that most of the engagements, even the latest in Kentucky and Tennessee, were fought mainly with firearms at fairly long range, and that the incidental bayonet charges either soon halted before the enemy's fire or put the foe to flight before it came to a hand-to-hand encounter. Meanwhile, the new campaign has been opened under more favorable auspices with the advance of Buell and Halleck through Kentucky to Tennessee. After the reconquest of Missouri and West Virginia, the Union opened the campaign with the advance into Kentucky. Here the secessionists held three strong positions, fortified camps: Columbus on the Mississippi to their left, Bowling Green in the center, Mill Spring on the Cumberland River to the right. Their line stretched three hundred miles from west to east. The extension of this line denied the three corps the possibility of affording each other mutual support and offered the Union troops the chance of attacking each individually with superior forces. The great mistake in the disposition of the secessionists sprang from the attempt to hold all they had occupied. A single, fortified, strong central camp, chosen as the battlefield for a decisive engagement and held by the main body of the army, would have defended Kentucky far more effectively. It must either have attracted the main force of the Unionists or put the latter in a dangerous position should they attempt to march on without regard to so strong a concentration of troops.

Under the given circumstances the Unionists resolved to attack those three camps one after another, to maneuver their enemy out of them and force him to accept battle in open country. This plan, which conformed to all the rules of the art of war, was carried out with energy and dispatch. Towards the middle of January a corps of about 15,000 Unionists marched on Mill Spring, which was held by 20,000 secessionists. The Unionists maneuvered in a manner that led the enemy to believe he had to deal only with a weak reconnoitering corps. General Zollicoffer fell forthwith into the trap, sallied from his fortified camp, and attacked the Unionists. He soon convinced himself that a superior force confronted him. He fell, and his troops suffered a complete defeat, like the Unionists at Bull Run. This time, however, the victory was exploited in quite other fashion.

The stricken army was hard pressed until it arrived broken, demoralized, without field artillery or baggage, in its encampment at Mill Spring. This camp was pitched on the northern bank at the Cumberland River, so that in the event of another defeat the troops had no retreat open to them save across the river by way of a few steamers and riverboats. We find in general that almost all the secessionist camps were pitched on the *enemy* side of the stream. To take up such a position is not only according to rule, but also very practical if there is a bridge in the rear. In such case the encampment serves as the bridgehead and gives its holders the chance of throwing their fighting forces at pleasure on both banks of the stream and so maintaining complete command of these banks.

Without a bridge in the rear, on the contrary, a camp on the enemy side of the stream cuts off the retreat after an unlucky engagement and compels the troops to capitulate or exposes them to massacre and drowning, a fate that befell the Unionists at Ball's Bluff on the enemy side of the Potomac, whither the treachery of General Stone had sent them.

When the beaten secessionists had pitched their camp at Mill Spring, they had at once understood that an attack by the enemy on their fortifications must be repulsed or in a very short time capitulation must follow. After the experience of the morning they had lost confidence in their powers of resistance. Accordingly, when next day the Unionists advanced to attack the camp, they found that the foe had taken advantage of the night to put across the stream, leaving the camp, the baggage, the artillery and stores behind him. In this way the extreme right of the secessionist line was pushed back to Tennessee, and east Kentucky, where the mass of the population is hostile to the slaveholders' party, was reconquered for the Union.

At the same time—towards the middle of January—the preparations for dislodging the secessionists from Columbus and Bowling Green commenced. A strong flotilla of mortar vessels and ironclad gunboats was held in readiness, and the news was spread in all directions that it was to serve as a convoy to a large army marching along the Mississippi from Cairo to Memphis and New Orleans. All the demonstrations on the Mississippi, however, were merely mock maneuvers. At the decisive moment the gunboats were brought to the Ohio and thence to the Tennessee, up which they traveled as far as Fort Henry. This place, together with Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River, formed the second line of defense of the secessionists in Tennessee. The position was well chosen, for in case of a retreat behind the Cumberland the latter stream would have covered its front, the Tennessee its left flank, while the narrow strip of land between the two streams was sufficiently covered by the two forts abovementioned. The swift action of the Unionists, however, broke through the line itself before the left wing and the center of the first line were attacked.

In the first week of February the gunboats of the Unionists appeared before Fort Henry, which surrendered after a short bombardment. The garrison escaped to Fort Donelson, since the land forces of the expedition were not strong enough to encircle the place. The gunboats now traveled down the Tennessee again, upstream to the Ohio, and thence up the Cumberland as far as Fort Donelson. A single gunboat sailed boldly up the Tennessee through the very heart of the State of Tennessee, skirting the State of Mississippi and pushing on as far as Florence in north Alabama, where a series of swamps and banks (known by the name of the Muscle Shoals) forbade further navigation. This fact, that a single gunboat made this long voyage of at least 150 miles and then returned, without experiencing any kind of attack, proves that Union sentiment prevails along the river and will be very useful to the Union troops should they push forward so far.

The boat expedition up the Cumberland now combined its movements with those of the land forces under Generals Halleck and Grant. The secessionists at Bowling Green were deceived over the movements of the Unionists. They accordingly remained quietly in their camp while, a week after the fall of Fort Henry, Fort Donelson was surrounded on the land side by 40,000 Unionists and threatened on the river side by a strong flotilla of gunboats. Like the camps at Mill Spring and Fort Henry, Fort Donelson had the river lying in the rear, without a bridge for retreat. It was the strongest place the Unionists had attacked up to the present. The works were carried out with the greatest care; moreover, the place was capacious enough to accommodate the 20,000 men who occupied it. On the first day of the attack the gunboats silenced the fire of the batteries trained towards the river side and bombarded the interior of the defense works, while the land troops drove back the enemy outposts and forced the main body of the secessionists to seek shelter right under the guns of their own defense works. On the second day the gunboats, which had suffered severely the day before, appear to have accomplished but little. The land troops, on the contrary, had to fight a long and, in places, hot encounter with the columns of the garrison, which sought to break through the right wing of the enemy in order to secure their line of retreat to Nashville. However, an energetic attack of the Unionist right wing on the left wing of the secessionists, and considerable reinforcements that the left wing of the Unionists received, decided the victory in favor of the assailants. Divers outworks had been stormed. The garrison, forced into its inner lines of defense, without the chance of retreat and manifestly not in a position to withstand an assault next morning, surrendered unconditionally on the following day.

Die Presse, March 26, 1862

PART II

Conclusion of yesterday's feuilleton.

With Fort Donelson, the enemy's artillery, baggage, and military stores fell into the hands of the Unionists; 13,000 secessionists surrendered on the day of its capture, 1,000 more the next day; and as soon as the outposts of the victors appeared before Clarksville, a town that lies farther up the Cumberland River, it opened its gates. Here too considerable supplies for the secessionists had been stored.

The capture of Fort Donelson presents only one riddle: the flight of General Floyd with 5,000 men on the second day of the bombardment. These fugitives were too numerous to be smuggled away in steamboats during the night. With some measures of precaution on the part of the assailants, they could not have got away.

Seven days after the surrender of Fort Donelson, Nashville was occupied by the Federals. The distance between the two places amounts to about 100 English miles, and a march of 15 miles a day, on very wretched roads and during the most unfavorable season of the year, redounds to the honor of the Unionist troops. On receipt of the news of the fall of Fort Donelson, the secessionists evacuated Bowling Green; a week later, they abandoned Columbus and withdrew to a Mississippi island 45 miles south. Thus Kentucky was completely reconquered for the Union. Tennessee, however, can be held by the secessionists only if they invite and win a big battle. They are said in fact to have concentrated 65,000 men for this purpose. Meanwhile, nothing prevents the Unionists from bringing a superior force against them.

The leadership of the Kentucky campaign from Somerset to Nashville deserves the highest praise. The reconquest of so extensive a territory, the advance from the Ohio to the Cumberland during a single month, evidence an energy, resolution, and speed such as have seldom been attained by regular armies in Europe. One may compare, for example, the slow advance of the Allies from Magenta to Solferino in 1859—without pursuit of the retreating foe, without endeavor to cut off his stragglers or in any way to envelop and encircle whole bodies of his troops.

Halleck and Grant, in particular, furnish good examples of resolute military leadership. Without the least regard either for Columbus or Bowling Green, they concentrate their forces on the decisive points, Fort Henry and Fort Donelson, launch a swift and energetic attack on these and precisely thereby render Columbus and Bowling Green untenable. Then they march at once to Clarksville and Nashville, without allowing the retreating secessionists time to take up new positions in north Tennessee. During this rapid pursuit, the corps of secessionist troops in Columbus remains completely cut off from the center and right wing of its army. English papers have criticized this operation unjustly. Even if the attack on Fort Donelson failed, the secessionists kept busy by General Buell at Bowling Green could not dispatch sufficient men to enable the garrison to follow the repulsed Unionists into the open country or to endanger their retreat. Columbus, on the other hand, lay so far off that it could not interfere with Grant's movements at all. In fact, after the Unionists had cleared Missouri of the secessionists, Columbus was for the latter an entirely useless post. The troops that formed its garrison had greatly to hasten their retreat to Memphis or even to Arkansas in order to escape the danger of ingloriously laying down their arms.

In consequence of the clearing of Missouri and the reconquest of Kentucky, the theater of war has so far narrowed that the different armies can cooperate to a certain extent along the whole line of operations and work for the achievement of definite results. In other words, the war now takes on for the first time a *strategic* character, and the geographical configuration of the country acquires a new interest. It is now the task of the Northern generals to find the Achilles heel of the cotton states.

Up to the capture of Nashville no concerted strategy between the army of Kentucky and the army on the Potomac was possible. They were too far apart from one another. They stood in the same front line, but their lines of operation were entirely different. Only with the victorious advance into Tennessee did the movements of the army of Kentucky become important for the entire theater of war.

The American papers influenced by McClellan are going great guns with the "anaconda" envelopment theory. According to this an immense line of armies is to wind round the rebellion, gradually constrict its coils, and finally strangle the enemy. This is sheer childishness. It is a rehash of the so-called *cordon system* devised in Austria about 1770, which was employed against the French from 1792 to 1797 with such great obstinacy and with such constant failure. At Jemappes, Fleurus, and, more especially, at Moutenotte, Millesimo, Dego, Castiglione, and Rivoli, the knockout blow was dealt to this system. The French cut the "anaconda" in two by attacking at a point where they had concentrated superior forces. Then the coils of the "anaconda" were cut to pieces seriatim.

In well-populated and more or less centralized states there is always a center, with the occupation of which by the foe the national resistance would be broken. Paris is a shining example. The slave states, however, possess no such center. They are thinly populated, with few large towns and all these on the seacoast. The question therefore arises: Does a military center of gravity nevertheless exist, with the capture of which the backbone of their resistance breaks, or are they, as Russia still was in 1812, not to be conquered without occupying every village and every plot of land—in a word, the entire periphery? Cast a glance at the geographical formation of *Secessia*, with its long stretch of coast on the Atlantic Ocean and its long stretch of coast on the Gulf of Mexico. So long as the Confederates held Kentucky and Tennessee, the whole formed a great compact mass. The loss of both these states drives an immense wedge into their territory, separating the states on the North Atlantic Ocean from the states on the Gulf of Mexico. The direct route from Virginia and the two Carolinas to Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and even, in part, to Alabama leads through Tennessee, which is now occupied by the Unionists. The *sole* route that, after the complete conquest of Tennessee by the Union, connects the two sections of the slave states goes through Georgia. This proves that *Georgia* is *the key to Secessia*. With the loss of Georgia the Confederacy would be cut into two sections which would have lost all connection with one another. A reconquest of Georgia by the secessionists, however, would be almost unthinkable, for the Unionist fighting forces would be concentrated in a center position, while their adversaries, divided into two camps, would have scarcely sufficient forces to summon to a united attack.

Would the conquest of all Georgia, with the seacoast of Florida, be requisite for such an operation? By no means. In a land where communication, particularly between distant points, depends more on railways than on highways, the seizure of the railways is sufficient. The southernmost railway line between the states on the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic coast goes through Macon and Gordon near Milledgeville.

The occupation of these two points would accordingly cut *Secessia* in two and enable the Unionists to beat one part after another. At the same time, one gathers from the above that no Southern republic is capable of living without the possession of Tennessee. Without Tennessee, Georgia's vital spot lies only eight or ten days' march from the frontier; the North would constantly have its hand at the throat of the South, and on the slightest pressure the South would have to yield or fight for its life anew, under circumstances in which a single defeat would cut off every prospect of success.

From the foregoing considerations it follows:

The Potomac is *not* the most important position of the war theater. The taking of Richmond and the advance of the Potomac army further South—difficult on account of the many streams that cut across the line of march—could produce a tremendous moral effect. From a purely military standpoint, they would decide *nothing*.

The decision of the campaign belongs to the Kentucky army, now in Tennessee. On the one hand, this army is nearest the decisive points; on the other hand, it occupies a territory without which Secession is incapable of living. This army would accordingly have to be strengthened at the expense of all the rest and the sacrifice of all minor operations. Its next points of attack would be Chattanooga and Dalton on the upper Tennessee, the most important railway centers of the entire South. After their occupation the connection between the eastern and western states of *Secessia* would be limited to the connecting lines in Georgia. The further question would then arise of cutting off another railway line with Atlanta and Georgia, and finally of destroying the last connection between the two sections by the capture of Macon and Gordon.

On the contrary, should the "anaconda" plan be followed, then despite all successes in particular cases and even on the Potomac, the war may be prolonged indefinitely, while the financial difficulties together with diplomatic complications acquire fresh scope.

Die Presse, March 27, 1862

A Criticism of American Affairs

The crisis which at the moment dominates conditions in the United States has been brought about by twofold causes: military and political.

Had the last campaign been conducted according to a *single* strategic plan, the main army of the West must then, as previously explained in these columns, have availed itself of its successes in Kentucky and Tennessee to penetrate through north Alabama to Georgia and to seize there the railroad centers at Decatur, Milledgeville, etc. The connection between the Eastern and the Western army of the Secessionists would thereby have been broken and their mutual support rendered impossible. Instead of this, the Kentucky army marched south down the Mississippi in the direction of New Orleans and its victory near Memphis had no other result than to dispatch the greater part of Beauregard's troops to Richmond, so that the Confederates here now suddenly confronted McClellan, who had not exploited the defeat of the enemy's troops at Yorktown and Williamsburg, and on the other hand had from the first split up his own fighting forces, with a superior army in a superior position. McClellan's generalship, already described by us previously, was in itself sufficient to secure the downfall of the strongest and best-disciplined army. Finally, War Secretary Stanton made an unpardonable mistake. To make an impression abroad, he suspended recruiting after the conquest of Tennessee and so condemned the army to constant attenuation, just when it stood most in need of reinforcements for a rapid, decisive offensive. Despite the strategic blunders and despite McClellan's generalship, with a steady influx of recruits the war, if not decided by now, would nevertheless have been rapidly nearing a victorious decision. Stanton's step was so much the more unfortunate as the South was then enlisting every man from 18 to 35 years old, to a man, and was therefore staking everything on a *single* card. It is those people who have been trained in the meantime that almost everywhere give the Confederates the upper hand and secure the initiative to them. They held Halleck fast, dislodged Curtis from Arkansas, beat McClellan, and under Stonewall Jackson gave the signal for the guerrilla raids that now reach as far as the Ohio.

In part, the military causes of the crisis are connected with the political. It was the influence of the Democratic Party that elevated an incompetent like McClellan, because he was formerly a supporter of Breckinridge, to the position of commander in chief of all the military forces of the North. It was anxious regard for the wishes, advantages, and interests of the spokesmen of the *border slave states* that hitherto broke off the Civil War's point of principle and, so to speak, deprived it of its soul. The "loyal" slaveholders of these border states saw to it that the fugitive-slave laws dictated by the South were maintained and the sympathies of the Negroes for the North forcibly suppressed; that no general could venture to put a company of Negroes in the field; and that slavery was finally transformed from the Achilles' heel of the South into its invulnerable hide of horn. Thanks to the slaves, who perform all productive labors, the entire manhood of the South that is fit to fight can be led into the field!

At the present moment, when secession's stocks are rising, the spokesmen of the border states increase their claims. However, Lincoln's appeal to them shows, where it threatens them with inundation by the Abolition party, that things are taking a revolutionary turn. Lincoln knows what Europe does not know, that it is by no means apathy or giving way under pressure of defeat that causes his demand for 300,000 recruits to meet with such a cold response. New England and the Northwest, which have provided the main body of the army, are determined to enforce a revolutionary waging of war on the government and to inscribe the battle slogan of "Abolition of Slavery!" on the star-spangled banner. Lincoln yields only hesitantly and uneasily to this pressure from without, but knows that he is incapable of offering resistance to it for long. Hence his fervent appeal to the border states to renounce the institution of slavery voluntarily and under the conditions of a favorable contract. He knows that it is only the continuance of slavery in the border states that has so far left slavery untouched in the South and prohibited the North from applying its great radical remedy. He errs only if he imagines that the "loyal" slaveholders are to be moved by benevolent speeches and rational arguments. They will yield only to force.

So far we have only witnessed the first act of the Civil War—the *constitutional* waging of war. The second act, the revolutionary waging of war, is at hand.

Meanwhile, during its first session, the Congress—which has now adjourned—has decreed a series of important measures that we will briefly summarize here:

Apart from its financial legislation, it has passed the Homestead Bill that the Northern popular masses had long striven for in vain; by this, a part of the state lands is given gratis for cultivation to the colonists, whether American-born or immigrants. It has abolished slavery in [the District of] Columbia and the national capital, with monetary compensation for the former slaveholders. Slavery has been declared "forever impossible" in all the *Territories* of the United States. The Act under which the new State of West Virginia is taken into the Union prescribes abolition of slavery by stages and declares all Negro children born after July 4, 1863, to be born free. The conditions of this emancipation by stages are on the whole borrowed from the law that was enacted 70 years ago in Pennsylvania for the same purpose. By a fourth Act, all slaves of rebels are to be emancipated as soon as they fall into the hands of the republican army. Another law, which is now being put into effect *for the first time*, provides that these emancipated Negroes may be militarily organized and sent into the field against the South. The independence of the Negro republics of Liberia and Haiti has been recognized, and, finally, a treaty for the abolition of the slave trade has been concluded with England.

Thus, however the dice may fall in the fortunes of battle, it can now safely be said that Negro slavery will not long outlive the Civil War.

Die Presse, August 9, 1862

Abolitionist Demonstrations in America

It was previously observed in these columns that President Lincoln, legally cautious, constitutionally conciliatory, by birth a citizen of the border slave state of Kentucky, escapes only with difficulty from the control of the "loyal" slaveholders, seeks to avoid any open breach with them, and precisely thereby calls forth a conflict with the parties of the North which are consistent in point of principle and are pushed more and more into the foreground by events. The speech that Wendell Phillips delivered at Abington, Massachusetts, on the occasion of the anniversary of the slaves' emancipation in the British West Indies, may be regarded as a prologue to this conflict.

Together with Garrison[1] and G. Smith, Wendell Phillips is the leader of the Abolitionists in New England. For 30 years he has without intermission and at the risk of his life proclaimed the emancipation of the slaves as his battle cry, regardless alike of the persiflage of the press, the enraged howls of paid rowdies, and the conciliatory representations of solicitous friends. Even by his opponents he is acknowledged as one of the greatest orators of the North, as combining iron character with forceful energy and purest conviction. The London *Times*—and what could characterize this magnanimous paper more strikingly—today *denounces* Wendell Phillips's speech at Abington to the government at Washington. It is an "abuse" of freedom of speech. Anything more violent it is scarcely possible to image—says the *Times*—and anything more daring in time of Civil War was never perpetrated in any country by any sane man who valued his life and liberty. In reading the speech…it is scarcely possible to avoid the conclusion that the speaker's object was to force the government to prosecute him.[2]

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[1] William Lloyd Garrison.

And the *Times*, in spite of, or perhaps because of its hatred of, the Union government, appears not at all disinclined to assume the role of public prosecutor!

In the present state of affairs, Wendell Phillips's speech is of greater importance than a battle bulletin. We therefore epitomize its most striking passages.[3]

The government, he says among other things, fights for the maintenance of slavery, and therefore it fights in vain. Lincoln wages a political war. Even at the present time he is more afraid of Kentucky than of the entire North. He believes in the South. The Negroes on the Southern battlefields, when asked whether the rain of cannonballs and bombs that tore up the earth all round and split the trees asunder did not terrify them, answered, "No, massa; we know that they are not meant for us!" The rebels could speak of McClellan's bombs in the same way. They know that they are not meant for them, to do them harm. I do not say that McClellan is a traitor, but I say that if he were a traitor, he must have acted exactly as he has done. Have no fear for Richmond; McClellan will not take it. If the war is continued in this fashion, without a rational aim, then it is a useless squandering of blood and gold. It would be better were the South independent today than to hazard one more human life for a war based on the present execrable policy. To continue the war in the fashion prevailing hitherto requires 125,000 men a year and a million dollars a day.

But you cannot get rid of the South. As Jefferson said of slavery, "The Southern states have the wolf by the ears, but they can neither hold him nor let him go." In the same way we have the South by the ears and can neither hold it nor let it go. Recognize it tomorrow and you will have no peace. For eighty years it has lived with us, in fear of us the whole time, with hatred for us half the time, ever troubling and abusing us. Made presumptuous by conceding its present claims, it would not keep within an imaginary borderline a year—nay, the moment that we speak of conditions of peace, it will cry victory! We shall never have peace until slavery is uprooted. So long as you retain the present tortoise at the head of our government, you make a hole with one hand in order to fill it with the other. Let the entire nation endorse the resolutions of the New York Chamber of Commerce and then the army will have something for which it is worthwhile fighting. Had Jefferson Davis the power, he would not capture Washington. He knows that the bomb that fell in this Sodom would rouse the whole nation.

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[2] The London *Times*, August 22, 1862.

[3] For the complete speech see W. Phillips, *Speeches, Lectures and Letters, Series 1* Boston 1864, 448–463. The address is entitled "The Cabinet."

The entire North would thunder with one voice: "Down with slavery, down with everything that stands in the way of saving the republic!" Jefferson Davis is quite satisfied with his successes. They are greater than he anticipated, far greater! If he can continue to swim on them till March 4, 1863, England will then, and this is in order, recognize the Southern Confederacy…The President has not put the Confiscation Act into operation. He may be honest, but what has his honesty to do with the matter? He has neither insight nor foresight. When I was in Washington, I ascertained that three months ago Lincoln had written the proclamation for a general emancipation of the slaves and that McClellan blustered him out of his decision and that the representatives of Kentucky blustered him into the retention of McClellan, in whom he places no confidence. It will take years for Lincoln to learn to combine his legal scruples as an attorney with the demands of the Civil War. This is the appalling condition of a democratic government and its greatest evil.

In France a hundred men, convinced for good reasons, would carry the nation with them, but in order that our government may take a step, nineteen millions must previously put themselves in motion. And to how many of these millions has it been preached for years that slavery is an institution ordained by God! With these prejudices, with paralyzed hands and hearts, you entreat the President to save you from the Negro! If this theory is correct, then only slaveholding despotism can bring a temporary peace…I know Lincoln. I have taken his measure in Washington. He is a first-rate *second-rate* man. He waits honestly, like another Vesenius, for the nation to take him in hand and sweep away slavery through him…In past years, not far from the platform from which I now speak, the Whigs fired off small mortars in order to stifle my voice. And what is the result?

The sons of these Whigs now fill their own graves in the marshes of Chickahominy! Dissolve this Union in God's name and put another in its place, on the cornerstone of which is written: "Political equality for all the citizens of the world…" During my stay in Chicago I asked lawyers of Illinois, among whom Lincoln had practiced, what sort of man he was. Whether he could say No. The answer was: "He lacks backbone. If the Americans wanted to elect a man absolutely incapable of leadership, of initiative, then they were bound to elect Abraham Lincoln…Never has a man heard him say No!…" I asked, "Is McClellan a man who can say No?" The manager of the Chicago Central Railroad, on which McClellan was employed, answered, "He is incapable of making a decision. Put a question to him and it takes an hour for him to think of the answer. During the time that he was connected with the administration of the Central Railroad, he never decided a single important controversial question."

And these are the two men who, above all others, now hold the fate of the Northern republic in their hands! Those best acquainted with the state of the army assure us that Richmond could have been taken five times, had the do-nothing at the head of the army of the Potomac allowed it, but he preferred to dig up dirt in the Chickahominy swamps, in order ignominiously to abandon the locality and his dirt ramparts. Lincoln, out of cowardly fear of the border slave states, keeps this man in his present position, but the day will come when Lincoln will confess that he has never believed in McClellan…Let us hope that the war lasts long enough to transform us into men, and then we shall quickly triumph. God has put the thunderbolt of emancipation into our hands in order to crush this rebellion…

Die Presse, August 30, 1862

Letters

Letter from Marx to Pavel Vasilyevich Annenkov

… Thus, M. Proudhon, mainly because he lacks the historical knowledge, has not perceived that as men develop their productive forces, that is, as they live, they develop certain relations with one another and that the nature of these relations is bound to change with the change and growth of these productive forces. He has not perceived that *economic categories* are only *abstract expressions* of these actually existing relations and only remain true while these relations exist. He therefore falls into the error of the bourgeois economists, who regard these economic categories as eternal laws and not as historical laws which are valid only for a particular historical development, for a definite development of the productive forces. Instead, therefore, of regarding the politico-economic categories as abstract expressions of the real, transitory, historic social relations, M. Proudhon, by a mystic inversion, regards real relations merely as reifications of these abstractions. These abstractions themselves are formulas which have been slumbering in the bosom of God the Father since the beginning of the world.

But here our good M. Proudhon falls into severe intellectual convulsions. If all these economic categories are emanations from the bosom of God, if they constitute the hidden and eternal life of man, how does it come about, first, that there is such a thing as development, and secondly, that M. Proudhon is not a conservative? He explains these evident contradictions by a whole system of antagonisms …

Now I will give you an example of M. Proudhon's dialectics.

Freedom and *slavery* constitute an antagonism. I need not speak either of the good or of the bad sides of freedom. As to slavery, I need not speak of its bad sides. The only thing that has to be explained is the good side of slavery. We are not dealing with indirect slavery, the slavery of the proletariat, but with direct slavery, the slavery of the black people in Surinam, in Brazil, and in the Southern States of North America.

Direct slavery is as much the pivot of our industrialism today as machinery, credit, etc. Without slavery, no cotton; without cotton, no modern industry. It is slavery which has given value to the colonies; the colonies have created world trade; world trade is the necessary condition of large-scale machine industry. Thus, before the traffic in Negroes began, the colonies supplied the Old World with only very few products and did not visibly change the face of the earth. Slavery is therefore an economic category of the utmost importance. Without slavery, North America, the most progressive country, would be turned into a patriarchal land. If North America were wiped off the map of the world the result would be anarchy, the total decay of trade and of modern civilization. But to make slavery disappear would mean to wipe America off the map of the world. Since slavery is an economic category, it has existed in every nation since the world began. Modern nations have merely known how to disguise slavery in their own countries while they openly imported it into the New World. After these observations on slavery, how will our worthy M. Proudhon proceed? He will look for the synthesis between freedom and slavery, the true *juste-milieu*; in other words, equilibrium between slavery and freedom…

Indeed, he does what all good bourgeois do. They all assert that in principle—that is, considered as abstract ideas—competition, monopoly, etc. are the only basis of life, but that in practice they leave much to be desired. They all want competition without the pernicious effects of competition. They all want the impossible, namely, the conditions of bourgeois existence without the necessary consequences of those conditions. None of them understands that the bourgeois form of production is historical and transitory, just as the feudal form was. This mistake arises from the fact that the bourgeois man is to them the only possible basis of every society; they cannot imagine a society in which men have ceased to be bourgeois…

You will now understand why M. Proudhon is the declared enemy of every political movement. The solution of actual problems does not lie for him in public action but in the dialectical rotations of his own head. Since to him the categories are the motive force, it is not necessary to change practical life in order to change the categories. Quite the contrary. One must change the categories and the consequence will be a change in the existing society.

In his desire to reconcile the contradictions, M. Proudhon does not even ask whether it is not the basis of those contradictions that must really be overthrown. He is exactly like the political doctrinaire who chooses to regard the king, the chamber of deputies, and the chamber of peers as integral parts of social life, as eternal categories. All he is looking for is a new formula by which to establish an equilibrium between these powers whose equilibrium consists precisely in the actually existing movement in which one power is now the conqueror and now the slave of the other. Thus in the eighteenth century a number of mediocre minds were busy finding the true formula which would bring the social estates, nobility, king, parliament, etc., into equilibrium, and they woke up one morning to find that all this—king, parliament and nobility—had disappeared. The true equilibrium in this antagonism was the overthrow of all the social relations which served as a basis for these feudal institutions and for the antagonisms of these feudal institutions.

Because M. Proudhon places eternal ideas, the categories of pure reason, on the one side and human beings and their practical life, which, according to him, is the application of these categories, on the other, one finds with him from the beginning a *dualism* between life and ideas, between soul and body, a dualism which recurs in many forms. You can see now that this antagonism is nothing but the incapacity of M. Proudhon to understand the profane origin and the profane history of the categories which he deifies…

December 28, 1846

Letters between Karl Marx and Frederick Engels (1860–1866)

MARX TO ENGELS, JANUARY 11, 1860[1]

In my opinion, the biggest things that are happening in the world today are on the one hand the movement of the slaves in America started by the death of John Brown, and on the other the movement of the serfs in Russia…

I have just seen in the *Tribune* that there has been a fresh rising of slaves in Missouri, naturally suppressed. But the signal has now been given. If things get serious by and by, what will then become of Manchester?

ENGELS TO MARX, JANUARY 26, 1860

Your opinion of the significance of the slave movement in America and Russia is now confirmed. The Harper's Ferry affair with its aftermath in Missouri bears its fruit: the free Negroes in the South are everywhere hunted out of the states, and I have just read in the first New York cotton report (W. P. Wright and Co., January 10, 1860) that the planters have hurried their cotton on to the ports in order to guard against any probable consequences arising out of the Harper's Ferry affair.

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[1] This and the extracts which follow relating to the American Civil War have been taken from the complete German edition of the works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: *Gesamtausgabe, Dritte Abteilung* (*"Der Briefwechsel zwischen Marx und Engels"*), *Band* 2 (1854–1860) and *Band* 3 (1861–1867) [*Collected Works*, Third Division ("The Correspondence Between Marx and Engels"), Vols. 2 and 3], Berlin 1930. A number of the letters are contained in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Correspondence, A Selection with Commentary and Notes*, London and New York 1934.

ENGELS TO MARX, JANUARY 7, 1861

Things in North America are also becoming exciting. Matters must be going very badly for them with the slaves if the Southerners play so risky a game. The least volunteer *putsch* from the North could set everything ablaze. In any case, it seems that one way or another slavery is rapidly going to come to an end, and then it will be the same with cotton production. But how this will react on England will then soon become manifest. And with such mighty movements an ass like Bonaparte believes he can permanently fish in troubled waters.

MARX TO ENGELS, JUNE 9, 1861

Many thanks for the letter about America. Should anything important (militarily) occur, then always write me your opinion about it. According to the picture that I have formed of General Scott—now, moreover, 76 years old—from the Mexican War (see Ripley), I expect the greatest blunders from him unless the old donkey is controlled by others. Slowness and indecision, above all. For the rest, I see by the facts reported in the *Tribune* that the North now speaks openly of a slave war and the destruction of slavery.

ENGELS TO MARX, NOVEMBER 27, 1861

Have these Yankees then gone completely crazy to carry out the mad coup with the Confederate Commissioners? The fact that here in the Channel too a warship was waiting for the mail steamer proves that general instructions must have been issued from Washington.

To take political prisoners by force on a foreign ship is the clearest *casus belli* there can be. The fellows must be sheer fools to land themselves in for a war with England. If war should actually break out, you can send your letters to New York via Germany or the Havre addressed to an intermediary, but you will have to take care that you don't give any assistance to the enemies of the Queen.

MARX TO ENGELS, DECEMBER 9, 1861

War, as I have declared in the *Presse* from the first day, will not break out with America, and I only regret that I had not the means to exploit the asininity of the Reuter and Times–swayed Stock Exchange during this fool period.

MARX TO ENGELS, MARCH 3, 1862

I should be glad if you supplied me *this week* (by Friday morning) with an *English* article on the American War. You can write *entirely without constraint*. The *Tribune* will print it as the letter of a foreign officer. *Nota bene:* The *Tribune* hates McClellan, who is in league with the Democratic Party and who, *so long as* he was commander in chief of all the armies, prevented any action not only on the Potomac (where this was perhaps justified) but in *all* theaters of war, particularly in the West, by *direct intervention*. (He was also the soul of the extremely disgraceful intrigue against Frémont.) This Mc, moreover, out of *esprit de corps* and hatred of the civilians, protected all the traitors in the army, e.g., Colonel Maynard and General Stone. The arrest of the latter ensued a day or two after [Mc]Clellan had been deposed as commander-in-chief of the whole army. In the same way, the shameless Washington "representative" of the *New York Herald* was arrested as a spy contrary to M'Clellan's wishes and after he had entertained the entire staff of M'C[lellan] the day before at a champagne breakfast.

MARX TO ENGELS, MAY 6, 1862

I shall write to Dana once more. I miss the sending of the *Tribune* sadly. This is a mean trick of Greeley and McElrath. From the last numbers of the *Tribune* for March I have learned two things. Firstly, that McClellan had been *accurately* informed eight days beforehand of the Confederates' retreat. Secondly, that the *Times*'s Russell availed himself of his nosing in Washington during the *Trent* affair to gamble on the Stock Exchange in New York…

Bonaparte's present maneuvers in Mexico (the affair originally emanated from Pam[2]) are explained by the fact that Juarez only recognizes the official debt to France of £46,000. But Miramon and his gang, per medium of the Swiss banker Jecker *et* Co., had issued state bonds to the amount of $52,000,000 (on which about $4,000,000 have been paid). These state bonds—Jecker *et* Co. being only the *hommes de pailles*[3]—have fallen almost for *zéro* into the hands of Morny *et* Co. They demand recognition of them by Juarez. *Hinc illae lacrimae*.[4]

Schurz is—a brigadier general with Frémont! ! !

MARX TO ENGELS, MAY 27, 1862

The blowing up of the *Merrimac* seems to me an evident act of cowardice on the part of the dirty dogs of Confederacy. The hounds could still risk something. It is wonderfully fine how the *Times* (which supported all the Coercion Bills against Ireland with so much fiery zeal) wails that "liberty" must be lost in the event of the North tyrannizing the South. The *Economist* is also good. In its last number it declares that the Yankees' financial prosperity—the nondepreciation of their paper money—is *incomprehensible* to it (although the matter is perfectly simple). It had hitherto consoled its readers from week to week with this depreciation. Although it now admits that it does not understand what is its business and has misled its readers concerning this, it is at present solacing them with dark doubts about the "military operations," of which it officially knows nothing.

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[2] Lord Palmerston, prime minister 1855–58 and 1859–65.

[3] Straw men [original editor's note].

[4] Hence these tears [original editor's note].

What extraordinarily facilitated the paper operations of the Yankees (the main point being the confidence placed in their cause and therewith in their government) was without question the circumstance that in consequence of secession the West was almost denuded of paper money and therefore of a circulating medium generally. All the banks whose principal securities consisted of the bonds of slave states were bankrupted. Moreover, currency for millions, which circulated in the West in the form of direct banknotes of the Southern banks, was swept away. Then, partly in consequence of the Morrill tariff, partly in consequence of the war itself, which largely put an end to the import of luxuries, the Yankees had a balance of trade and therefore a rate of exchange favorable to themselves and against Europe the whole time. An unfavorable rate of exchange might have badly affected the patriotic confidence in their paper on the part of the philistines.

For the rest—this comical concern of John Bull for the interest on the national debt that Uncle Sam will have to pay! As if it were not a mere bagatelle in comparison with Bull's national debt; moreover, the United States are unquestionably richer today than were the Bulls with their debt of a billion in 1815.

Has Pam not got Bonaparte into a pretty pickle in Mexico?

ENGELS TO MARX, MAY 29, 1862

Anneke is with Buell's army and from today is writing in the *Augsburger*. I am rather anxious about Halleck's troops; the affair drags on so long, and yet he does not appear to receive any reinforcements, though Spence's lies in the *Times* have surely no significance. Willich is a colonel (the eternal colonel!) and commands the 32nd Indiana regiment…

A certain amount of guerrilla warfare does now seem after all to be beginning, but it is certainly not of great importance, and if only a victory ensues, the reserve forces following in its wake, together with some cavalry, will soon put an end to the business. In case of a defeat, it would of course be vexatious.

ENGELS TO MARX, JULY 30, 1862[5]

Things go wrong in America, and it is after all Mr. Stanton who is chiefly to blame, for the reason that after the conquest of Tennessee he suspended recruiting out of sheer vainglory and so condemned the army to constant weakening just when it stood most in need of reinforcements for a rapid, decisive offensive. With a steady influx of recruits, even if the war were not decided by now, its success would nevertheless have been beyond doubt. With continual victories recruits would also have come freely. This step was all the sillier as the South was then enlisting all men from 18 to 35 years of age, and was therefore staking everything on a *single* card. It is those people who have joined up in the meantime who now give the Confederates the upper hand everywhere and secure the initiative to them. They held Halleck fast, dislodged Curtis from Arkansas, smote McClellan, and under Jackson in the Shenandoah valley gave the signal for the guerrilla raids that now reach as far as the Ohio. No one could have acted more stupidly than Stanton.

Further. When Stanton saw that he could not dislodge McClellan from the command of the Potomac army, he perpetrated the stupidity of weakening him by conferring special commands on Frémont, Banks, and McDowell *and of splitting up the forces to the end of removing McClellan*. The consequence of this is not only that McC[lellan] has been beaten, but also that public opinion now maintains that it is not McC[lellan] but Stanton who is to blame for the defeat. Serves Mr. Stant[on] right.

All that would be of no consequence; it might even be of service, in that the war would at last be waged in a revolutionary way. But there's the trouble. The defeats do not stir these Yankees up; they make them slack. If, merely to obtain recruits, they have already come to the point of declaring themselves prepared to take them *for nine months only*, what is meant is nothing other than this: we are in a bad way, and all we want is the semblance of an army as a means of making a demonstration during the peace negotiations. Those 300,000 volunteers were the criterion, and by refusing to provide them the North declares that to it, its whole cause is *au fond* muck. Furthermore, what cowardice in government and Congress. They are afraid of conscription, of resolute financial steps, of attacks on slavery, of everything that is urgently necessary; they let everything loaf along as it will, and if the semblance of some measure finally gets through Congress, the honorable Lincoln so qualifies it that nothing at all is left of it any longer. This slackness, this collapse like a punctured pig's bladder, under the pressure of defeats that have annihilated one army, the strongest and best, and actually left Washington exposed, this total absence of any elasticity in the whole mass of the people—this proves to me that it is all up. The few mass meetings, etc., do not mean anything; they don't attain even the stir of a presidential election.

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[5] Part of this letter is included by Marx in his article "A Criticism of American Affairs," *Die Presse*, August 9, 1862, 198–201.

In addition, the total lack of talent. One general more stupid than the other. Not one that would be capable of the least initiative or of independent decision. For three months the initiative once more wholly with the adversary. Then, one financial measure more lunatic than the other. Helplessness and cowardice everywhere, save among the common soldiers. The politicians in like case—just as absurd and devoid of counsel. And the populace is more helpless than if it had lingered three thousand years under the Austrian scepter.

For the South, on the contrary—it's no use shutting one's eyes to the fact—it's a matter of bloody earnest. That we get no cotton is already one proof. The guerrillas in the border states are a second. But that after being thus shut off from the world, an agricultural people can sustain such a war and after severe defeats and losses in resources, men, and territory can nevertheless now stand forth as the victor and threaten to carry its offensive right into the North, this is in my opinion decisive. Besides, they fight quite famously, and with the second occupation of Kentucky and Tennessee, what Union feeling still existed there outside the highlands is now surely lost.

If they get Missouri, they get the Territories too, and then the North can pack up.

As said, if the North does not proceed forthwith in revolutionary fashion, it will get an ungodly hiding and deserve it—and it looks like it.

MARX TO ENGELS, JULY 30, 1862

As to America, that, says he [Lassalle], is quite interesting. The Yankees have no "ideas." "Individual liberty" is merely a "negative idea," etc., and more of this old, decayed, speculative rubbish.

MARX TO ENGELS, AUGUST 7, 1862

I do not altogether share your views on the American Civil War. I do not think that all is up. The Northerners have been dominated from the first by the representatives of the border slave states, who also pushed McClellan, that old partisan of Breckinridge, to the top. The Southerners, on the other hand, acted as one man from the beginning. The North itself has turned the slaves into a military force on the side of the Southerners, instead of turning it against them. The South leaves productive labor to the slaves and could therefore put its whole fighting strength in the field without disturbance. The South had unified military leadership, the North had not. That no strategic plan existed was already obvious from all the maneuvers of the Kentucky army after the conquest of Tennessee. In my opinion all this will take another turn. In the end the North will make war seriously, adopt revolutionary methods, and throw over the domination of the border slave statesmen. A single Negro regiment would have a remarkable effect on Southern nerves.

The difficulty of getting the 300,000 men seems to me purely political. The Northwest and New England wish to, and will, force the government to give up the diplomatic method of conducting war which it has used hitherto, and they are now making terms on which the 300,000 men shall come forth. If Lincoln does not give way (which he will do, however), there will be a revolution.

As to the lack of military talent, the method which has prevailed up till now of selecting generals purely from considerations of diplomacy and party intrigue is scarcely designed to bring talent to the front. General Pope seems to me to be a man of energy, however.

With regard to the financial measures, they are clumsy, as they are bound to be in a country where up to now no taxes (for the whole state) have in fact existed; but they are not nearly so idiotic as the measures taken by Pitt and Co. The present depreciation of money is due, I think, not to economic but to purely political reasons—distrust. It will therefore change with a different policy.

The long and short of the business seems to me to be that a war of this kind must be conducted on revolutionary lines, while the Yankees have so far been trying to conduct it constitutionally.

MARX TO ENGELS, SEPTEMBER 10, 1862

As regards the Yankees, I am assuredly still of my previous opinion that the North will finally prevail; certainly the Civil War may go through all sorts of episodes, even armistices, perhaps, and be long drawn out. The South would and could only conclude peace on condition that it received the border slave states. In this event California would also fall to it; the Northwest would follow, and the entire Federation, with perhaps the exception of the New England states, would form a single country once more, this time under the acknowledged supremacy of the slaveholders. It would be the reconstruction of the United States on the basis demanded by the South. This, however, is impossible and will not happen.

The North can, for its part, only conclude peace if the Confederacy limits itself to the old slave states and those confined between the Mississippi River and the Atlantic. In this case the Confederacy would soon come to its blessed end. Intervening armistices, etc., on the basis of a *status quo*, could at most entail pauses in the prosecution of the war.

The manner in which the North wages war is only to be expected from a *bourgeois* republic, where fraud has so long reigned supreme. The South, an oligarchy, is better adapted thereto, particularly as it is an oligarchy where the whole of the productive labor falls on the Negroes and the four millions of "white trash" are filibusters by profession. All the same, I would wager my head that these boys come off second best, despite "Stonewall Jackson." To be sure, it is possible that it will come to a sort of revolution in the North itself first.

Willich is a brigadier general and, as Kapp has related in Cologne, Steffen is now to take the field also.

It seems to me that you let yourself be swayed a little too much by the military aspect of things.

MARX TO ENGELS, OCTOBER 29, 1862

As for America, I believe that the Maryland campaign was decisive insofar as it showed that even in this section of the border states most sympathetic to the South, support for the Confederates is weak. But the whole struggle turns on the border states. Whoever gets them dominates the Union. At the same time, the fact that Lincoln issued the forthcoming Emancipation Act at a moment when the Confederates were pushing forward in Kentucky shows that all consideration for the loyal slaveholders in the border states has ceased. The emigration of the slave owners from Missouri, Kentucky, and Tennessee to the South, with their black chattels, is already enormous, and if the war is prolonged for a while, as it is certain to be, the Southerners will have lost all hold there. The South began the war for these territories. The war itself was the means of destroying its power in the border states, where apart from this the ties with the South were becoming weaker every day, because a market can no longer be found for the breeding of slaves and the internal slave trade. In my opinion, therefore, for the South it will only be a matter now of the defensive. But their sole possibility of success lay in an offensive. If the report is confirmed that Hooker is getting the active command of the Potomac army, that McClellan is being "retired" to the "theoretical" post of commander in chief, and that Halleck is taking over the chief command in the West, then the conduct of the war in Virginia may also take on a more energetic character. Moreover, the most favorable time of year for the Confederates is now past.

There is no doubt at all that morally the collapse of the Maryland campaign was of the most tremendous importance.

As to finance, the United States know from the time of the War of Independence, and we know from the Austrian experience, how far one can go with depreciated paper money. It is a fact that the Yankees never exported more corn to England than they have this year, that the present harvest is again far above the average, and that the trade balance was never more favorable for them than it has been for the last two years. As soon as the new system of taxation (a very hackneyed one, it is true, exactly in Pitt's style) comes into operation, the paper money which up to now has only been continually *emitted* will also at last begin to *flow back again*. An extension of the paper issue on the present scale will therefore became superfluous and further depreciation will thus be checked. What had made even the present depreciation less dangerous than it was in France, and even in England, in similar circumstances has been the fact that the Yankees never prohibited *two prices*, a gold price and a paper price. The actual damage done resolves itself into a state debt, for which the proper equivalent has never been received, and a premium on jobbing and speculation.

When the English boast that their depreciation was never more than 11½ percent (other people believe that it amounted to more than double this during some time), they conveniently forget that they not only continued to pay their old taxes but every year paid new ones as well, so that the return flow of the banknotes was assured from the beginning, while the Yankees have actually carried on the war for a year and a half *without taxes* (except the greatly diminished import duties), simply by repeating the issue of paper. For a process of this kind, which has now reached the turning point, the actual depreciation is still comparatively small.

The fury with which the Southerners have received Lincoln's Acts proves their importance. All Lincoln's Acts appear like the mean pettifogging conditions which one lawyer puts to his opposing lawyer. But this does not alter their historic content, and indeed it amuses me when I compare them with the drapery in which the Frenchman envelops even the most unimportant point.

Of course, like other people, I see the repulsive side of the form the movement takes among the Yankees, but I find the explanation of it in the nature of "bourgeois" democracy. The events over there are a world upheaval, nevertheless, and there is nothing more disgusting in the whole business than the English attitude towards them.

ENGELS TO MARX, NOVEMBER 5, 1862

As regards America I also think, of course, that the Confederates in Maryland have received an unexpected moral blow of great significance. I am also convinced that the *definite* possession of the border states will decide the result of the war. But I am by no means certain that the affair is going to proceed along such classic lines as you appear to believe. Despite all the screams of the Yankees, there is still no sign whatever available that the people regard this business as a real question of national existence. On the contrary, these election victories of the Democrats go to prove rather that the party which has had enough of the war is growing. If there were only some proof or some indication that the masses in the North were beginning to rise as they did in France in 1792 and 1793, then it would all be very fine. But the only revolution to be expected seems rather to be a Democratic counterrevolution and a rotten peace, including the partition of the border states. That this would not be the end of the affair by a long way—granted. But for the present moment I must say I cannot work up any enthusiasm for a people which on such a colossal issue allows itself to be continually beaten by a fourth of its own population and which after eighteen months of war has achieved nothing more than the discovery that all its generals are idiots and all its officials rascals and traitors. After all, the thing must happen differently, even in a bourgeois republic, if it is not to end in utter failure. I entirely agree with what you say about the meanness of the English way of looking at the business.

ENGELS TO MARX, NOVEMBER 15, 1862

I impatiently await the steamer that is bringing news of the New York elections. If the Democrats triumph in the State of New York, then I no longer know what I am to think of the Yankees. That a people placed in a great historical dilemma, which is at the same time a matter of its own existence, can after eighteen months' struggle become reactionary in its mass and vote for climbing down is a bit beyond my understanding. Good as it is from one aspect that even in America the bourgeois republic exposes itself in thoroughgoing fashion, so that in future it can never again be preached on its own merits, but solely as a means, and a form of transition, to the social revolution, still it is mortifying that a lousy oligarchy with only half the number of inhabitants proves itself just as strong as the unwieldy, great, helpless democracy. For the rest, if the Democrats triumph, the worthy McClellan and the West Pointers have the better of it most beautifully, and its glory will soon be at an end. The fellows are capable of concluding peace, if the South returns to the Union on condition that the President shall always be a Southerner and the Congress shall always consist of Southerners and Northerners in equal numbers. They are even capable of proclaiming Jeff Davis President of the United States forthwith and to surrender even the whole of the border states, if there is no other way to peace. Then, good-bye America.

Of Lincoln's emancipation, likewise, one still sees no effect up to the present, save that from fear of a Negro inundation the Northwest has voted Democratic.

MARX TO ENGELS, NOVEMBER 17, 1862

It seems to me that you are looking too much at only one side of the American quarrel. I have looked at a mass of Southern papers in the American coffeehouse and have seen from these that the Confederacy is in a tight corner. The English newspapers have suppressed the battle of "Corinth." The Southern papers describe it as the most extraordinarily bad luck that has befallen them since the armed rising. The State of *Georgia* has declared the Confederate "Conscription Acts" to be null and void. In the person of Floyd the thief, *Virginia* has disputed the right of the "*creatures* (literally) of Jefferson Davis" further to levy troops in his state. Oldham, representative of *Texas* in the Congress of Richmond, has lodged a protest against the transportation of the "picked troops" of the Southwest to the East, that is, Virginia. From all these disputes two things emerge quite incontestably:

That the Confederate government has overreached itself in its violent efforts to fill the ranks of the army;

That the states are asserting their "state rights" against the separatist Confederacy, just as the latter made them its pretext against the Union.

I regard the victories of the Democrats in the North as a reaction, which was made easy for this conservative and blackleg element by the Federal government's bad direction of the war and financial blunders. It is for the rest a species of reaction met with in every revolutionary movement, and at the time of the Convention, for instance, was so strong that it was considered counterrevolutionary to want to submit the death of the King to *suffrage universel*[6] and under the Directory so strong that Mr. Bonaparte I had to bombard Paris.

On the other hand, the elections have no bearing on the composition of the Congress prior to December 4, 1863; they serve, therefore, merely as a spur to the Republican government, over whose head the sword hangs. And in any case the Republican House of Representatives will put the term of life allotted to it to better use, if only from hatred of the opposing party.

As to McClellan, he has in his own army Hooker and other Republicans, who will any day arrest him on the order of the government.

In addition, there is the French attempt at intervention, which will call forth a reaction against the reaction.

I do not therefore regard things as so bad. What might be much more injurious in my view is the sheep's attitude of the workers in Lancashire. Such a thing has never been heard of in the world. All the more is this the case as the manufacturing rabble do not even pretend "to make sacrifices" themselves, but leave to the rest of England the honor of keeping their army going for them; that is, impose on the rest of England the costs of maintenance of their variable capital.

During this recent period England has disgraced herself more than any other country, the workers by their christian slave nature, the bourgeois and aristocrats by their enthusiasm for slavery in its most direct form. But the two manifestations supplement one another.

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[6] Universal suffrage; that is, a general vote.

MARX TO ENGELS, JANUARY 2, 1863

Burnside seems to have committed great tactical blunders in the battle of Fredericksburg. He was obviously nervous in the employment of such great military forces. As far, however, as the fundamental asininity is concerned: 1. In connection with the wait of 26 days, there is unquestionably direct treason at work in the war administration at Washington. Even the New York correspondent of the *Times* admitted that only after weeks did Burnside obtain resources which had been promised him immediately. 2. That nevertheless he then made this attack shows the moral weakness of the man. The worthy *Tribune* began to cast suspicion on him and threatened him with dismissal. This paper, with its enthusiasm and its ignorance, does great harm.

The Democrats and M'Clellanists naturally cried out in unison, in order to exaggerate the unfortunate position. For the "rumor" that M'Clellan, the "Monk" of the *Times*, had been summoned to Washington, we are indebted to Mr. Reuter.

"Politically," the defeat was good. They ought not to have had good luck before January 1, 1863. Anything of the sort could have caused the "Proclamation" to be revoked.

The *Times* and Co. are utterly furious over the workers' meetings in Manchester, Sheffield, and *London*. It is very good that the eyes of the Yankees are opened in this way. For the rest, Opdyke (Mayor of New York and political economist) has already said at a meeting in New York: "We know that the English working class are with us, and that the governing classes of England are against us."

I greatly regret that Germany does not hold similar demonstrations. They cost nothing and "internationally" bring in large returns. Germany would have all the more warrant for these, as in this war she has done more for the Yankees than France in the eighteenth century. It is the old German stupidity of not making herself felt in the world theater and stressing what she actually accomplishes.

ENGELS TO MARX, FEBRUARY 17, 1863

Things look rotten in Yankeeland. It is true that with the customary irony of world history the Democrats, as against the philistine, have now become the war party, and the bankrupt poetaster Ch. Mackay has again made himself thoroughly ridiculous. I also hear from private sources in New York that the preparations of the North are being continued on a hitherto unheard-of scale. But, on the other hand, the signs of moral slackening are increasing daily, and the inability to conquer is daily becoming greater. Where is the party whose victory and *avènement*[7] would be synonymous with prosecution of the war *à outrance*[8] and by every means? The *people* has been bamboozled, that is the trouble, and it is lucky that a peace is a physical impossibility, otherwise they would have made one long ago, merely to be able to live for the almighty dollar again.

A Confederate major, who participated in the engagements near Richmond on Lee's staff, told me during the last few days that according to papers which Lee himself had shown him, the rebels had no less than 40,000 stragglers at the end of these actions! He referred specifically to the Western regiments of the Federals with great respect; for the rest, however, he is an ass. [*The conclusion of this letter is missing—Ed.*]

ENGELS TO MARX, JUNE 11, 1863

There are nice goings-on in America. Fighting Joe has made an awful fool of himself with his boasts,[9] Rosecrans is asleep, and only Grant operates well. His movement against Vicksburg from southwest to northeast, cutting off the relief army, repulsing it; then rapid advance against Vicksburg; and even the impetuous, unavailing assaults are all very good. I do not believe in the possibility of assembling sufficient relief troops in time. On the other hand, we have so often seen the American generals suddenly operate well for a fortnight and then perpetrate the greatest asininities once more, that one can say nothing whatever about their future movements.

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[7] Advent; appearance on the scene.

[8] To the finish.

[9] Refers to General Hooker. Toward the close of March 1863, Hooker announced to his officers that his plans were perfect and that he would have no mercy upon Lee. At the battle of Chancellorsville (May 1863), the Confederate army, though outnumbered two to one, forced Hooker to retreat. Despite this reverse, the Union commander issued an order in which he congratulated his army for its "achievements." (For his General Orders, No. 49, see *War of the Rebellion: Official Records, Army*, 1 ser., xxv, pt. 1, p. 171).

MARX TO ENGELS, MAY 26, 1864

What do you say of Grant's operations? The *Times*, of course, has admiration only for Lee's strategy, concealed behind retreats. "It," said Tussy[10] this morning, "considers this very canny, I dare say." I wish for nothing more fervently than that Butler may have success. It would be priceless, if he marched into Richmond first. It would be bad if Grant had to retreat, but I think that fellow knows what he is about. At any rate, the first Kentucky campaign, Vicksburg, and the beating that Bragg got in Tennessee are due to him.

MARX TO ENGELS, JUNE 7, 1864

The American news seems to me to be very good, and I was particularly delighted with today's leader in the *Times*, in which it proves that Grant is being beaten continuously and will possibly be punished for his defeats—by the capture of Richmond.

MARX TO ENGELS, SEPTEMBER 7, 1864

As regards America, I consider the present moment, *entre nous*, to be very critical. If it brings Grant a great defeat or Sherman a great victory, then it's all right. A chronic series of small checks, precisely at the present election time, would be dangerous. I am entirely of your opinion that thus far Lincoln's reelection is pretty certain,

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[10] Refers to Eleanor Marx, Karl Marx's youngest daughter. She became the wife of the English socialist, Edward Aveling, and took an active part in the British labor movement.

still a hundred to one. But in the model country of the democratic swindle this election time is full of contingencies that may give the logic of events (an expression that Magnus Urquhartus[11] considers to be just as senseless as "the justice of a locomotive") a quite unexpected smack in the face. An armistice seems to be very necessary for the South, to save it from complete exhaustion. It has been the first to bring up this cry not only in its Northern organs, but directly in the Richmond organs, though now, when it has found an echo in New York, the *Richmond Examiner* throws it back to the Yankees with scorn. That Mr. Davis has decided to treat the Negro soldiers as "prisoners of war"—latest official instruction of his War Secretary—is very characteristic.

Lincoln has in his hands great resources with which to carry this election. (Peace proposals on his part are naturally mere humbug!) The election of an opposition candidate would probably lead to a real *revolution*. But all the same one cannot fail to recognize that for the coming eight weeks, in which the issue will in the first instance be decided, much depends on military accident. This is absolutely the most critical point since the beginning of the war. If this is shifted, old Lincoln can then blunder on to his heart's content. For the rest, the old man cannot possibly "make" generals. He could already choose his ministers better. The Confederate papers, however, attack their ministers quite as much as the Yankees do those at Washington. If Lincoln gets through this time—as is very probable—it will be on a much more radical platform and under wholly changed circumstances. In conformity with his legal manner, the old man will then find more radical methods compatible with his conscience.

MARX TO ENGELS, DECEMBER 2, 1864

The worst of such an agitation is that one is much bothered as soon as one participates in it. For example, it was again a matter of an

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[11] The "Great Urquhart," or David Urquhart, who was a British diplomat, writer and publisher of *The Free Press*, to which Marx contributed from 1856–7.

Address, this time to Lincoln,[12] and again I had to compose the stuff (which was much harder than a substantial work), in order that the phraseology to which this sort of scribbling is restricted should at least be distinguished from the democratic, vulgar phraseology…

As the Address to Lincoln was to be handed to Adams, *part* of the Englishmen on the Committee wanted to have the deputation introduced by a member of Parliament, since it was customary. This hankering was defeated by the majority of the English and the unanimity of the Continentals, and it was declared, on the contrary, that such old English customs ought to be abolished. On the other hand, M. Le Lubez[13], like a real *crapaud*, wanted to have the Address made out not to Lincoln, but to the American people. I have made him duly ridiculous and explained to the Englishmen that the French democratic etiquette is not worth a farthing more than the monarchical etiquette.

MARX TO ENGELS, FEBRUARY 6, 1865

… Lincoln's answer[14] to us is in today's *Times*.

MARX TO ENGELS, FEBRUARY 10, 1865

The fact that Lincoln has replied to us so courteously and to the "Bourgeois Emancipation Society" so rudely and purely formally has made the *Daily News* so angry that it did *not* print the reply to us. When, however, it saw to its sorrow that the *Times* did so, it had to publish it *belatedly* in the *stop press*. *Levy*, too, has had to swallow the bitter pill. The difference between L[incoln]'s reply to us and to the bourgeois has made such a stir here that the "Clubs" in the West

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[12] For the Address of the First International to Lincoln, see pp. 211–2.

[13] Lubez was a French democrat who lived in London. He taught music and French and acted as secretary-correspondent for France in the general council of the First International. On account of intrigue and slander, Lubez was expelled from the International in 1866.

[14] For Lincoln's answer to the Address of the First International, as transmitted by Adams, the American ambassador, see pp. 213–4.

End are shaking their heads over it. You can understand how much good this does our people.

MARX TO ENGELS, MARCH 4, 1865

The Confederacy seems to be at an end.

MARX TO ENGELS, JUNE 24, 1865

Johnson's policy disquiets me.[15] Ridiculous affectation of severity against single persons, up to the present extremely vacillating and weak in substance. The reaction has already begun in America and will soon be greatly strengthened, if the hitherto prevailing slackness does not quickly cease.

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[15] The elevation of Johnson to the presidency following the assassination of Lincoln was enthusiastically hailed by the leaders of the Radical wing of the Republican Party. They saw in the new president a mn after their own heart, a vigorous opponent of "the bloated slaveocracy" of the South. As such, they expected him to punish the ex-Confederate leaders, to break up their large landed estates and to guarantee Negro suffrage. Their expectations, however, were not realized, as Johnson, wedged between a falling oligarchy (slave planters) and a rising plutocracy (industrial and financial bourgeoisie), decided to fight the latter by capitulating to the former. The result was a "reactionary holiday" the beginnings of which became apparent in May 1865, when Johnson issued a proclamation providing for the reconstruction of seven Southern states along the lines laid down by Lincoln. During the summer and fall of 1865, all of these states, except Texas, complied with the President's request, elected state officials and sent representatives to Congress. However, in December 1865, both houses declined to permit the newly elected members to take their seats. Under these circumstances, the battle was on with Stevens, the leader of the parliamentary Left, gradually winning over a majority of congressmen to the formulation of a Radical reconstruction program. See J.S. Allen, *Reconstruction: The Battle for Democracy*, New York 1937. For the Address of the First International to Johnson, see pp. 214–5.

ENGELS TO MARX, JULY 15, 1865

I, too, like Mr. Johnson's policy less and less. His hatred of Negroes comes out more and more violently, while as against the old lords of the South he lets all power go out of his hands. If things go on like this, in six months all the old villains of secession will be sitting in Congress at Washington. Without colored suffrage nothing whatever can be done there, and J[ohnson] leaves it to the vanquished, the ex-slaveholders, to decide upon this matter. It is too absurd. However, one must certainly reckon with things developing differently from what Messrs. the Barons imagine. The majority of them are surely totally ruined and will be glad to sell land to migrants and speculators from the North. These will come soon enough and change many things. The mean whites, I think, will gradually die out. With this stock there is nothing more to be done; what is left after two generations will merge with the migrants into a stock entirely different. The Negroes will probably become small squatters, as in Jamaica. So that finally, indeed, the oligarchy goes down, but the process could now be brought to a speedy conclusion on the spot at one time, whilst, as it is, it becomes long-drawn-out.

MARX TO ENGELS, APRIL 23, 1866

After the Civil War phase the United States are really only now entering the revolutionary phase, and the European wiseacres, who believe in the omnipotence of Mr. Johnson, will soon be disillusioned.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE LONDON DELEGATES TO THE PROVISIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE IWA DRAFTED BY MARX IN AUGUST 1866

Limitation of the Working Day—A preliminary condition, without which all further attempts at improvement and emancipation must prove abortive, is the *limitation of the working day*. It is needed to restore the health and physical energies of the working class, that is the great body of every nation, as well as to secure them the possibility of intellectual development, social intercourse, social and political action. We propose eight hours' work as the *legal limit* of the working day, this limitation being generally agreed by the workmen of the United States of America, the Congress [of the IWA] will raise it to [become] the common platform of the working classes all over the world. [Adopted by the IWA and published in *Der Verbote*, 10 and 11, October–November 1866.]

MARX TO ENGELS, JULY 25, 1877

What do you think of the workers of the United States? This eruption against the oligarchy of associated capital which has arisen since the Civil War will of course be put down, but it could quite well form the starting point for the establishment of a serious workers party in the United States. There are, moreover, favorable circumstances. The policy of the new President will turn the Negroes into allies of the workers, and the large expropriations of the land (especially fertile land) in favor of the railway, mining, etc., companies will convert the farmers of the West, who are already very disenchanted, into allies of the workers. Thus a fine mess is in the offing there, and transferring the center of the International to the United States might, *post festum*, turn out to have been a peculiarly opportune move.

Letters between Marx and Lincoln

ADDRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKINGMEN'S ASSOCIATION TO ABRAHAM LINCOLN

To Abraham Lincoln,
President of the United States of America.

Sir,

We congratulate the American people upon your reelection by a large majority.

If resistance to the Slave Power was the reserved watchword of your first election, the triumphant war cry of your reelection is Death to Slavery.

From the commencement of the titanic American strife the workingmen of Europe felt instinctively that the star-spangled banner carried the destiny of their class. The contest for the territories which opened the dire *epopée,*[1] was it not to decide whether the virgin soil of immense tracts should be wedded to the labor of the immigrant or prostituted by the tramp of the slave driver?

When an oligarchy of 300,000 slaveholders dared to inscribe, for the first time in the annals of the world, "slavery" on the banner of armed revolt; when on the very spots where hardly a century ago the idea of one great democratic republic had first sprung up, whence the first Declaration of the Rights of Man was issued, and the first impulse given to the European revolution of the eighteenth century; when on those very spots counterrevolution, with systematic thoroughness, gloried in rescinding "the ideas entertained at the time of the formation of the old Constitution" and maintained "slavery to be a beneficent institution, indeed the only solution of the great problem of the relation of labor to capital," and cynically proclaimed property in man "the cornerstone of the new edifice," then the working classes of Europe understood at once, even before the fanatic partisanship of the upper classes for the Confederate gentry had given its dismal warning, that the slaveholders' rebellion was to sound the tocsin for a general holy crusade of property against labor, and that for the men of labor, with their hopes for the future, even their past conquests were at stake in that tremendous conflict on the other side of the Atlantic. Everywhere they bore therefore patiently the hardships imposed upon them by the cotton crisis, opposed enthusiastically the proslavery intervention, importunities of their "betters," and from most parts of Europe contributed their quota of blood to the good cause.

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[1] Epic.

While the workingmen, the true political power of the North, allowed slavery to defile their own republic, while before the Negro, mastered and sold without his concurrence, they boasted it the highest prerogative of the white-skinned laborer to sell himself and choose his own master, they were unable to attain the true freedom of labor or to support their European brethren in their struggle for emancipation, but this barrier to progress has been swept off by the red sea of civil war.

The workingmen of Europe feel sure that as the American War of Independence initiated a new era of ascendancy for the middle class, so the American antislavery war will do for the working classes. They consider it an earnest of the epoch to come, that it fell to the lot of Abraham Lincoln, the single-minded son of the working class, to lead his country through the matchless struggle for the rescue of an enchained race and the reconstruction of a social world.

Signed on behalf of the International Workingmen's Association, the Central Council…

Bee-Hive (London), January 7, 1865

THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR'S REPLY TO THE ADDRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKINGMEN'S ASSOCIATION

To the Editor of the Times.
Sir,

Some few weeks since a congratulatory address was sent from the Central Council of the above Association to Mr. Lincoln. The address was transmitted through the United States' Legation and the following reply has been received. Its publication will oblige,

Respectfully yours,

W. R. Cremer.
Legation of the United States,
London, Jan. 31.

Sir,

I am directed to inform you that the address of the Central Council of your association, which was duly transmitted through this legation to the President of the United States, has been received by him. So far as the sentiments expressed by it are personal, they are accepted by him with a sincere and anxious desire that he may be able to prove himself not unworthy of the confidence which has been recently extended to him by his fellow citizens and by so many of the friends of humanity and progress throughout the world. The government of the United States has a clear consciousness that its policy neither is nor could be reactionary, but at the same time it adheres to the course which it adopted at the beginning, of abstaining everywhere from propagandism and unlawful intervention. It strives to do equal and exact justice to all states and to all men, and it relies upon the beneficial results of that effort for support at home and for respect and goodwill throughout the world. Nations do not exist for themselves alone, but to promote the welfare and happiness of mankind by benevolent intercourse and example. It is in this relation that the United States regard their cause in the present conflict with slavery-maintaining insurgents as the cause of human nature, and they derive new encouragement to persevere from the testimony of the workingmen of Europe that the national attitude is favored with their enlightened approval and earnest sympathies.

I have the honor to be, Sir, your obedient servant,
Charles Francis Adams.

The Times, February 6, 1865.

ADDRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKINGMEN'S ASSOCIATION TO PRESIDENT JOHNSON

To Andrew Johnson,
President of the United States.

Sir,

The demon of the "peculiar institution," for the supremacy of which the South rose in arms, would not allow his worshipers to honorably succumb on the open field. What he had begun in treason, he must needs end in infamy. As Philip II's war for the Inquisition bred a Gerard, thus Jefferson Davis's proslavery war a Booth.

It is not our part to call words of sorrow and horror, while the heart of two worlds heaves with emotion. Even the sycophants who, year after year and day by day, stuck to their Sisyphus work of morally assassinating Abraham Lincoln and the great republic he headed stand now aghast at this universal outburst of popular feeling, and rival with each other to strew rhetorical flowers on his open grave. They have now at last found out that he was a man neither to be browbeaten by adversity nor intoxicated by success; inflexibly pressing on to his great goal, never compromising it by blind haste; slowly maturing his steps, never retracing them; carried away by no surge of popular favor, disheartened by no slackening of the popular pulse; tempering stern acts by the gleams of a kind heart; illuminating scenes dark with passion by the smile of humor; doing his titanic work as humbly and homely as heaven-born rulers do little things with the grandiloquence of pomp and state; in one word, one of the rare men who succeed in becoming great, without ceasing to be good. Such, indeed, was the modesty of this great and good man, that the world only discovered him a hero after he had fallen a martyr.

To be singled out by the side of such a chief, the second victim to the infernal gods of slavery, was an honor due to Mr. Seward. Had he not, at a time of general hesitation, the sagacity to foresee and the manliness to foretell "the irrepressible conflict"? Did he not, in the darkest hours of that conflict, prove true to the Roman duty to never despair of the republic and its stars? We earnestly hope that he and his son will be restored to health, public activity, and well-deserved honors within much less than "90 days."

After a tremendous war, but [one] which, if we consider its vast dimensions, and its broad scope, and compare it to the Old World's 100 years' wars, and 30 years' wars, and 23 years' wars, can hardly be said to have lasted 90 days, yours, Sir, has become the task to uproot by the law what has been felled by the sword, to preside over the arduous work of political reconstruction and social regeneration. A profound sense of your great mission will save you from any compromise with stern duties. You will never forget that to initiate the new era of the emancipation of labor, the American people devolved the responsibilities of leadership upon two men of labor—the one Abraham Lincoln, the other Andrew Johnson.

Signed on behalf of the International Workingmen's Association, London, May 13, 1865, by the Central Council…

Bee-Hive, May 20, 1865

Articles

Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly

INDEPENDENCE VS. DEPENDENCE! WHICH?

Though not attributed, this article was likely written by Victoria Woodhull.

In this age of progress, wherein rapid strides are being made in all branches of civilization, woman seems to be about the only constituent feature devoid of the general spirit that controls. All the elements of society are becoming more distinctly individualized with increasing heterogeneity. Its lines of demarcation, while increasing numerically, become more distinct. The whole tendency is to individual independence and mutual dependence. It is most true that in the aid progress receives from peoples, the female element is but poorly represented, but its effects are sufficiently obvious and diffusive to demonstrate, even to her, that there must be a forward movement made by the sex, else it will be left entirely too far in the rear to perform even an unimportant part in the great wants that the immediate future will develop.

The wife was formerly the housekeeper; she is becoming less and less so every day. Many of the duties that once devolved upon her are now performed by special trades. Each branch of housewifery is coming to be the basis of a separate branch of business. Schools perform all the duties of education that once devolved upon the mother, and tailors and dressmakers absorb the labor of the ward-

Victoria Woodhull, 1872

robe. The grocer and the baker pretty nearly supply the table, while the idea of furnishing meals complete is rapidly gaining acceptance. Thus, one by one, the duties of the housewife are being taken from her by the better understanding and adaptation of principles of general economy.

While this revolution is in progress, the preparatory steps to cooperative housekeeping are being taken. Thousands live at one place and eat at another, when once such practice was unknown. Dining saloons are increasing more rapidly than any other branch of business, and more transient meals are eaten every day. The result of this will be a division of living under the two systems represented by the two classes of hotels—the table d'hôte and the à la carte. The residence portions of our cities will be converted into vast hotels, which will be arranged and divided for the accommodation of families of all sizes. A thousand people can live in one hotel, under one general system of superintendence, at much less expense than two hundred and fifty families of four members each can in as many houses and under as many systems. As a system of economy this practice is sure to prevail, for progress in this respect is as equally marked as in attainment, and, if we mistake not, is of a higher order. To obtain more effect from a given amount of power is a higher branch of science than to obtain the same by increasing the power. To lessen resistance is better than to increase power, and on this principle progress in the principles of living is being made toward cooperation. Allowing that the practice will become general, what will become of the "special sphere" of woman that is painted in such vivid colors by the opponents of the extension of female privileges? Are the powers of woman to be wasted upon vain frivolities so widely practiced now, when this principle is already operating, or are they to be cast in some useful channel—some honorable calling? Is fashion to consume the entire time of women of the immediate future, or shall they become active members of the social body, not only forming a portion of its numbers but contributing their share to the amount of results to be gained? True, the beginning of this practice is forcing woman into wider fields of usefulness; forcing them without preparation into competition with man, who has been trained to industry from youth—a vast disparity over which the complaint of unequal pay is sometimes raised without real cause.

Does woman foresee what these things are to lead to, or does she prefer to remain blind to the tendencies of progress in this regard? It is evident to every mind not willfully blind that woman is gradually merging into all the employments of life. [She is] being driven to it by the force of circumstances coming from new developments. It is a necessity. Occupation they must have, for not all women even will be content to lead useless lives. This condition is gradually increasing both in volume and extent, and with a persistency which overcomes all opposition custom offers, it proclaims its intentions. Why cannot its drift be recognized as a matter of course and all provisions made to help the cause along? Women who do not perceive these things, from habitual blindness to all that usefulness indicates, may be excused for their supineness; but men, who are habitually provident, stand condemned of inconsistency for all the opposition manifested to the course events will pursue.

In consideration of the fact that woman is entering the active sphere of life and is every day widening this sphere, can she sit in utter quiescence saying she has no desire to establish herself as an element of power politically? In this she voluntarily acknowledges her inferiority and her willingness to remain the political slave, which is but a shade removed from the slavery that cost the country so much life to extinguish.

However much man may at present resist the bold demands of the few now calling for political equality, were the sex as a whole to rouse itself into a comprehension of the situation and its prophecies, with the determination to assert equality of privilege in the control of that in which they have an equality of interest, he would not dare to refuse. Let the question be put home to yourselves in the light of rising events and considered with calmness and wisdom. Are you willing to remain a political nonentity, a dependent upon the consideration of those who do possess political rights, and be subservient to masters of others' making? Shall you not the rather demand political equality, basing it on an equality of interest in the results to be obtained through the exercise of political rights? The first means continued dependence; the last means the beginning of independence. These are the questions. Consider them.

June 25, 1870

THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

We clip the following sensible remarks from an article in the Philadelphia *Daily Chronicle*, and commend them to the consideration of our readers:

This is the age when, for the first time in human history, the rights of all living things are, in some way, recognized as existing. We are far enough yet from according to all their rights, but we talk about them; we see them, and thought is busy to determine how they should be best secured.

Even the dumb animals have their advocates. The bird flies, and the horse labors, exempt from many a former abuse, danger, or ill. Man, with his superior muscle and pluck, has secured for himself a recognition that forbids others to trample upon privileges which he calls his own. And woman, too, is rising with her demand that whatever is man's right should also be conceded as her right as well. It is an age of rights; we wish to give all their due; and those who cannot speak for themselves must be spoken for.

In regard to women, our idea is that their present condition is neither as bad as it has been nor as good as it will be. There has already been so much thought and said about their rights as to receive some modification and a fairer degree of common justice. But in regard to the rights of children very little has been thought, or said, or done. They cannot speak for themselves. There are few to speak for them. They are still looked upon very much as property. It is still conceded that their parents have an exclusive right to them. If those parents wish to send them to beg day after day, it is thought that they have an undoubted right to do so. If they desire to send their children forth as bootblacks at six or eight years of age, there are few interested, or disposed, to dispute their right to do so. Or, if they will that their children must stand all day at the loom, or by the spindles, or do some kind of manual work, instead of going to school, it is usually regarded as right that they should do even this. Nobody, perhaps, regards it as wisdom for them to do any of these things, but there are enough who regard it as an undoubted parental prerogative.

Now it is just this which we wish to stoutly and emphatically deny. The children have rights of their own, rights in which society ought to protect them in all cases where parental wisdom fails to do it. Children are not property. They are not the born servants and slaves of their parents. They belong to themselves, and it is their inalienable right to be, in an age like this, fitted for taking some useful and self-supporting place in the world's works. It is their right to receive an education according to their capacity, just as good as our public schools can provide. No parental authority has any right to intervene between them and those advantages which shall make their experience and influence in life the best possible. It is really of less consequence that the home of today be uncomfortable, than that both it and the homes of its children should be without promise. And parents should not be allowed to sacrifice the future of their children to their own desire to get on a little further in the world. Children ought to be protected against this shortsighted avarice of their fathers and mothers. Children are not to blame for the ignorance in which they are growing up. The fault is first parental, then social. If parents are poor and ignorant, general laws ought to provide that every child should not suffer unnecessarily from neglect, and humane individuals ought to see to it that in every neighborhood those laws take effect.

These poor parents plead that they need the work of their children to help in the maintenance of the family, to buy the clothing and the daily bread. In some cases this plea is just. In a larger number of cases it is groundless. Where it is just, it would be a better public economy to keep the family and pay for the children's schooling than to allow the parents to deprive the children of their early advantages, their right to the privilege of education. The better citizens they would then become would more than repay the community in dollars and cents for its forethought and justice.

It ought to be a recognized first principle that every child born into the bosom of society has a right to the very best we can do for it. The welfare of the whole community is more or less involved in its welfare. If it is so cared for as to be useful and productive, society is the gainer. But if it be left in neglect, becomes a vagrant, a criminal, or a sot, society is continually taxed for its support and has constantly a heavy bill of expenses to defend itself from its vicious depredations. If we do not secure to children their inalienable rights, we suffer grievously for our neglect. We make the public expense greater, the public safety less, the public morality lower, and allow the whole public tone to fall far below the demands of a nominally Christian and enlightened age.

There are many other considerations touching the rights of children which are applicable to their treatment in the home. But today we had in view their treatment by society—its duty to secure them protection against the enslaving desire of poor and ignorant parents. We have abundant occasion to consider the matter. Here stand these twenty thousand children who have no schooling, no wise provisions made for them, who are beggars, vagrants, little bootblacks, newsboys, and who are maturing every day. What are their prospects? What are they likely to become? What are all the Christians, all the philanthropists, all the wealthy and the wise doing to secure them their higher rights?

December 5, 1870

INTERVIEW WITH KARL MARX, THE HEAD OF L'INTERNATIONALE

R. Landor

You have asked me to find out something about the International Association, and I have tried to do so. The enterprise is a difficult one just now. London is indisputably the headquarters of the association, but the English people have got a scare, and smell International in everything as King James smelled gunpowder after the famous plot. The consciousness of the society has naturally increased with the suspiciousness of the public, and if those who guide it have a secret to keep, they are of the stamp of men who keep a secret well. I have called on two of their leading members, have talked with one freely, and I here give you the substance of my conversation. I have satisfied myself of one thing: that it is a society of genuine workingmen, but that these workmen are directed by social and political theories of another class. One man whom I saw, a leading member of the council, was sitting at his workman's bench during our interview, and left off talking to me from time to time to receive a complaint, delivered in no courteous tone, from one of the many little masters in the neighborhood who employed him. I have heard this same man make eloquent speeches in public, inspired in every passage with the energy of hate toward the classes that call themselves his rulers. I understood the speeches after this glimpse at the domestic life of the orator. He must have felt that he had brains enough to have organized a working government, and yet here he was obliged to devote his life to the most revolting task work of a mechanical profession. He was proud and sensitive, and yet at every turn he had to return a bow for a grunt and a smile for a command that stood on about the same level in the scale of civility with a huntsman's call to his dog. This man helped me to a glimpse of one side of the nature of the International, the result of LABOR AGAINST CAPITAL of the workman who produces against the middleman who enjoys. Here was the hand that would smile hard when the time came, and as to the head that plans, I think I saw that too, in my interview with Dr. Karl Marx.

Dr. Karl Marx is a German doctor of philosophy, with a German breadth of knowledge derived both from observation of the living world and from books. I should conclude that he has never been a worker in the ordinary sense of the term. His surroundings and appearance are those of a well-to-do man of the middle class. The drawing room into which I was ushered on the night of the interview would have formed very comfortable quarters for a thriving stockbroker who had made his competence and was now beginning to make his fortune. It was comfort personified, the apartment of a man of taste and of easy means, but with nothing in it peculiarly characteristic of its owner. A fine album of Rhine views on the table, however, gave a clue to his nationality. I peered cautiously into the vase on the side table for a bomb. I sniffed for petroleum, but the smell was the smell of roses. I crept back stealthily to my seat, and moodily awaited the worst.

He has entered and greeted me cordially, and we are sitting face-to-face. Yes, I am tête-à-tête with the revolution incarnate, with the real founder and guiding spirit of the International Society, with the author of the address in which capital was told that if it warred on labor it must expect to have its house burned down about its ears—in a word, with the APOLOGIST FOR THE COMMUNE of Paris. Do you remember the bust of Socrates? the man who died rather than protest his belief in the Gods of the time—the man with the fine sweep of profile for the forehead running meanly at the end into a little snub, curled-up feature, like a bisected pothook, that formed the nose. Take this bust in your mind's eye, color the beard black, dashing it here and there with puffs of gray; clap the head thus made on a portly body of the middle height, and the Doctor is before you. Throw a veil over the upper part of the face and you might be in the company of a born vestryman. Reveal the essential feature, the immense brow, and you know at once that you have to deal with that most formidable of all composite individual forces—a dreamer who thinks, a thinker who dreams.

I went straight to my business. The world, I said, seemed to be in the dark about the International, hating it very much but not able to say clearly what thing it hated. Some, who professed to have peered further into the gloom than their neighbors, declared that they had made out a sort of Janus figure, with a fair, honest workman's smile on one of its faces, and on the other a murderous conspirator's scowl. Would he light up the case of mystery in which the theory dwelt?

The professor laughed—chuckled a little, I fancied, at the thought that we were so frightened of him. "There is no mystery to clear up, dear sir," he began, in a very polished form of the Hans Breitmann dialect, "except perhaps the mystery of human stupidity in those who perpetually ignore the fact that our association is a public one, and that the fullest reports of its proceedings are published for all who care to read them. You may buy our rules for a penny, and a shilling laid out in pamphlets will teach you almost as much about us as we know ourselves."

> R. L.: Almost—yes, perhaps so, but will not the something I shall not know constitute the all-important reservation? To be quite frank with you, and to put the case as it strikes an outside observer, this general claim of depreciation of you must mean something more than the ignorant ill-will of the multitude. And it is still pertinent to ask, even after what you have told me, What is the International Society?
>
> Dr. M.: You have only to look at the individuals of which it is composed—workmen.
>
> R. L.: Yes, but the soldier need be no exponent of the statecraft that sets him in motion. I know some of your members, and I can believe that they are not of the stuff of which conspirators are made. Besides, a secret shared by a million men would be no secret at all. But what if these were only the instruments in the hands of a bold and—I hope you will forgive me for adding—not overscrupulous conclave.
>
> Dr. M.: There is nothing to prove it.
>
> R. L.: The last Paris insurrection?

Dr. M.: I demand firstly the proof that there was any plot at all—that anything happened that was not the legitimate effect of the circumstances of the moment; or, the plot granted, I demand the proofs of the participation in it of the International Association.

R. L.: The presence in the communal body of so many members of the association.

Dr. M.: Then it was a plot of the Freemasons too, for their share in the work as individuals was by no means a slight one. I should not be surprised, indeed, to find the Pope setting down the whole insurrection to their account. But try another explanation. The insurrection in Paris was made by the workmen of Paris. The ablest of the workmen must necessarily have been its leaders and administrators, but the ablest of the workmen happen also to be members of the International Association. Yet the association, as such, may be in no way responsible for their action.

R. L.: It will seem otherwise to the world. People talk of secret instructions from London, and even grants of money. Can it be affirmed that the alleged openness of the association's proceedings precludes all secrecy of communication?

Dr. M.: What association ever formed carried on its work without private as well as public agencies? But to talk of secret instruction from London, as of decrees in the matter of faith and morals from some center of Papal domination and intrigue, is wholly to misconceive the nature of the International. This would imply a centralized form of government for the International, whereas the real form is designedly that which gives the greatest play to local energy and independence. In fact, the International is not properly a government for the working class at all. It is a bond of union rather than a controlling force.

R. L.: And of union to what end?

Dr. M.: The economical emancipation of the working class by the conquest of political power. The use of that political power to the attainment of social ends. It is necessary that our aims should be thus comprehensive to include every form of working-class activity. To have made them of a special character would have been to adapt them to the needs of one section—one nation of workmen alone. But how could all men be asked to unite to further the objects of a few? To have done that, the association must have forfeited its title of International. The association does not dictate the form of political movements; it only requires a pledge as to their end. It is a network of affiliated societies spreading all over the world of labor. In each part of the world some special aspect of the problem presents itself, and the workmen there address themselves to its consideration in their own way. Combinations among workmen cannot be absolutely identical in detail in Newcastle and in Barcelona, in London and in Berlin. In England, for instance, the way to show political power lies open to the working class. Insurrection would be madness where peaceful agitation would more swiftly and surely do the work. In France, a hundred laws of repression and a mortal antagonism between classes seem to necessitate the violent solution of social war. The choice of that solution is the affair of the working classes of that country. The International does not presume to dictate in the matter, and hardly to advise. But to every movement it accords its sympathy and its aid within the limits assigned by its own laws.

R. L.: And what is the nature of that aid?

Dr. M.: To give an example, one of the commonest forms of the movement for emancipation is that of strikes. Formerly, when a strike took place in one country, it was defeated by the importation of workmen from another. The International has nearly stopped all that. It receives information of the intended strike; it spreads that information among its members, who at once see that for them the seat of the struggle must be forbidden ground. The masters are thus left alone to reckon with their men. In most cases the men require no other aid than that. Their own subscriptions or those of the societies to which they are more immediately affiliated supply them with funds, but should the pressure upon them become too heavy and the strike be one of which the association approves, their necessities are supplied out of the common purse. By these means a strike of the cigar makers of Barcelona was brought to a victorious issue the other day. But the society has no interest in strikes, though it supports them under certain conditions. It cannot possibly gain by them in a pecuniary point of view, but it may easily lose. Let us sum it all up in a word. The working classes remain poor amid the increase of wealth, wretched amid the increase of luxury. Their material privation dwarfs their moral as well as their physical stature. They cannot rely on others for a remedy. It has become then with them an imperative necessity to take their own case in hand. They must revise the relations between themselves and the capitalists and landlords, and that means they must transform society. This is the general end of every known workmen's organization—land and labor leagues, trade and friendly societies, cooperative stores and cooperative production are but means toward it. To establish a perfect solidarity between these organizations is the business of the International Association. Its influence is beginning to be felt everywhere. Two papers spread its views in Spain, three in Germany, the same number in Austria and in Holland, six in Belgium, and six in Switzerland. And now that I have told you what the International is, you may, perhaps, be in a position to form your own opinion as to its pretended plots.

R. L.: And Mazzini, is he member of your body?

Dr. M. (laughing): Ah, no. We should have made but little progress if we had not got beyond the range of his ideas.

R. L.: You surprise me. I should certainly have thought that he represented most advanced views.

Dr. M.: He represents nothing better than the old idea of a middle-class republic. We seek no part with the middle class. He has fallen as far to the rear of the modern movement as the German professors, who, nevertheless, are still considered in Europe as the apostles of the cultured democratism of the future. They were so at one time—before '48, perhaps, when the German middle class, in the English sense, had scarcely attained its proper development. But now they have gone over bodily to the reaction, and the proletariat knows them no more.

R. L.: Some people have thought they saw signs of a positivist element in your organization.

Dr. M.: No such thing. We have positivists among us, and others not of our body who work as well. But this is not by virtue of their philosophy, which will have nothing to do with popular government as we understand it, and which seeks only to put a new hierarchy in place of the old one.

R. L.: It seems to me, then, that the leaders of the new international movement have had to form a philosophy as well as an association for themselves.

Dr. M.: Precisely. It is hardly likely, for instance, that we could hope to prosper in our war against capital if we derived our tactics, say, from the political economy of Mill. He has traced one kind of relationship between labor and capital. We hope to show that it is possible to establish another.

R. L.: And the United States?

Dr. M.: The chief centers of our activity are for the present among the old societies of Europe. Many circumstances have hitherto tended to prevent the labor problem from assuming an all-absorbing importance in the United States. But they are rapidly disappearing, and it is rapidly coming to the front there with the growth, as in Europe, of a laboring class distinct from the rest of the community and divorced from capital.

R. L.: It would seem that in this country the hoped-for solution, whatever it may be, will be attained without the violent means of revolution. The English system of agitating by platform and press until minorities become converted into majorities is a hopeful sign.

Dr. M.: I am not so sanguine on that point as you. The English middle class has always shown itself willing enough to accept the verdict of the majority, so long as it enjoyed the monopoly of the voting power. But mark me: as soon as it finds itself outvoted on what it considers vital questions, we shall see here a new slave-owner's war.

I have here given you as well as I can remember them the heads of my conversation with this remarkable man. I shall leave you to form your own conclusions. Whatever may be said for or against the probability of its complicity with the movement of the Commune, we may be assured that in the International Association the civilized world has a new power in its midst with which it must soon come to a reckoning for good or ill.

August 12, 1871

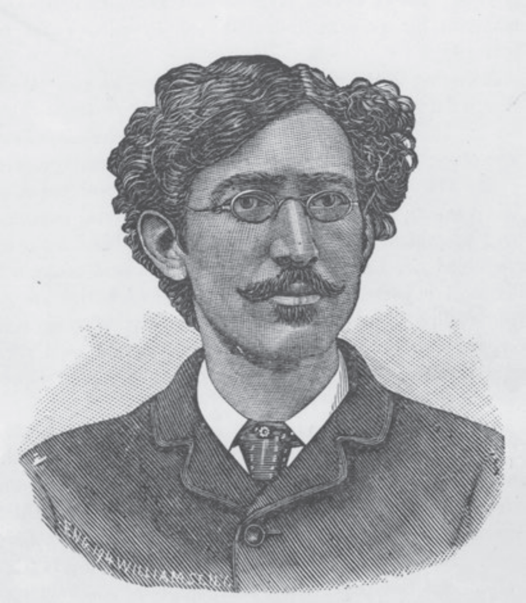
Conclusion to *Black and White*

Thomas Fortune

I know it is not fashionable for writers on economic questions to tell the truth, but the truth should be told, though it kill. When the wail of distress encircles the world, the man who is linked by "the touch of nature" which "makes the whole world kin" to the common destiny of the race universal, who hates injustice wherever it lifts up its head, who sympathizes with the distressed, the weak, and the friendless in every corner of the globe, such a man is morally bound to tell the truth as he conceives it to be the truth.

In these times, when the lawmaking and enforcing authority is leagued against the people, when great periodicals—monthly, weekly, and daily—echo the mandates or anticipate the wishes of the powerful men who produce our social demoralization, it becomes necessary for the few men who do not agree to the arguments advanced or the interests sought to be bolstered up to "cry aloud and spare not." The man who with the truth in his possession flatters with lies, that "thrift may follow fawning," is too vile to merit the contempt of honest men.

The government of the United States confiscated as "contraband of war" the slave population of the South, but it left to the portion of the unrepentant rebel a far more valuable species of property. The slave, the perishable wealth, was confiscated to the government and then manumitted, but property in land, the wealth which perishes not nor can fly away, and which had made the institution of slavery possible, was left as the heritage of the robber who had not hesitated to lift his iconoclastic hand against the liberties of his country.



Thomas Fortune, 1887

The baron of feudal Europe would have been paralyzed with astonishment at the leniency of the conquering invader who should take from him his slave, subject to mutation, and leave him his landed possessions, which are as fixed as the Universe of Nature. He would ask no more advantageous concession. But the United States took the slave and left the thing which gave birth to *chattel slavery* and which is now fast giving birth to *industrial slavery,* a slavery more excruciating in its exactions, more irresponsible in its machinations than that other slavery, which I once endured. The chattel slave–holder must, to preserve the value of his property, feed, clothe, and house his property and give it proper medical attention when disease or accident threaten its life. But industrial slavery requires no such care. The new slaveholder is only solicitous of obtaining the maximum of labor for the minimum of cost. He does not regard the man as of any consequence when he can no longer produce. Having worked him to death, or ruined his constitution and robbed him of his labor, he turns him out upon the world to live upon the charity of mankind or to die of inattention and starvation. He knows that it profits him nothing to waste time and money upon a disabled industrial slave. The multitude of laborers from which he can recruit his necessary laboring force is so enormous that solicitude on his part for one that falls by the wayside would be a gratuitous expenditure of humanity and charity which the world is too intensely selfish and materialistic to expect of him. Here he forges wealth and death at one and the same time. He could not do this if our social system did not confer upon him a monopoly of the soil from which subsistence must be derived, because the industrial slave, given an equal opportunity to produce for himself, would not produce for another. On the other hand, the large industrial operations, with the multitude of laborers from which Adam Smith declares employers grow rich, as far as this applies to the soil would not be possible, since the vast volume of increased production brought about by the industry of the multitude of coequal small farmers would so reduce the cost price of food products as to destroy the incentive to speculation in them, and at the same time utterly destroy the necessity or the possibility of famines, such as those which have from time to time come upon the Irish people. There could be no famine, in the natural course of things, where all had an opportunity to cultivate as much land as they could wherever they found any not already under cultivation by someone else. It needs no stretch of the imagination to see what a startling tendency the announcement that all vacant land was free to settlement upon condition of cultivation would have to the depopulation of overcrowded cities like New York, Baltimore, and Savannah, where the so-called pressure of population upon subsistence has produced a hand-to-hand fight for existence by the wage workers in every avenue of industry.

This is no fancy picture. It is a plain, logical deduction of what would result from the restoration to the people of that equal chance in the race of life which every man has a right to expect, to demand, and to exact as a condition of his membership of organized society.

The wag who started the “forty acres and a mule” idea among the black people of the South was a wise fool; wise in that he enunciated a principle which every argument of sound policy should have dictated, *upon the condition that the forty acres could in no wise* *be alienated*, and that it could be regarded *only as property as long as it was cultivated;* and a fool because he designed simply to impose upon the credulity and ignorance of his victims. But the justness of the "forty acre" donation cannot be controverted. In the first place, the slave had earned this miserable stipend from the government by two hundred years of unrequited toil, and, secondly, as a free man, he was inherently entitled to so much of the soil of his country as would suffice to maintain him in the freedom thrust upon him. To tell him he was a free man, and at the same time shut him off from free access to the soil upon which he had been reared, without a penny in his pocket, and with an army of children at his coattail—some of his reputed wife's children being the illegitimate offspring of a former inhuman master—was to add insult to injury, to mix syrup and hyssop, to aggravate into curses the pretended conference of blessings.

When I think of the absolutely destitute condition of the colored people of the South at the close of the Rebellion, when I remember the moral and intellectual enervation which slavery had produced in them, when I remember that not only were they thus bankrupt but that they were absolutely and unconditionally cut off from the soil, with absolutely no right or title in it, I am surprised—not that they have already got a respectable slice of landed interests, not that they have taken hold eagerly of the advantages of moral and intellectual opportunities of development placed in their reach by the charitable philanthropy of good men and women, not that they have bought homes and supplied them with articles of convenience and comfort, often of luxury—but I am surprised that the race did not turn robbers and highwaymen, and in turn terrorize and rob society as society had for so long terrorized and robbed them. The thing is strange, marvelous, phenomenal in the extreme. Instead of becoming outlaws, as the critical condition would seem to have indicated, the black men of the South *went manfully to work* to better their own condition and the crippled condition of the country which had been produced by the ravages of internecine rebellion; *while the white men of the South, the capitalists, the land-sharks, the poor white trash, and the nondescripts, with a thousand years of Christian civilization and culture behind them, with "the boast of chivalry, the pomp of power," these white scamps, who had imposed upon the world the idea* *that they were paragons of virtue and the heaven-sent vicegerents of civil power, organized themselves into a band of outlaws whose concatenative chain of auxiliaries ran through the entire South, and deliberately proceeded to murder innocent men and women for* POLITICAL REASONS *and to systematically rob them of their honest labor, because they were too accursedly lazy to labor themselves.*

But this highly abnormal, unnatural condition of things is fast passing away. The white man, having asserted his superiority in the matters of assassination and robbery, has settled down upon a barrel of dynamite, as he did in the days of slavery, and will await the explosion with the same fatuity and self-satisfaction true of him in other days. But as convulsions from within are more violent and destructive than convulsions from without, being more deep-seated and therefore more difficult to reach, the next explosion will be more disastrous, more far-reaching in its havoc than the one which metamorphosed social conditions in the South and from the dreadful reactions of which we are just now recovering.

As I have said elsewhere, the future struggle in the South will be not between white men and black men but between capital and labor, landlord and tenant. Already the cohorts are marshalling to the fray; already the forces are mustering to the field at the sound of the slogan.

The same battle will be fought upon Southern soil that is in preparation in other states, where the conditions are older in development, but no more deep-seated, no more pernicious, no more blighting upon the industries of the country and the growth of the people.

It is not my purpose here to enter into an extended analysis of the foundations upon which our land system rests, nor to give my views as to how matters might be remedied. I may take up the question at some future time. It is sufficient for my purpose to have indicated that the social problems in the South, as they exfoliate more and more as resultant upon the war, will be found to be the same as those found in every other section of our country, and to have pointed out that the questions of "race," "condition," "politics," etc. will all properly adjust themselves with the advancement of the people in wealth, education, and forgetfulness of the unhappy past.

The hour is approaching when the laboring classes of our country, North, East, West and South, will recognize that they have a *common cause*, a *common humanity,* and a *common enemy*, and that therefore, if they would triumph over wrong and place the laurel wreath upon triumphant justice, without distinction of race or of previous condition *they must unite!* And unite they will, for "a fellow feeling makes us wond'rous kind." When the issue is properly joined, the rich, be they black or be they white, will be found upon the same side, and the poor, be they black or be they white, will be found on the same side.

Necessity knows no law and discriminates in favor of no man or race.

Preface to the American Edition of *The Condition of the Working-Class in England*

Frederick Engels[1]

Ten months have elapsed since, at the translator's wish, I wrote the Appendix[2] to this book, and during these ten months, a revolution has been accomplished in American society such as in any other country would have taken at least ten years. In February 1885, American public opinion was almost unanimous on this one point: that there was no working class, in the European sense of the word, in America; that consequently no class struggle between workmen and capitalists such as tore European society to pieces was possible in the American Republic; and that, therefore, Socialism was a thing of foreign importation which could never take root on American soil. And yet at that moment the coming class struggle was casting its gigantic shadow before it in the strikes of the Pennsylvania coal miners, and of many other trades, and especially in the preparations all over the country for the great Eight Hours' movement, which was to come off, and did come off, in the May following. That I then duly appreciated these symptoms, that I anticipated a working-class movement on a national scale, my Appendix shows,[3] but no one could then foresee that in such a short time the movement would burst out with such irresistible force, would spread with the rapidity of a prairie fire, would shake American society to its very foundations.

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[1] Published in the American edition of *The Condition of the Working-Class in England*, New York 1887. Printed according to the text of the book.

[2] The Appendix to the American edition of *The Condition of the Working-Class in England* was, except for the paragraph quoted in the next footnote, used by Engels as the basis of his preface to the English edition of 1892.

The fact is there, stubborn and indisputable. To what an extent it had struck with terror the American ruling classes was revealed to me, in an amusing way, by American journalists who did me the honor of calling on me last summer; the "new departure" had put them into a state of helpless fright and perplexity. But at that time the movement was only just on the start; there was but a series of confused and apparently disconnected upheavals of that class which, by the suppression of negro slavery and the rapid development of manufactures, had become the lowest stratum of American society.

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[3] In this appendix Engels wrote: "There were two circumstances which for a long time prevented the unavoidable consequences of the Capitalist system from showing themselves in the full glare of day in America. These were the easy access to the ownership of cheap land, and the influx of immigration. They allowed, for many years, the great mass of the native American population to "retire" in early manhood from wage labor and to become farmers, dealers, or employers of labor, while the hard work for wages, the position of a proletarian for life, mostly fell to the lot of immigrants. But America has outgrown this early stage. The boundless backwoods have disappeared, and the still more boundless prairies are faster and faster passing from the hands of the Nation and the States into those of private owners. The great safety valve against the formation of a permanent proletarian class has practically ceased to act. A class of lifelong and even hereditary proletarians exists at this hour in America. A nation of sixty millions striving hard to become, and with every chance of success, too, the leading manufacturing nation of the world—such a nation cannot permanently import its own wage-working class, not even if immigrants pour in at the rate of half a million a year. The tendency of the Capitalist system towards the ultimate splitting-up of society into two classes, a few millionaires on the one hand, and a great mass of mere wageworkers on the other, this tendency, though constantly crossed and counteracted by other social agencies, works nowhere with greater force than in America; and the result has been the production of a class of native American wageworkers, who form, indeed, the aristocracy of the wage-working class as compared with the immigrants, but who become conscious more and more every day of their solidarity with the latter and who feel all the more acutely their present condemnation to lifelong wage toil, because they still remember the bygone days, when it was comparatively easy to rise to a higher social level."—*Ed.*

Frederick Engels, 1879

Before the year closed, these bewildering social convulsions began to take a definite direction. The spontaneous, instinctive movements of these vast masses of working people, over a vast extent of country, the simultaneous outburst of their common discontent with a miserable social condition, the same everywhere and due to the same causes, made them conscious of the fact that they formed a new and distinct class of American society, a class of—practically speaking—more or less hereditary wageworkers, proletarians. And with true American instinct this consciousness led them at once to take the next step towards their deliverance: the formation of a political workingmen's party, with a platform of its own, and with the conquest of the Capitol and the White House for its goal. In May, the struggle for the Eight Hours' working day, the troubles in Chicago, Milwaukee, etc., the attempts of the ruling class to crush the nascent uprising of Labor by brute force and brutal class justice; in November, the new Labor Party organized in all great centers, and the New York, Chicago, and Milwaukee elections. May and November have hitherto reminded the American bourgeoisie only of the payment of coupons of U.S. bonds; henceforth May and November will remind them, too, of the dates on which the American working class presented *their* coupons for payment.

In European countries, it took the working class years and years before they fully realized the fact that they formed a distinct and, under the existing social conditions, a permanent class of modern society, and it took years again until this class consciousness led them to form themselves into a distinct political party, independent of, and opposed to, all the old political parties formed by the various sections of the ruling classes. On the more favored soil of America, where no medieval ruins bar the way, where history begins with the elements of modern bourgeois society as evolved in the seventeenth century, the working class passed through these two stages of its development within ten months.

Still, all this is but a beginning. That the laboring masses should feel their community of grievances and of interests, their solidarity as a class in opposition to all other classes; that in order to give expression and effect to this feeling, they should set in motion the political machinery provided for that purpose in every free country—that is the first step only. The next step is to find the common remedy for these common grievances, and to embody it in the platform of the new Labor Party. And this—the most important and the most difficult step in the movement—has yet to be taken in America.

A new party must have a distinct positive platform, a platform which may vary in details as circumstances vary and as the party itself develops, but still one upon which the party, for the time being, is agreed. So long as such a platform has not been worked out, or exists but in a rudimentary form, so long the new party, too, will have but a rudimentary existence; it may exist locally but not yet nationally; it will be a party potentially but not actually.

That platform, whatever may be its first initial shape, must develop in a direction which may be determined beforehand. The causes that brought into existence the abyss between the working class and the capitalist class are the same in America as in Europe; the means of filling up that abyss are equally the same everywhere. Consequently, the platform of the American proletariat will in the long run coincide, as to the ultimate end to be attained, with the one which, after sixty years of dissensions and discussions, has become the adopted platform of the great mass of the European militant proletariat. It will proclaim, as the ultimate end, the conquest of political supremacy by the working class, in order to effect the direct appropriation of all means of production—land, railways, mines, machinery, etc.—by society at large, to be worked in common by all for the account and benefit of all.

But if the new American party, like all political parties everywhere, by the very fact of its formation aspires to the conquest of political power, it is as yet far from agreed upon what to do with that power when once attained. In New York and the other great cities of the East, the organization of the working class has proceeded upon the lines of Trades' Societies, forming in each city a powerful Central Labor Union. In New York the Central Labor Union, last November, chose for its standard-bearer Henry George, and consequently its temporary electoral platform has been largely imbued with his principles. In the great cities of the Northwest, the electoral battle was fought upon a rather indefinite labor platform, and the influence of Henry George's theories was scarcely, if at all, visible. And while in these great centers of population and of industry the new class movement came to a political head, we find all over the country two widespread labor organizations: the Knights of Labor[4] and the Socialist Labor Party,[5] of which only the latter has a platform in harmony with the modern European standpoint as summarized above.

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[4] The Noble Order of the Knights of Labor was a working-class organization founded in Philadelphia in 1869. Existing illegally until 1878, it observed a semi-mysterial ritual. That year the organization emerged from the underground, retaining some of its secret features. The Knights of Labor aimed to liberate workers by setting up cooperatives. They took in all skilled and even unskilled trades, without discrimination on account of sex, race, nationality, or religion. The organization reached the highest point of its activity during the 1880s, when, under pressure from the masses, the leaders of the order were compelled to consent to an extensive strike movement. Its membership at that time was over 700,000, including 60,000 Negroes. However, on account of the opportunistic tactics of the leaders, who were opposed to revolutionary class struggle, the order forfeited its prestige among the masses. Its activity came to an end in the next decade.

[5] The Socialist Labor Party came into existence in 1876 as a result of the union of the American sections of the First International with other working-class

Of the three more or less definite forms under which the American labor movement thus presents itself, the first, the Henry George movement in New York, is for the moment of a chiefly local significance. No doubt New York is by far the most important city of the States, but New York is not Paris and the United States are not France. And it seems to me that the Henry George platform, in its present shape, is too narrow to form the basis for anything but a local movement, or at best for a short-lived phase of the general movement. To Henry George, the expropriation of the mass of the people from the land is the great and universal cause of the splitting up of the people into Rich and Poor. Now this is not quite correct historically. In Asiatic and classical antiquity, the predominant form of class oppression was slavery; that is to say, not so much the expropriation of the masses from the land as the appropriation of their persons. When, in the decline of the Roman Republic, the free Italian peasants were expropriated from their farms, they formed a class of "poor whites" similar to that of the Southern Slave States before 1861, and between slaves and poor whites, two classes equally unfit for self-emancipation, the old world went to pieces. In the Middle Ages, it was not the expropriation of the people *from*, but on the contrary their appropriation *to* the land which became the source of feudal oppression. The peasant retained his land, but was attached to it as a serf or villein, and made liable to tribute to the lord in labor and in produce. It was only at the dawn of modern times, towards the end of the fifteenth century, that the expropriation of the peasantry on a large scale laid the foundation for the modern class of wageworkers who possess nothing but their labor power and can live only by the selling of that labor power to others. But if the expropriation from the land brought this class into existence, it was the development of capitalist production, of modern industry and agriculture on a large scale, which perpetuated it, increased it, and shaped it

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socialist organizations in the United States. This party consisted mainly of immigrants, particularly Germans. Its activities were sectarian, and its leaders, because they refused to work in the trade unions, were incapable of heading the mass movement of the American workers.

into a distinct class with distinct interests and a distinct historical mission. All this has been fully expounded by Marx (*Capital*, Part VIII: "The So-Called Primitive Accumulation"). According to Marx, the cause of the present antagonism of the classes and of the social degradation of the working class is their expropriation from *all* means of production, in which the land is of course included.

If Henry George declares land monopolization to be the sole cause of poverty and misery, he naturally finds the remedy in the resumption of the land by society at large. Now, the Socialists of the school of Marx, too, demand the resumption, by society, of the land, and not only of the land but of all other means of production likewise. But even if we leave these out of the question, there is another difference. What is to be done with the land? Modern Socialists, as represented by Marx, demand that it should be held and worked in common and for common account, and the same with all other means of social production, mines, railways, factories, etc.; Henry George would confine himself to letting it out to individuals as at present, merely regulating its distribution and applying the rents for public, instead of, as at present, for private purposes. What the Socialists demand implies a total revolution of the whole system of social production; what Henry George demands leaves the present mode of social production untouched, and has, in fact, been anticipated by the extreme section of Ricardian bourgeois economists who, too, demanded the confiscation of the rent of land by the State.

It would of course be unfair to suppose that Henry George has said his last word once for all. But I am bound to take his theory as I find it.

The second great section of the American movement is formed by the Knights of Labor. And that seems to be the section most typical of the present state of the movement, as it is undoubtedly by far the strongest. An immense association, spread over an immense extent of country in innumerable "assemblies," representing all shades of individual and local opinion within the working class, the whole of them sheltered under a platform of corresponding indistinctness and held together much less by their impracticable constitution than by the instinctive feeling that the very fact of their clubbing together for their common aspiration makes them a great power in the country: a truly American paradox, clothing the most modern tendencies in the most medieval mummeries and hiding the most democratic and even rebellious spirit behind an apparent, but really powerless, despotism—such is the picture the Knights of Labor offer to a European observer. But if we are not arrested by mere outside whimsicalities, we cannot help seeing in this vast agglomeration an immense amount of potential energy evolving slowly but surely into actual force. The Knights of Labor are the first national organization created by the American working class as a whole; whatever be their origin and history, whatever their shortcomings and little absurdities, whatever their platform and their constitution, here they are, the work of practically the whole class of American wageworkers: the only national bond that holds them together, that makes their strength felt to themselves not less than to their enemies, and that fills them with the proud hope of future victories. For it would not be exact to say that the Knights of Labor are liable to development. They are constantly in full process of development and revolution, a heaving, fermenting mass of plastic material seeking the shape and form appropriate to its inherent nature. That form will be attained as surely as historical evolution has, like natural evolution, its own immanent laws. Whether the Knights of Labor will then retain their present name or not makes no difference, but to an outsider it appears evident that here is the raw material out of which the future of the American working-class movement, and along with it the future of American society at large, has to be shaped.

The third section consists of the Socialist Labor Party. This section is a party but in name, for nowhere in America has it, up to now, been able actually to take its stand as a political party. It is, moreover, to a certain extent foreign to America, having until lately been made up almost exclusively by German immigrants, using their own language and for the most part little conversant with the common language of the country. But if it came from a foreign stock, it came, at the same time, armed with the experience earned during long years of class struggle in Europe, and with an insight into the general conditions of working-class emancipation far superior to that hitherto gained by American workingmen. This is a fortunate circumstance for the American proletarians, who thus are enabled to appropriate, and to take advantage of, the intellectual and moral fruits of the forty years' struggle of their European classmates, and thus to hasten on the time of their own victory. For, as I said before, there cannot be any doubt that the ultimate platform of the American working class must and will be essentially the same as that now adopted by the whole militant working class of Europe, the same as that of the German-American Socialist Labor Party. So far, this party is called upon to play a very important part in the movement. But in order to do so, they will have to doff every remnant of their foreign garb. They will have to become out-and-out American. They cannot expect the Americans to come to them; they, the minority and the immigrants, must go to the Americans, who are the vast majority and the natives. And to do that, they must above all things learn English.

The process of fusing together these various elements of the vast moving mass—elements not really discordant, but indeed mutually isolated by their various starting points—will take some time and will not come off without a deal of friction, such as is visible at different points even now. The Knights of Labor, for instance, are here and there, in the Eastern cities, locally at war with the organized Trades Unions. But then, this same friction exists within the Knights of Labor themselves, where there is anything but peace and harmony. These are not symptoms of decay for capitalists to crow over. They are merely signs that the innumerable hosts of workers, for the first time set in motion in a common direction, have as yet found out neither the adequate expression for their common interests, nor the form of organization best adapted to the struggle, nor the discipline required to insure victory. They are as yet the first levies *en masse* of the great revolutionary war, raised and equipped locally and independently, all converging to form one common army, but as yet without regular organization and common plan of campaign. The converging columns cross each other here and there; confusion, angry disputes, even threats of conflict arise. But the community of ultimate purpose in the end overcomes all minor troubles; ere long, the straggling and squabbling battalions will be formed in a long line of battle array, presenting to the enemy a well-ordered front, ominously silent under their glittering arms, supported by bold skirmishers in front and by unshakable reserves in the rear.

To bring about this result, the unification of the various independent bodies into one national Labor Army, with no matter how inadequate a provisional platform, provided it be a truly working-class platform—that is the next great step to be accomplished in America. To effect this, and to make that platform worthy of the cause, the Socialist Labor Party can contribute a great deal, if they will only act in the same way as the European Socialists acted at the time when they were but a small minority of the working class. That line of action was first laid down in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1847 in the following words:

> The Communists [that was the name we took at the time and which even now we are far from repudiating] do not form a separate party opposed to other working-class parties.
>
> They have no interests separate and apart from the interests of the whole working class.
>
> They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and model the proletarian movement.
>
> The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out, and bring to the front, the common interests of the whole proletariat, interests independent of all nationality; 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the capitalist class has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.
>
> The Communists, therefore, are on the one hand practically the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of all countries, that section which ever pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletarians the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement.
>
> Thus they fight for the attainment of the immediate ends, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class, but in the movement of the present, they represent and take care of the future of the movement.

That is the line of action which the great founder of Modern Socialism, Karl Marx, and with him I and the Socialists of all nations, who worked along with us, have followed for more than forty years, with the result that it has led to victory everywhere, and that at this moment the mass of European Socialists in Germany and in France; in Belgium, Holland, and Switzerland; in Denmark and Sweden as well as in Spain and Portugal are fighting as one common army under one and the same flag.

Frederick Engels
London, January 26, 1887

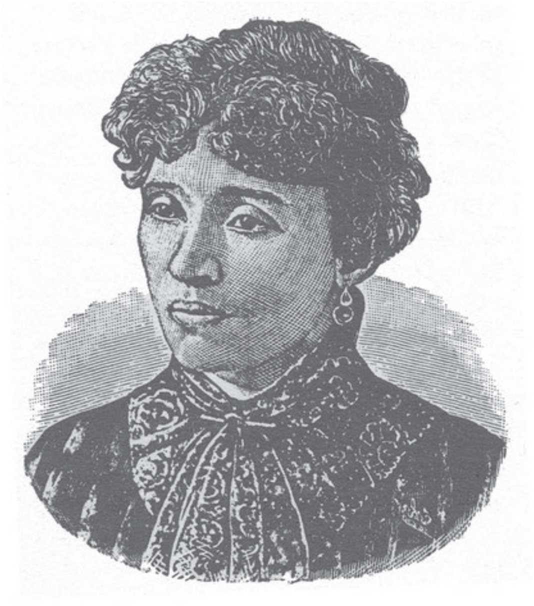
Speeches at the Founding of the Industrial Workers of the World

Lucy Parsons

I can assure you that after the intellectual feast that I have enjoyed immensely this afternoon, I feel fortunate to appear before you now in response to your call. I do not wish you to think that I am here to play upon words when I tell you that I stand before you and feel much like a pygmy before intellectual giants, but that is only the fact.

I wish to state to you that I have taken the floor because no other woman has responded and I feel that it would not be out of place for me to say in my poor way a few words about this movement. We, the women of this country, have no ballot even if we wished to use it, and the only way that we can be represented is to take a man to represent us. You men have made such a mess of it in representing us that we have not much confidence in asking you, and I for one feel very backward in asking the men to represent me. We have no ballot, but we have our labor. I think it is August Bebel, in his *Woman in the Past, Present and Future*—a book that should be read by every woman that works for wages—Bebel says that men have been slaves throughout all the ages, but that woman's condition has been worse, for she has been the slave of a slave.

There was never a greater truth uttered. We are the slaves of the slaves. We are exploited more ruthlessly than men. Wherever wages are to be reduced, the capitalist class use women to reduce them, and if there is anything that you men should do in the future it is to



Lucy Parsons, c. 1886

organize the women. And I say that if the women had inaugurated a boycott of the State Street stores since the teamsters' strike, the stores would have surrendered long ago. I do not stand before you to brag. I had no man connected with that strike to make it of interest to me to boycott the stores, but I have not bought one penny's worth there since that strike was inaugurated. I intended to boycott all of them as one individual at least, so it is important to educate the women.

Now, I wish to show my sisters here that we fasten the chains of slavery upon our sisters, sometimes unwittingly, when we go down to the department store and look around so cheap. When we come to reflect, it simply means the robbery of our sisters, for we know that the things cannot be made for such prices and give women who made them fair wages. I wish to say that I have attended many conventions in the twenty-seven years since I came here to Chicago a young girl, so full of life and animation and hope. It is to youth that hope comes; it is to age that reflection comes. I have attended conventions from that day to this, of one kind and another, and taken part in them. I have taken part in some in which our Comrade Debs had a part. I was at the organization that he organized in this city some eight or ten years ago. Now, the point I want to make is that these conventions are full of enthusiasm. And that is right: we should sometimes mix sentiment with soberness; it is a part of life.

But when you go out of this hall, when you have laid aside your enthusiasm, then comes the solid work. Are you going out of here with your minds made up that the class which we call ourselves, revolutionary Socialists so-called—that class is organized to meet organized capital with the millions at its command? It has many weapons to fight us. First, it has money. Then, it has legislative tools. Then, it has armories, and last, it has the gallows. We call ourselves revolutionists. Do you know what the capitalists mean to do to you revolutionists? I simply throw these hints out that you young people may become reflective and know what you have to face at the first, and then it will give you strength. I am not here to cause any discouragement, but simply to encourage you to go on in your grand work.

Now, that is the solid foundation that I hope this organization will be built on—that it may be built not like a house upon the sand, that when the waves of adversity come it may go over into the ocean of oblivion, but that it shall be built upon a strong, granite-hard foundation, a foundation made up of the hearts and aspirations of the men and women of this twentieth century, who have set their minds, their hands, their hearts, and their heads against the past with all its miserable poverty, with its wage slaves, with its children ground into dividends, with its miners away down under the earth and with never the light of sunshine, and with its women selling the holy name of womanhood for a day's board. I hope we understand that this organization has set its face against that iniquity, and that it has set its eyes to the rising star of liberty that means fraternity, solidarity, the universal brotherhood of man. I hope that while politics have been mentioned here—I am not one of those who, because a man or woman disagrees with me, cannot act with them—I am glad and proud to say I am too broad-minded to say they are a faker or fool or a fraud because they disagree with me.

My view may be narrow and theirs may be broad, but I do say to those who have intimated politics here as being necessary or a part of this organization, that I do not impute to them dishonesty or impure motives. But as I understand the call for this convention, politics had no place here; it was simply to be an economic organization, and I hope for the good of this organization that when we go away from this hall, and our comrades go some to the west, some to the east, some to the north, and some to the south, while some remain in Chicago, and all spread this light over this broad land and carry the message of what this convention has done, that there will be no room for politics at all.

There may be room for politics—I have nothing to say about that—but it is a bread-and-butter question, an economic issue, upon which the fight must be made. Now, what do we mean when we say revolutionary Socialist? We mean that the land shall belong to the landless, the tools to the toiler, and the products to the producers. Now, let us analyze that for just a moment, before you applaud me. First, the land belongs to the landless. Is there a single landowner in this country, who owns his land by the constitutional rights given by the constitution of the United States, who will allow you to vote it away from him? I am not such a fool as to believe it. We say, "The tools belong to the toiler." They are owned by the capitalist class. Do you believe they will allow you to go into the halls of the legislature and simply say, "Be it enacted that on and after a certain day the capitalist shall no longer own the tools and the factories and the places of industry, the ships that plow the ocean and our lakes?"

Do you believe that they will submit? I do not. We say, "The product belongs to the producers." It belongs to the capitalist class as their legal property. Do you think that they will allow you to vote them away from them by passing a law and saying, "Be it enacted that on and after a certain day Mr. Capitalist shall be dispossessed?" You may, but I do not believe it. Hence, when you roll under your tongue the expression that you are revolutionists, remember what that word means. It means a revolution that shall turn all these things over where they belong—to the wealth producers.

Now, how shall the wealth producers come into possession of them? I believe that if every man and every woman who works, or who toils in the mines, the mills, the workshops, the fields, the factories, and the farms in our broad America should decide in their minds that they shall have that which of right belongs to them, and that no idler shall live upon their toil, and when your new organization, your economic organization, shall declare as man to man and woman to woman, as brothers and sisters, that you are determined that you will possess these things, then there is no army that is large enough to overcome you, for you yourselves constitute the army. Now, when you have decided that you will take possession of these things, there will not need to be one gun fired or one scaffold erected.

You will simply come into your own, by your own independence and your own manhood, and by asserting your own individuality, and not sending any man to any legislature in any State of the American Union to enact a law that you shall have what is your own—yours by nature and by your manhood and by your very presence upon this Earth. Nature has been lavish to her children. She has placed in this Earth all the material of wealth that is necessary to make men and women happy. She has given us brains to go into her storehouse and bring from its recesses all that is necessary. She has given us these two hands and these brains to manufacture them on a parallel with all other civilizations.

There is just one thing we lack, and we have only ourselves to blame if we do not become free. We simply lack the intelligence to take possession of that hope, and I feel that the men and women who constitute a convention like this can come together and organize that intelligence. I feel that you will at least listen to me, and maybe you will disagree with it.

I wish to say that my conception of the future method of taking possession of this Earth is that of the general strike; that is my conception of it. The trouble with all the strikes in the past has been this: the workingmen, like the teamsters of our cities, these hardworking teamsters, strike and go out and starve. Their children starve. Their wives get discouraged. Some feel that they have to go out and beg for relief, and to get a little coal to keep the children warm, or a little bread to keep the wife from starving, or a little something to keep the spark of life in them so that they can remain wage slaves. That is the way with the strikes in the past.

My conception of the strike of the future is not to strike and go out and starve, but to strike and remain in and take possession of the necessary property of production. If anyone is to starve—I do not say it is necessary—let it be the capitalist class. They have starved us long enough, while they have had wealth and luxury and all that is necessary. You men and women should be imbued with the spirit that is now displayed in far-off Russia and far-off Siberia, where we thought the spark of manhood and womanhood had been crushed out of them. Let us take example from them.

We see the capitalist class fortifying themselves today behind their Citizens' Associations and Employers' Associations in order that they may crush the American labor movement. Let us cast our eyes over to far-off Russia and take heart and courage from those who are fighting the battle there, and from the further fact shown in the dispatches that appear this morning in the news that carries the greatest terror to the capitalist class throughout the world—the emblem that has been the terror of all tyrants through all the ages, and there you will see that the red flag has been raised.

According to the *Tribune*, the greatest terror is evinced in Odessa and all through Russia because the red flag has been raised. They know that where the red flag has been raised, whoever enroll themselves beneath that flag recognize the universal brotherhood of man; they recognize that the red current that flows through the veins of all humanity is identical, that the ideas of all humanity are identical, that those who raise the red flag, it matters not where, whether on the sunny plains of China or on the sun-beaten hills of Africa or on the far-off snowcapped shores of the north, or in Russia or America, that they all belong to the human family and have an identity of interest. That is what they know.

So when we come to decide, let us sink such differences as nationality, religion, politics, and set our eyes eternally and forever towards the rising star of the industrial republic of labor, remembering that we have left the old behind and have set our faces toward the future. There is no power on Earth that can stop men and women who are determined to be free at all hazards. There is no power on Earth so great as the power of intellect. It moves the world and it moves the Earth.

Now, in conclusion, I wish to say to you—and you will excuse me because of what I am going to say and only attribute it to my interest in humanity. I wish to say that nineteen years ago on the fourth of May of this year, I was one of those at a meeting at the Haymarket in this city to protest against eleven workingmen being shot to pieces at a factory in the southeastern part of this city because they had dared to strike for the eight-hour movement that was to be inaugurated in America in 1886.

The Haymarket meeting was called primarily and entirely to protest against the murder of comrades at the McCormick factory. When that meeting was nearing its close someone threw a bomb. No one knows to this day who threw it except the man who threw it. Possibly he has rendered his account with nature and has passed away. But no human being alive knows who threw it. And yet in the soil of Illinois, the soil that gave a Lincoln to America, the soil in which the great, magnificent Lincoln was buried, in the State that was supposed to be the most liberal in the union, five men sleep the last sleep in Waldheim under a monument that has been raised there because they dared to raise their voices for humanity. I say to any of you who are here and can do so, it is well worth your time to go out there and draw some inspiration around the graves of the first martyrs who fell in the great industrial struggle for liberty on American soil.

I say to you that even within the sound of my voice, only two short blocks from where we meet today, the scaffold was erected on which those five men paid the penalty for daring to raise their voices against the iniquities of the age in which we live.

We are assembled here for the same purpose. And do any of you older men remember the telegrams that were sent out from Chicago while our comrades were not yet even cut down from the cruel gallows?

"Anarchy is dead, and these miscreants have been put out of the way."

Oh, friends, I am sorry that I even had to use that word, *anarchy*, just now in your presence, which was not in my mind at the outset.

So if any of you wish to go out there and look at this monument that has been raised by those who believed in their comrades' innocence and sincerity, I will ask you, when you have gone out and looked at the monument, that you will go to the reverse side of the monument and [read] there on the reverse side the words of a man, himself the purest and the noblest man who ever sat in the gubernatorial chair of the State of Illinois, John P. Altgeld. On that monument you will read the clause of his message in which he pardoned the men who were lingering then in [prison in] Joliet.

I have nothing more to say. I ask you to read the words of Altgeld, who was at that time the governor, and had been a lawyer and a judge, and knew whereof he spoke, and then take out your copybooks and copy the words of Altgeld when he released those who had not been slaughtered at the capitalists' behest, and then take them home and change your minds about what those men were put to death for.

Now, I have taken up your time in this because I simply feel that I have a right as a mother, and as the wife of one of those sacrificed men, to say whatever I can to bring the light to bear upon this conspiracy and to show you the way it was. Now, I thank you for the time that I have taken up of yours. I hope that we will meet again some time, you and I, in some hall where we can meet and organize the wageworkers of America, the men and women, so that the children may not go into the factories, nor the women into the factories, unless they go under proper conditions.

I hope even now to live to see the day when the first dawn of the new era will have arisen, when capitalism will be a thing of the past, and the new industrial republic, the commonwealth of labor, shall be in operation. I thank you.

June 29, 1905

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Audrea Lim for assembling and presenting the texts by Marx, Lincoln and others. The writings of both Karl Marx and Abraham Lincoln are voluminous and available in many forms. Those reprinted here are just a small sample to explain the onset and course of the Civil War in the United States. To these we have added a few writings by others who contributed to America's postwar social radicalization, but without attempting to duplicate the extensive and important documentation of the black experience of the war or of Reconstruction.

All the Lincoln speeches can be found on the US Library of Congress website, www.loc.gov.

Marx's "The North American Civil War" and "The Civil War in the United States" were taken from Marx's Political Writings, Volume 2, Surveys From Exile (Verso, 2010). The remaining articles in the "Karl Marx" section were taken from Karl Marx & Frederick Engels'The Civil War in the United States (International Publishers, 1861).

The "Letter from Marx to Annenkov" was taken from Marx Engels Collected Works, Volume 38 (International Publishers, 1975). The remaining letters were taken from Karl Marx & Frederick Engels'The Civil War in the United States (International Publishers, 1969).

"Independence vs. Dependence! Which?" is from Woodhull & Clafin's Weekly, June 25, 1870; "The Rights of Children" is from Woodhull & Clafin's Weekly, December 6, 1870; and "Interview

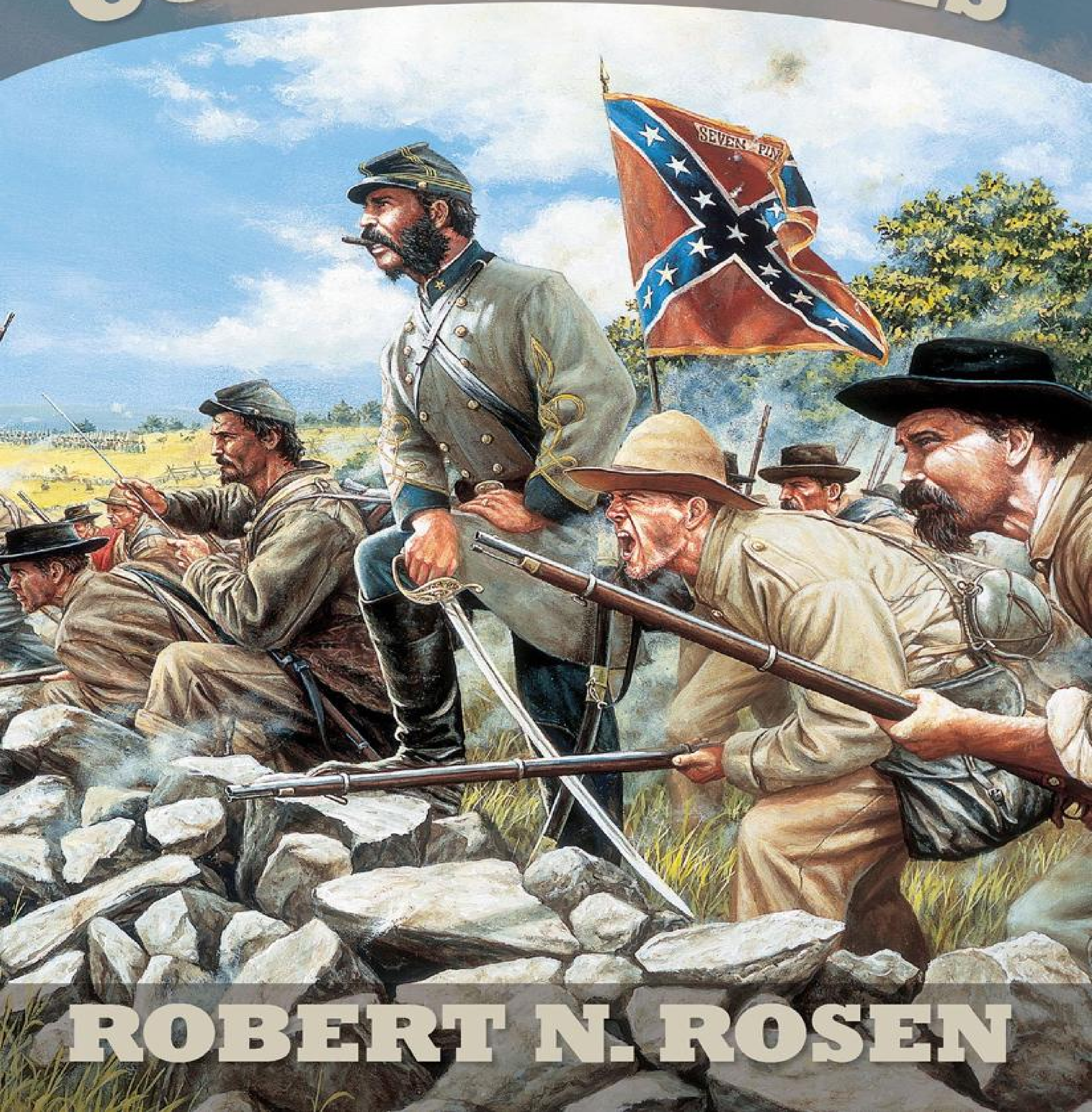
with Karl Marx" is from Woodhull & Clafin's Weekly, August 12, 1871, all on microfiche.

Thomas Fortune's "Conclusion" to Black and White was taken from Thomas Fortune, Black and White (Washington Square Press, 2007).

Engels' "Preface to the US Edition" was taken from Fredriech Engels, The Condition of the Working Class in England (Oxford University Press, 1999).

Lucy Parson's "Speeches at the Founding Convention of the Industrial Workers of the World" was taken from Lucy Parsons, Freedom, Equality & Solidarity (Charles H. Kerr, 2004).

THE JEWISH CONFEDERATES



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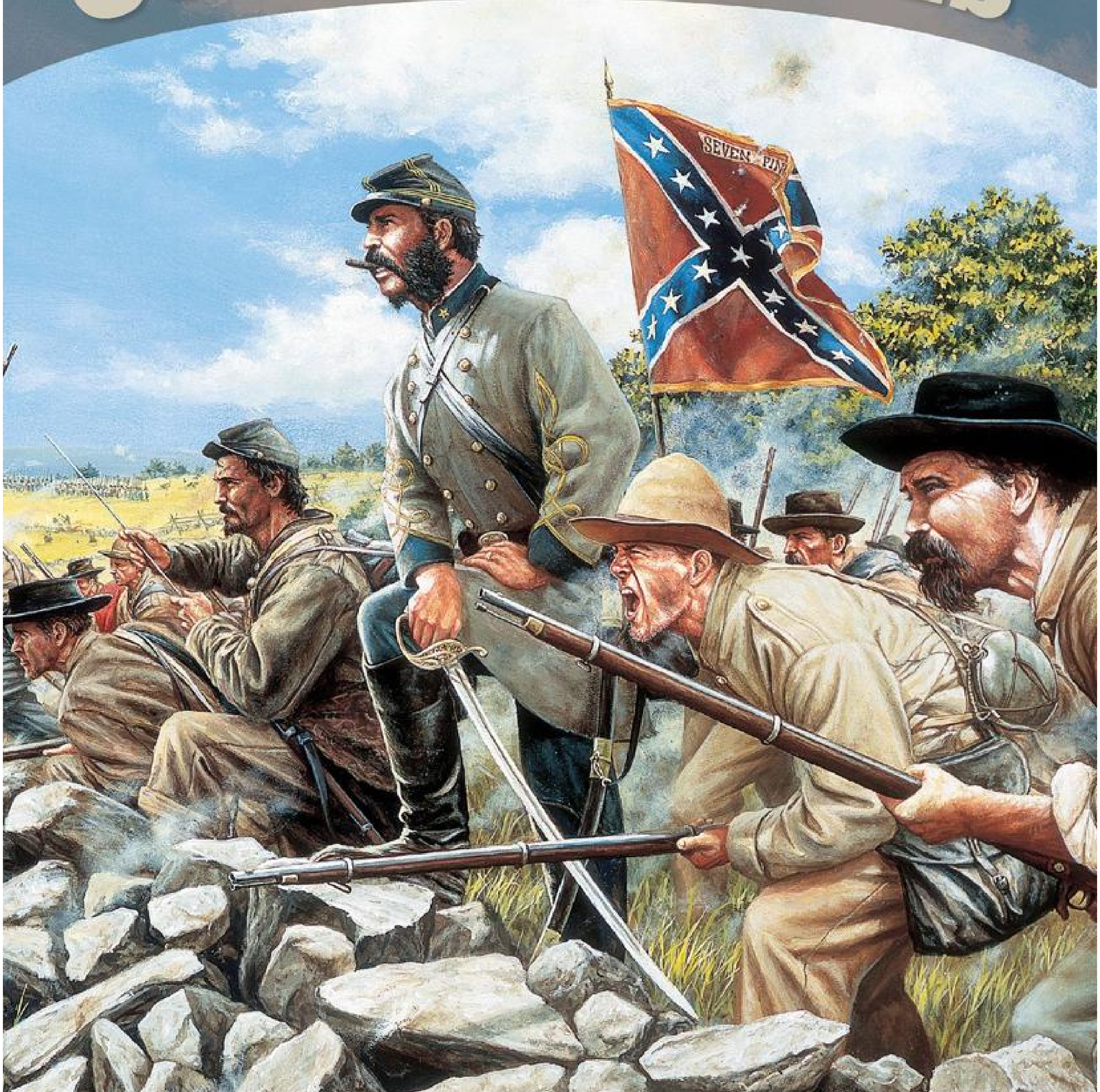

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THE JEWISH CONFEDERATES

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ROBERT N. ROSEN

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For Susan, again,
for her perseverance and love

To our three incomparable children

Annie, for her humor and insight

Ali, for her enthusiasm and inspiration

Will, for his exuberance and perspective
and to
Gustavus Poznanski Jr. and Isaac Valentine,
who died for their people at Secessionville

June 1862

There is only one baptism that can consecrate a man to a nationality: that is the baptism of blood shed in a common battle for freedom and fatherland.

—Gabriel Riesser, a German Jewish lawyer who led the fight to emancipate Jewry in early nineteenth-century Germany

* * *

And as thou led’st thy chosen people forth

From Egypt’s sullen wrath, oh King of Kings!

So smite the armies of the cruel North

And bear us to our hopes “on eagles’ wings.”

—Capt. Samuel Yates Levy, poem written in Savannah, November 2, 1863

* * *

In time to come, when our grief shall have become, in a measure, silenced, and when the malicious tongue of slander, ever so ready to assail Israel, shall be raised against us, then, with feeling of mournful pride, will we point to this monument and say: “*There* is our reply.”

—Appeal of the Hebrew Ladies’ Memorial Association of Richmond, “To the Israelites of the South,” 1866, to raise funds for a monument to the Jewish Confederate dead

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PREFACE

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THE WORLD OF THE JEWISH CONFEDERATES is a lost world. Although in the long history of the Jewish people 140 years is but the blink of an eye, both the South and American Jewry have undergone such monumental changes since 1861 that one traveling back in time must be prepared to visit a very different land populated by very different people.

My interest in this subject grew out of my curiosity about Charleston Jewry and the Civil War. In writing *Confederate Charleston*, I was determined to tell the story of African Americans, the Irish, and the Jews as well as the traditional story of the war. I knew that the old Jewish families had supported the Confederacy, but I was struck by the depth of their commitment to the cause. I wanted to understand why Southern Jews—most of whom were recent immigrants who at Passover each year celebrated the Exodus from their own enslavement in Egypt—were so committed to the Confederate States of America. Like most contemporary Jews, I was struck by the apparent irony of their story. I also believed I was in familiar territory, as the focal points, I thought, would be Charleston, Savannah, and Richmond.

What I discovered was much more complex. Jewish Confederates were, for the most part, not "old families" at all, but German, Polish, Hungarian, and Russian Jews. There were, to be sure, many prominent old Sephardic and Americanized Jewish Confederates from South Carolina and Virginia, but the typical "Hebrew" or "Israelite" soldiers, as they then called themselves, were German-speaking immigrants from Louisiana, a state that was home to approximately one-third of all Jews in the South in 1861. There were also large communities of these immigrants in Memphis, Nashville, Mobile, and Shreveport, as well as scattered communities in Arkansas and Mississippi. But Louisiana was a phenomenon. In 1861, Judah P. Benjamin was one of the state's U.S. senators; Henry M. Hyams, his cousin, served as lieutenant governor of Louisiana during the Civil War; and Edwin W. Moise had just retired as Speaker of the Louisiana House to become the Confederate district judge.[1] Here was an unusual—and unknown—moment in American Jewish history. When the war ended, Louisiana sent a former Jewish Confederate soldier, Benjamin Franklin Jonas of Fenner's Battery, to the U.S. Senate to lead its fight against Reconstruction. He was the first practicing Jew in the Senate, yet no historian had ever written about him.

The Jews of the South were committed to the cause of Southern independence because they were committed to their homeland, their new fatherland. The immigrants from

Bavaria, Prussia, and Central Europe, struck by the freedom they now enjoyed, repaid that gift with patriotic fervor. While Gratz Cohen of Savannah bemoaned prejudice against the Jews in the South in 1864—"intolerance & prejudice cast their baneful seed throughout the land," he wrote his father—Cohen did not hesitate to give to the Confederacy, in Rabbi Bertram Korn's poignant words, "the greatest service in his power to offer—his life."[2] It will surprise many to know that, although there was anti-Semitism in the South, there was little anti-Semitism in the armies of Robert E. Lee and Joseph E. Johnston, or in Jefferson Davis's executive offices—while Ulysses S. Grant and William Tecumseh Sherman issued blatantly anti-Jewish orders and proclamations. Although there were anti-Jewish outbursts in the South during the war, the Confederate South was, contrary to popular belief, the exact opposite of the image of the Old South held by most contemporary Americans.

Until recent years, the Jewish Confederates' story has not been told for a variety of reasons. After the war, the South was devastated and the small Jewish population failed to adequately write its own history. More importantly, Jewish historians have focused on the "bigger" issues in American history—immigration, anti-Semitism, political and economic success, and the large centers of Jewish population, primarily in New York and the Northeast. Political correctness is also a culprit. Typical is this statement by Lawrence Fuchs: Jews have been "Tories, Confederates, and Know-Nothings as well as Socialists, Progressives and liberal Democrats," as if being a Confederate equated to disloyalty in the American Revolution and being a radical nativist in the 1850s.[3] Nathaniel Weyl summarized the point quite colorfully in *The Jew in American Politics:* "The prominent role of Jews in the Confederacy is generally either ignored or condensed into shamefaced footnotes by those historians of American Jewry whose opinions conform to the liberal-leftist stereotype. While these writers are happy to expatiate on the deeds of comparatively insignificant Jewish Socialists and needle trade organizers, the most pertinent thing they have to say about Judah P. Benjamin is that he did not believe in the tenets of Judaism. By this criterion, Benedict Spinoza, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud and Albert Einstein would also have to be denied inclusion in the ranks of Jewry."[4]

I have tried to bring this lost Southern Jewish world back to life, to reintroduce old names and families to today's readers, and to do so without apologies. This is not without its difficulties. Modern-day Jews are very uncomfortable with the notion that antebellum Southern Jews owned slaves and that a few were in the business of slave trading. After all, Jews are unique among people in telling the story of their own enslavement.[5] Tony Horwitz writes of Charleston in *Confederates in the Attic* that the "image of Southern Jewish foot soldiers discomfitted me. I thought of my draft-dodging great-grandfather and of the Passover service, with its leitmotif of liberation from slavery in Egypt. Yet here were young Jews—a rabbi's son, even, who had perhaps recited the four questions at his family's Seder—going off to fight and die in defense of the South and its Pharaonic institution."[6] Of course, given the horror of slavery and the terrible damage and injustice it inflicted on millions of innocent people, Jewish Americans are understandably ill at ease at the mention of "Israelites with Egyptian principles," as Sen. Benjamin Wade once described Judah P. Benjamin.

Few Jewish Confederate soldiers owned slaves. Indeed, the great majority of Jewish soldiers were relatively poor clerks, peddlers, artisans, tailors, shopkeepers, and petty merchants who not only never owned a slave but had no realistic hope or ambition to do so. Being from the German states, some likely opposed slavery in private, although it cannot be said that Southern Jews were any different from their neighbors in matters of race and slavery. And while clearly the Civil War was brought about by the controversy over slavery, Confederate soldiers did not necessarily *fight* for slavery.

Jewish soldiers, as we shall see, fought for the South for many reasons, but the chief reason was to do their duty as they saw it.[7] It was a cardinal belief of anti-Semites and others in the nineteenth century that "the Wandering Jew" was a citizen of no country, that they were cowards and they were disloyal. This had been a staple of Judeophobia in Europe since the Middle Ages. Thus, like African American soldiers who fought for the Union army to prove they were men and equals, many a Jewish soldier enlisted to prove he was a man and a worthy citizen. Fighting for the Confederacy did not equate to fighting for slavery. Many who opposed secession and had misgivings about slavery fought for the South, Robert E. Lee being the foremost example. "You are all now going to the devil," one South Carolina unionist said, "and I will go with you. Honor and patriotism require me to stand by my state, right or wrong."[8]

The purpose of this book is to describe the Jewish Confederates in the context of their time and to give the reader a picture of them, warts and all. They neither need, nor would they want, a defense from a historian writing more than 130 years after an event and a cause to which they so willingly gave their energy, their property, and their lives.

Because, as Hasia Diner wrote, it is fashionable today to make a "public statement of the baggage one brings to a project," I confess to being a native third-generation Southerner whose grandparents were all immigrants or the children of immigrants. I have no Confederate ancestors. As a Southerner, however, I feel a kinship to the Southern Jews of the 1860s. It is hard to sit at Beth Elohim in Charleston and not feel a connection with the congregation's past members. And, because the South has been so deeply misunderstood, especially in relation to its Jewish citizens, I feel obliged to try to correct this misperception. Near the end of his life, Robert E. Lee told a visitor, “Doctor, I think some of you gentlemen that use the pen should see that justice is done us.”[9]

In 1820 James Madison wrote Dr. Jacob De La Motta of Savannah to thank him for the doctor’s speech at the dedication of Mikva Israel. “The history of the Jews,” Madison wrote, “must for ever be interesting. The modern part of it is at the same time so little generally known, that every ray of light on the subject has its value.”[10] This one ray of light will hopefully illuminate and allow us to glimpse again the Jewish Confederates.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

★

THERE ARE SIX PEOPLE WITHOUT whose help this book could not have been written. First and foremost is my wife, Susan, who, like Robert E. Lee, persevered when others would have surrendered. She has cajoled, argued, typed, and helped me in every way possible. I have been extremely fortunate in having had the generous assistance of two experts on Jews in the Civil War: Mel Young of Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Robert Marcus of Springfield, Virginia. I called Mel out of the blue eight years ago, and he pledged his help, saying in Hebrew, "La dor, Va dor" ("from generation to generation"). Bob Marcus has been equally generous and kind, sharing his extensive collection of photographs, research, and knowledge with me and correcting my many errors. Not being a military historian, I could not have deciphered the military records without the expertise and intellectual curiosity of Lt. Col. James A. Gabel, U.S. Air Force (Ret.). Without his meticulous attention to detail, dedication to accuracy, and hard work, I would have fallen into even more errors. Dr. Belinda Gergel of Columbia College was my personal historical tutor. Claudia Kelley, my administrative assistant, has gone far, far above and beyond the call of duty. Without her time, patience, hard work, and generosity, this book would not have been finished.

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Edward McCrady, a Charleston lawyer, wrote in his introduction to his magisterial *The History of South Carolina* (1897) that his study had been made “amidst the engagements of a busy professional life, in hours snatched from that jealous mistress—the law.” My fellow shareholders, associates, paralegals, and staff at Rosen, Goodstein & Hagood know firsthand what Mr. McCrady meant, and I deeply appreciate their support.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

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K. K. Beth Elohim as it appeared in the 1920s

The bombardment of Fort Sumter

Lt. Albert Luria

The tomb of Gustavus Poznanski Jr. at the Coming Street Cemetery, Charleston, South Carolina

K. K. Beth Elohim Synagogue, Charleston, South Carolina, in 1794

Bird’s-eye view of Charleston in 1850

Bird’s-eye view of New Orleans, Louisiana

Judah P. Benjamin in 1860

The Solomon Cohen family of Savannah, Georgia, in 1851

Shearith Israel (Remnant of Israel) Synagogue, Wentworth Street, Charleston, South Carolina

K. K. Beth Shalome (Holy Congregation of the House of Peace) Synagogue, Mayo Street, Richmond, Virginia

House of Jacob Synagogue, Norfolk, Virginia

Gates of Heaven Synagogue, Mobile, Alabama

Interior of Gates of Heaven, 1907

Mayer Lehman

Canal Street, New Orleans, Louisiana, in the Civil War era

The Jewish Orphans House, New Orleans, Louisiana

K. K. Nefutzoth Yehudah (Holy Congregation of the Dispersed of Judah), New Orleans, Louisiana

Clara Solomon

K. K. Shangarai Chased (Gates of Mercy), New Orleans, Louisiana

The Touro Infirmary, New Orleans, Louisiana

Pvt. Joseph Felsenthal of Company B, 9th Tennessee

Headquarters flag of Gen. Robert E. Lee

Rev. Dr. Max Lilienthal

Maj. David Camden DeLeon

Moses Cohen Mordecai and Isabel Lyons Mordecai

Benjamin Mordecai

Congressman Philip Phillips

Map of Charleston, South Carolina, showing key Jewish Confederate sites

The *Isabel*

Moses Ezekiel of Richmond, age twelve

Pvt. Theodore Kohn

David Yulee as a young man

Judah P. Benjamin’s townhouse, Bourbon Street, New Orleans, Louisiana

Sen. David Yulee of Florida

The first Confederate cabinet

Federal troops occupying Fernandina, Florida

Judah P. Benjamin early in the war

Confederate two-dollar bill, with portrait of Judah P. Benjamin

Jefferson F. Davis, president of the Confederate States of America

Capt. Ezekiel J. Levy of the Richmond Blues

Maj. Adolph Proskauer at Gettysburg

Lt. James Madison Seixas, 5th Company, Washington Artillery

Simon Levy Jr. of Shreveport, Louisiana, 1869

Maj. William B. Myers

Capt. Isaac L. Lyons

Lt. Michael Levy

Lt. Octavus Cohen of Savannah, Georgia

Capt. Ezekiel (“Zeke”) J. Levy

Capt. Samuel Yates Levy

Col. Leon Dawson Marks

Maj. Alexander Hart of New Orleans, Louisiana

Maj. Adolph Proskauer of Mobile, Alabama

Lt. Edwin I. Kursheedt

The Washington Artillery on Marye’s Hill, firing on Union columns

Col. Abraham Charles Myers

Maier Triest

The retreat from Gettysburg

Dr. Joseph Bensadon

Simon Baruch

The Battle of Galveston, New Year’s Day, 1863

Judah Benjamin’s letter to Leroy Pope Walker

The Battle of Chickamauga

A Louisiana “Pelican”

Charles H. Jonas

Edwin DeLeon

The Moses brothers of South Carolina

Pvt. Leon Fischel

Zalegman Phillips Moses of Sumter, South Carolina

Solomon Solomon of New Orleans, Louisiana

Pvt. Isidore Danziger

Sgt. Julian Levy

Pvt. Simon Kohlman, Point Coupee Artillery (Louisiana)

Confederate artilleryman

The Myers brothers of Richmond, Virginia

Pvt. Lewis Leon as an older man

Confederate sharpshooter

Pvt. Isaac Hermann

Pvt. Eugene Henry Levy

The “Bloody Angle” at Spotsylvania

Arkansas Jewish Confederate veterans

Louis Merz of West Point, Georgia

Gratz Cohen of Savannah, Georgia

Theodore Belitzer

Cadet Moses Ezekiel

The Battle of the Crater at Petersburg

Pvt. Isaac J. Levy’s letter to his sister Leonora

Simon and Phillipena (“Pena”) Brown

“The Prayer of the C.S. Soldiers”

Pvt. Solomon Cohen of Company B, 28th (Thomas’s) Louisiana

Touro Synagogue and Canal Street block, New Orleans, Louisiana

Rachel “La La” Lyons of Columbia, South Carolina

Adah Isaacs Menken as a French spy

Sen. James Chesnut of South Carolina and his wife, Mary Boykin Chesnut

Eliza “Lize” Moses, age fourteen

Penina Moise of Charleston, South Carolina

View of Main Street, Richmond, Virginia

Jacob A. Levy

Map of Richmond, Virginia, showing key Jewish Confederate sites

Rev. George Jacobs

Rev. Maximillian (“Max”) J. Michelbacher

General Lee’s letter to Rev. Max J. Michelbacher, August 29, 1861

David Lopez of Charleston, South Carolina

Railroad pass allowing “two colored persons” to travel to Columbia during the war

The home of the Minis family in Savannah, Georgia

1856 wedding photograph of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Haiman of Columbus, Georgia

Invoice for the sale of “one Negro Slave,” October 16, 1863, Augusta, Georgia

Canal Street, New Orleans, Louisiana, in the Civil War era

Map of New Orleans, Lousiana, showing key Jewish Confederate sites

Dispersed of Judah death record book

Emma Solomon

Rabbi James Gutheim

Israel I. Jones of Mobile, Alabama

Elias Cohen

Fanny Goldstein Cohen

George Jonas

Vicksburg, Mississippi, after the surrender

View of Nashville, Tennessee, looking toward the battlefield

Rabbi Simon Tuska, rabbi of B’nai Israel in Memphis, Tennessee

Marcus M. Spiegel, a Jewish Union officer in occupied Memphis

View of Richmond, Virginia, streets, the wounded from the Battle of Seven Pines

Phoebe Yates Pember

Eugenia Phillips

East Bay Street home of Jacob and Fanny Levy, Charleston, South Carolina

Philip Phillips

Scene at New Orleans City Hall when the flag was hauled down

Chimborazo Hospital

Belle Chasse in dilapidation

The Octavus Cohen house, Abercorn Street, Savannah, Georgia

K. K. Beth Elohim in 1886

Eleanor H. Cohen

Columbia, South Carolina, after being burned by Sherman’s army, the retreating Confederate army, and others

The Confederate cabinet escaping in April 1865

Richmond, Virginia, at the end of the war

Citizens of Richmond, Virginia, in Capitol Square during the conflagration

Gustavus A. Myers

Judah Benjamin disguised as “Monsieur Bonfals” during his daring escape through Florida

Lt. Simon Mayer of Natchez, Mississippi

David Yulee

Maj. Raphael J. Moses of Columbus, Georgia

Gratz Cohen of Savannah, Georgia

Circular sent to Southern Jews in 1866 by the Hebrew Ladies’ Memorial Association

Thomas Cooper DeLeon

Maj. Alroy Jonas, author of the poem “Lines on the Back of a Confederate Note”

Sen. Benjamin Franklin Jonas

Edwin Warren Moise

Franklin J. Moses Jr.

Judah P. Benjamin in his barrister’s wig, after the war

The record of Judah Benjamin’s burial at Père Lachaise Cemetery, Paris

Invitation to the ceremonies laying the cornerstone of the Confederate memorial monument in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1886

Harris Kempner of Galveston, Texas

William Mallory Levy

Octavus S. Cohen as an older man

Monuments to a Jewish Confederate colonel, Leon Dawson Marks, and a Jewish Union colonel, Marcus H. Spiegel, at the Vicksburg Battlefield

Maj. Alexander Hart of New Orleans

Rabbi James Gutheim

Alice Kruttschnitt as Queen of Comus (Mardi Gras), 1896

Pvt. Simon Kohlman of the Point Coupee Artillery in later years

Graves of Solomon and Emma Solomon, Dispersed of Judah Cemetery, New Orleans, Louisiana

Sir Moses Ezekiel, Virginia’s internationally renowned sculptor

Moses Ezekiel’s Confederate monument at Arlington National Cemetery

Dr. Simon Baruch as an older man

The leadership of the South Carolina division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy

Lt. Joshua Lazarus Moses, Company C, 3d (Palmetto) Battalion, South Carolina Light Artillery

Gates of Prayer, New Orleans, Louisiana, then and now

The Hebrew Cemetery, Confederate Section, at Shockoe Hill, Richmond, Virginia

Home of Moses Cohen Mordecai, Meeting Street, Charleston, South Carolina, today

Home of Solomon Cohen, Barnard and Liberty, Savannah, Georgia, today

Monument to Marx E. Cohen Jr. at the Coming Street Cemetery, Charleston, South Carolina

Mikve Israel in Savannah, Georgia

Robert E. Lee

Many of the illustrations are reproduced from Clarence C. Buel and Robert U. Johnson, eds., *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 4 vols. (New York: Century, 1888).

ABBREVIATIONS

*

AJA	American Jewish Archives, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio
AJA	*American Jewish Archives*, journal published by American Jewish Archives
AJH	*American Jewish History*, journal of the American Jewish Historical Society
AJHQ	*American Jewish Historical Quarterly*, New York, 1961–
AJHS	Library of the American Jewish Historical Society, Waltham, Massachusetts, and New York City
BA	Beth Ahabah Museum and Archive, Richmond, Va.
CC	College of Charleston, Jewish Heritage Collection, Charleston, S.C.
CSR	Compiled Service Records, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
DAB	*Dictionary of American Biography* (New York, 1946)
GHS	Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Ga.
HNOC	Williams Research Center, Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, La.

JE	*Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York, 1901–1905)
JPSA	Jewish Publication Society of America
NA	National Archives, Washington, D.C.
OR	U.S. War Department, *War of the Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*
ORN	U.S. Navy Department, *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of Rebellion*
PAJHS	*Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, Baltimore and New York, 1893–1960
SCHS	South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, S.C.
TU	Tulane University, New Orleans, La.
UNC	Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C.
VHS	Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va.
VSL	Virginia State Library (now the Library of Virginia), Richmond, Va.

PROLOGUE

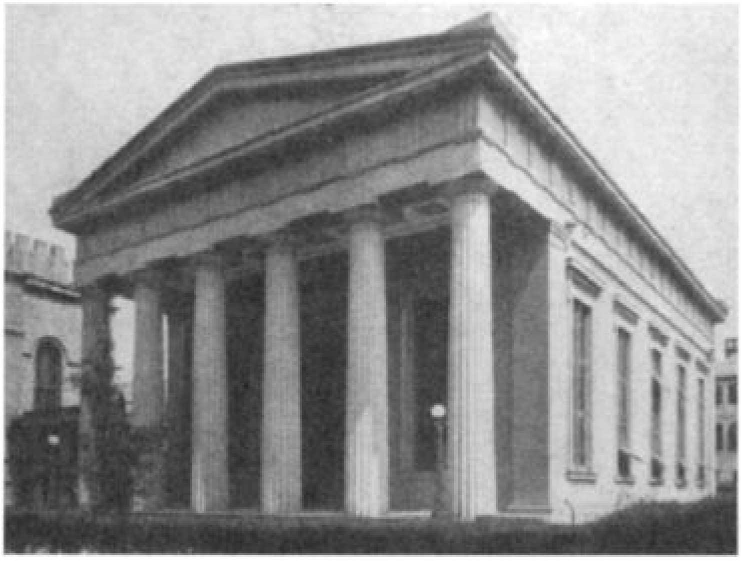
★

Our Sons Will Defend This Land

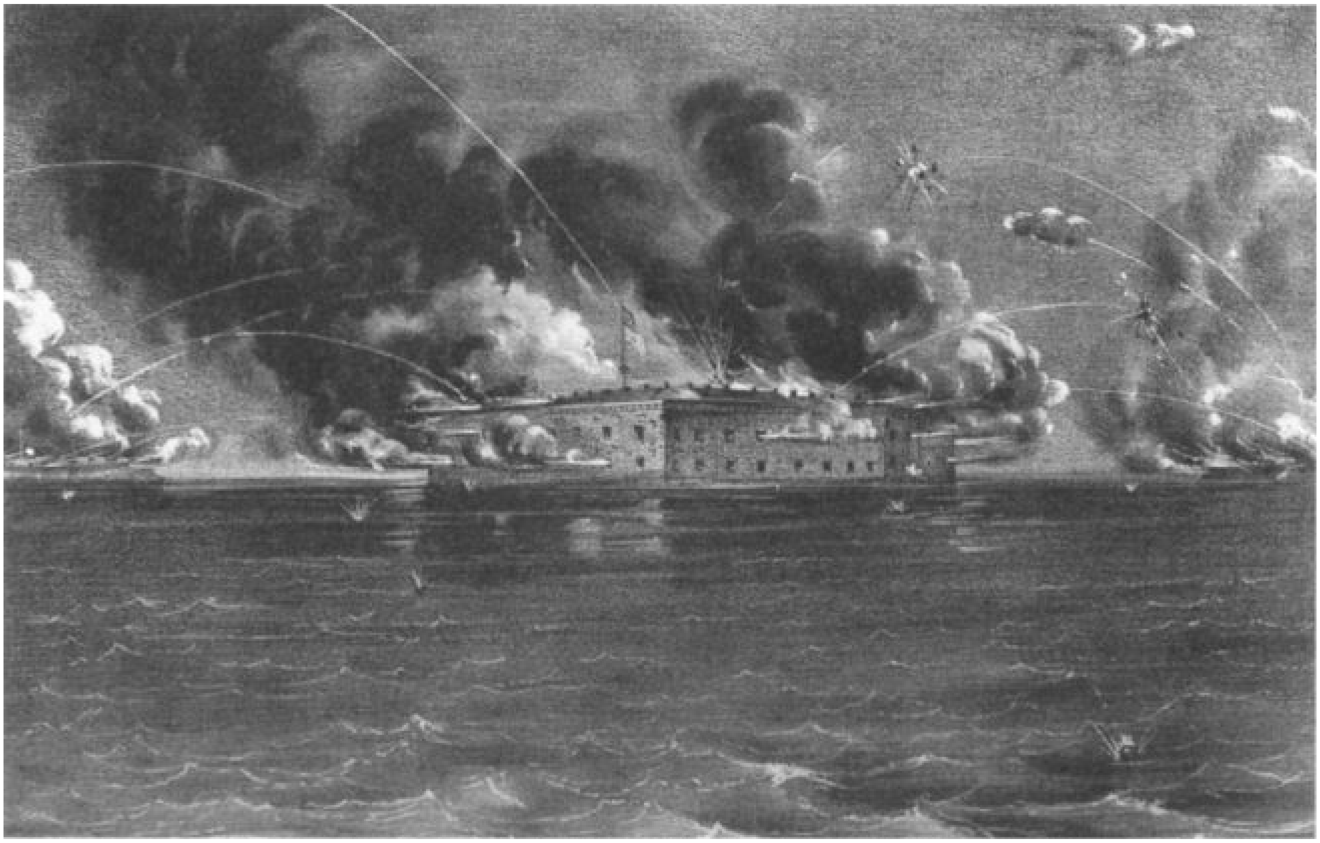
To every thing there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven: … A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

Eccelsiastes 3:1–8

ON MARCH 19, 1841, one of the oldest Jewish congregations in the United States, Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim (Holy Congregation House of God) in Charleston, invited the entire community to the consecration of its new synagogue on Hasell Street. Constructed so that worshipers faced Jerusalem, the handsome neoclassical building, the first in the city to be constructed in the form of a Greek Doric temple, overflowed with Charlestonians of many faiths. "The public spirit of the Israelites of our city," the *Courier* wrote, "is worthy of the highest praise in rearing a temple of such classical mode." It was likely the most imposing synagogue building in America. The trustees, six of the oldest congregants, the *parnass* (president), and rabbi carried the sacred Torah (scrolls containing the Five Books of Moses) from the tabernacle next door to the new building. The ancient *shofar* (ram's horn) was sounded four times. The rabbi, Gustavus Poznanski, spoke for generations of Jewish Charlestonians when he exclaimed that "this synagogue is our *temple*, this city our *Jerusalem*, this happy land our *Palestine*, and as our fathers defended with their lives *that* temple, *that* city and *that* land, so will their sons defend *this* temple, *this* city, and *this* land."[1]



K. K. Beth Elohim as it appeared in the 1920s. It was, in a sense, the mother synagogue of Southern Judaism. Its rabbis and congregants assumed leadership roles throughout the South. (Raisin, "Centennial Booklet.")



The bombardment of Fort Sumter. The dramatic beginning of the Civil War in Charleston harbor in April 1861 as depicted by Currier & Ives. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress.)

Twenty years later, on April 12, 1861, the Civil War began in Charleston harbor. Charleston Jewry, proud of their history and patriotism dating from the Revolution, rallied to the cause. Lt. Jacob Valentine commanded one of the chief artillery batteries in the bombardment of Fort Sumter. After the fort surrendered, Moses Cohen Mordecai's steamship, the *Isabel*, named for Mrs. Mordecai, transported Maj. Robert Anderson and his garrison to the waiting federal fleet. The Jews of Charleston enlisted in various units, and Rabbi Poznanski's son, Gustavus Jr., joined the Sumter Guard of the Charleston Battalion.[2]

Eight days after the bombardment of Fort Sumter and 275 miles away in Columbus, Georgia, a nineteen-year-old boy named Albert Luria sat with his family around the breakfast table when a message came that his company was to leave for Norfolk, Virginia, in two hours. Albert buttoned up his Confederate uniform, packed his trunk, and said his good-byes. He set out for town and stopped at his cousins' house, where he bid them an affectionate farewell.

Albert joined his company, the Columbus City Light Guards, Company A, 2d Georgia Infantry Battalion, and marched to the depot, where, amidst the crowd, were young Albert's family. His aunts, uncles, and cousins had walked to Columbus to send young Albert off to fight, although they were all prosperous planters accustomed to riding horseback or in carriages. It was Saturday, and, after all, the family members were Orthodox Jews. "I did not anticipate seeing them," the young soldier wrote in his journal, "for as it was Saturday I knew they could not ride & hardly expected they would pay me the compliment of walking in."[3]

Lt. Albert Luria. Luria served in the City Light Guards of Columbus, Georgia. He later was commissioned as a second lieutenant, Company I, 13th North Carolina Volunteers/23d North Carolina State Troops. In this photograph, he is seventeen years old and at military school in North Carolina. (Courtesy of Raphael J. Moses of Boulder, Colorado.)

His parents, Eliza and Raphael J. Moses, were born and raised in observant Jewish homes in Charleston and descended from a long line of Jewish Southerners. Raphael Moses was so proud of his Sephardic ancestry that, not wanting his old family names to die out, he named one son, Albert, "Luria" and another son, Israel, "Nunez" to carry on those old Sephardic names. A successful lawyer and planter in Columbus, Moses also volunteered for the Confederate army and achieved the rank of major as Gen. James Longstreet's chief of commissary. In addition to Albert Luria, two other sons of Raphael J. Moses served in the Confederate armed forces.

Albert Luria saw action with his company on May 19, 1861, at Sewell's Point, near Norfolk, Virginia. There, he picked up a live bombshell that had been lobbed into the Confederate fort by a Union gunboat in Hampton Roads, and he threw it over the works before it could explode. He saved the lives of many men but refused a promotion. Had he been a British soldier, his regimental history stated, his heroic act "would have brought him the Victoria Cross and caused the world to ring his name."[4] He may have given thanks to God at synagogue B'nai Jaacov in Norfolk.

Albert's thirteen-year-old cousin Eliza, nicknamed "Lize," wrote in her journal in July 1861, "now he expects to go to Manassas junction, where he has longed to be ever since he left it. Why?—because it is the most dangerous place. He is now among all his friends that are left from that large battle…. If his precious life could be insured I would be sorry that he had not an opportunity to distinguish himself again; but everything happens for the best." On May 27, 1861, Albert had asked another cousin, Julia, to remember him to Lize and to thank her for her assistance in communicating his romantic feelings toward her, "even though I should never return to thank you in person."[5]

On May 31, 1862, Albert Luria, now a second lieutenant in the 23d North Carolina, was severely wounded as he led his men over the enemies' works at the Battle of Seven Pines in the Peninsular Campaign. Major Moses, his father, was stationed in Richmond and set out to find his son. Moses went to the hospital where the ambulance had carried Albert. He saw a group of ladies standing by a cot and heard one of them say: "What a handsome young man!" Major Moses recalled in his memoir: "I crossed over to the cot, and my shock was beyond my power of expression when I saw my son Albert lying unconscious with a wound to his head." His father took him to a relative's home, where he died. And thus, his father later wrote, "passed away a bright, promising youth of nineteen."[6]

Mary Chesnut, the wife of South Carolina Sen. James Chesnut, knew the Moses family well. She wrote in her famous diary:

> Miriam's Luria—and the coincidence of his life. Luria (born Moses) and the hero of the bombshell. His mother was at a hotel in Charleston. Kind hearted Anna DeLeon Moses went for her sister-in-law, gave up her own chamber to her, that her child might be born in the comfort and privacy of a home. Only our people [that is, Southerners] are given to such excessive hospitality. So little Luria was born in Anna DeLeon's chamber. After Chickahominy, when this man was mortally wounded—again Anna, who is now living in Richmond, found him, and again she brought him home—her house being crowded to the doorsteps. Again she gave up her chambers to him—and as he was born in her room, so he died.[7]

Albert Luria was buried at his family's plantation, The Esquiline, in Columbus. His cousin Eliza, the young girl Albert left behind, found comfort in her ancient faith: "God, who knows and does all things for the best, has seen fit to deprive me of my greatest treasure, so I must bow in submission to his will…. God knows he did his duty to his country, and he died as he said he wanted to die—on the field of battle."[8]

Gustavus Poznanski Jr.'s tomb at the Coming Street Cemetery, Charleston. (Author's collection. Photograph by Michael Levkoff.)

Albert Luria's story was repeated many times during the war. On June 21, 1862, three Jewish boys were killed at the Battle of Secessionville on James Island defending Charleston. They were Pvt. Robert Cohen, Cpl. Isaac D. Valentine, and the former rabbi's son Pvt. Gustavus Poznanski Jr. "Thus has fallen," the *Charleston Mercury* said of young Poznanski, "a gallant youth, of singular promise." The *Charleston Daily Courier* wrote, "No one more willingly gave a life to free the soil from the invader."[9] Like Albert Luria, Gustavus Poznanski was "a bright, promising youth of nineteen." And, like Albert Luria, Gustavus Poznanski Jr. died defending his temple, his city, and his land, just as his father said he would from the pulpit of Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim on Hasell Street twenty-one years before.

PART 1

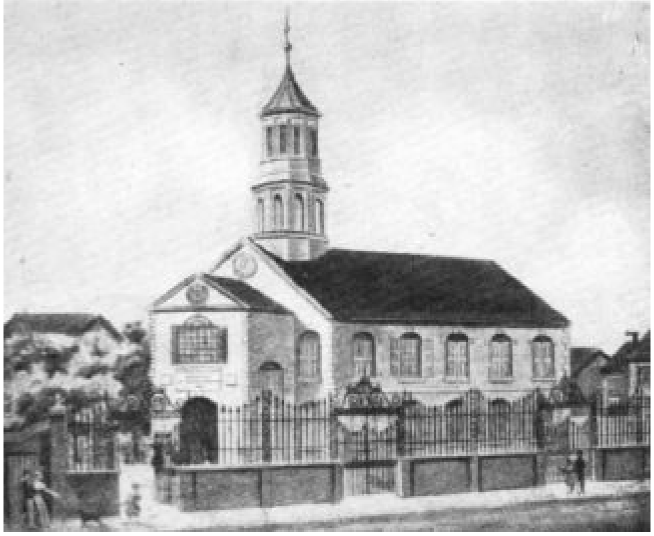
This Happy Land, Our Palestine

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

FREEDOM AND EQUALITY IN THE OLD SOUTH

In a free and independent country like America, where civil and religious freedom go hand in hand, where no distinctions exist between the clergy of different denominations, where we are incorporated and known in law; freely tolerated; where in short we enjoy all the blessings of freedom in common with our fellow citizens, you may readily conceive we pride ourselves under the happy situation which makes us feel we are men, susceptible of that dignity which belongs to human nature, by participating in all the rights and blessings of this happy country.

Letter of Beth Elohim to London’s Sephardic community (1806), quoted in Faber, *The Jewish People in America*



K. K. Beth Elohim Synagogue, Charleston, South Carolina, in 1794 (the print is mislabeled 1749). (Raisin, “Centennial Booklet.”)

CHAPTER 1

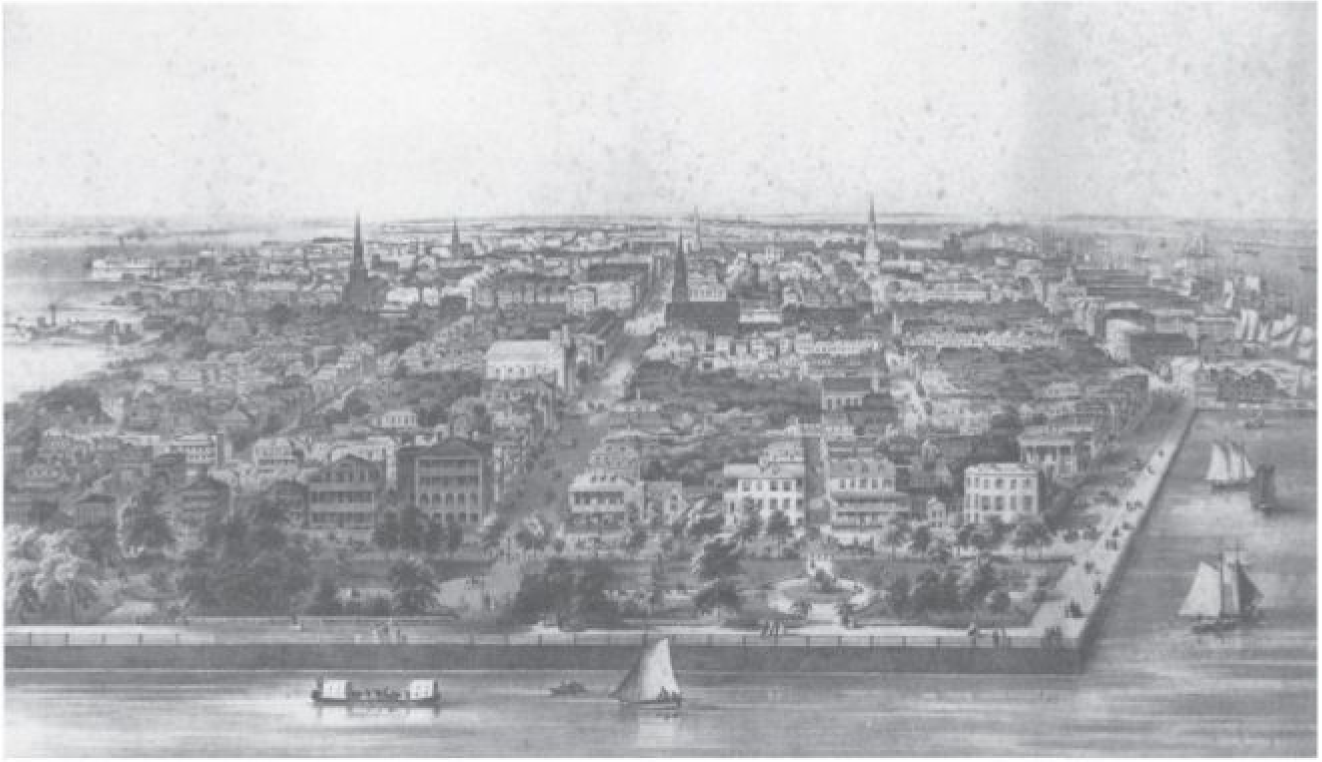
★

The Free Air of Dixie

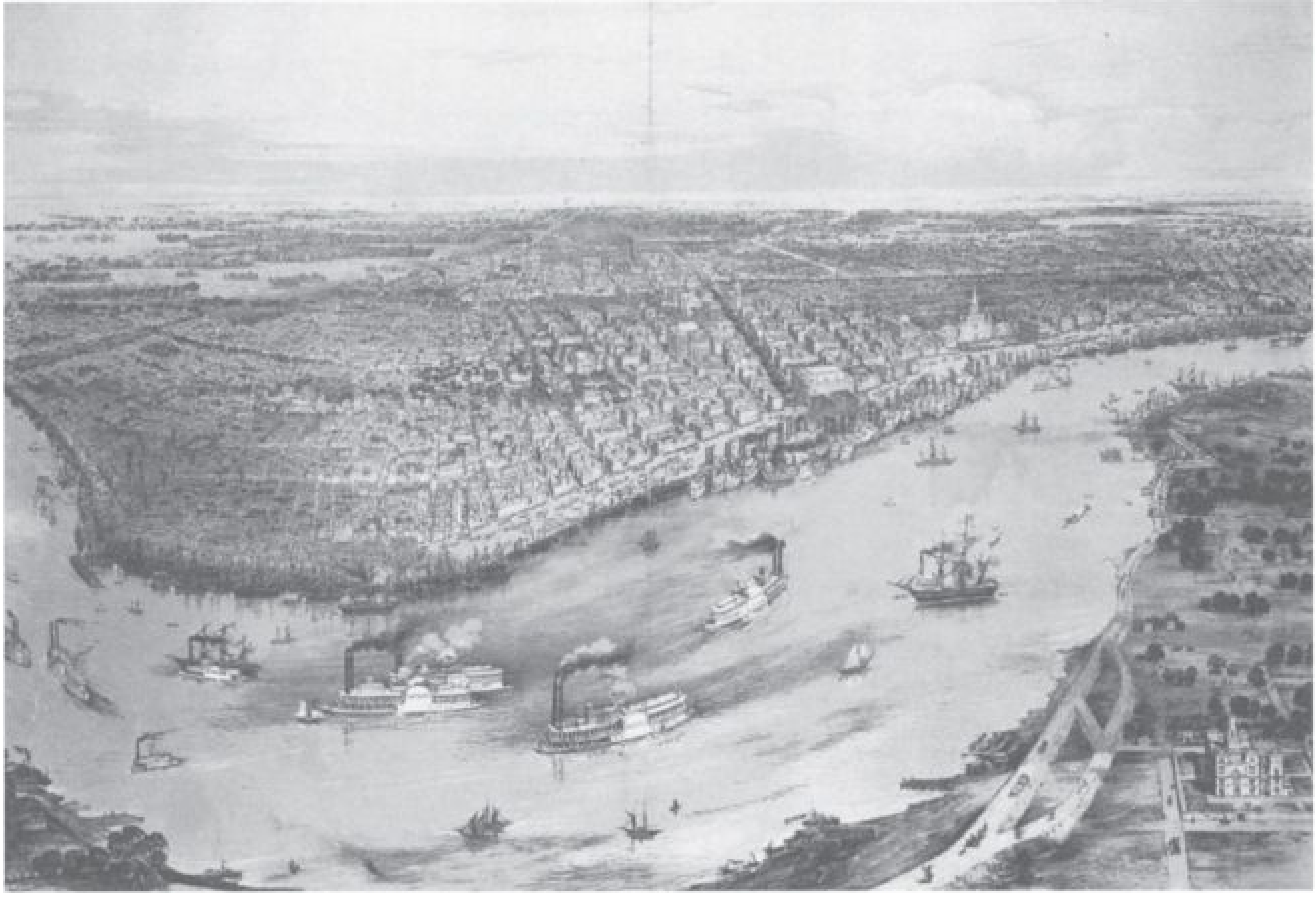
FROM ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S ELECTION as president of the United States in November 1860, through the secession winter of 1860, to the bombardment of Fort Sumter in April 1861, Jewish Southerners from Virginia to Texas weighed their devotion to the Union and to their states. "A storm, vast and terrible, is impending," Rabbi James K. Gutheim of New Orleans told his congregation.[1] Some were the sons and daughters—indeed, the grandsons and the granddaughters—of Southerners born and bred in Dixie. Some were slaveholders. A very few were planters. Some were descended from Sephardic Jews whose ancestors had been expelled from Spain and Portugal in the year Columbus set sail for the Orient.

Most Jewish Southerners, however, were Ashkenazi immigrants who in the 1840s and 1850s had fled Bavaria, Prussia, Alsace, Hesse, Baden, Swabia, Westphalia, Hungary, Poznan (Posen), and Silesia in Prussian Poland and Russian Poland to America, the fabled land of freedom.[2] "There is," one Hessian Jew wrote his brother in America, "only one land of liberty, which is ruled according to natural, reasonable laws, and that is the Union."[3] Rabbi Gutheim, himself an immigrant, reminded his congregation in a Thanksgiving sermon in 1860 that in the Old Country, the Jewish people endured "a life of tribulation and misery." But now, in America, the blessings of Providence "have been showered upon us."[4] They were peddlers and clerks, shopkeepers and saloon keepers, businessmen, liquor dealers, tobacco merchants, watchmakers, tanners, tailors, bakers, auctioneers, innkeepers, music teachers, grocers, and apothecaries. Thousands were young men who had fled their German fatherlands to avoid serving a tyrannical government in brutal, anti-Semitic armies. "Whatever you and many others may say about America," teacher Charles Mailert wrote, "you do not know European slavery, German oppression, and Hessian taxes."[5] Ludwig Börne exclaimed: "[B]ecause I was born a bondsman, I therefore love liberty more than you. Yes, because I have known slavery, I understand freedom more than you. Yes, because I was born without a fatherland my desire for a fatherland is more passionate than yours."[6]

Now they had to choose, the Sephardic grandee and the German peddler; the shipping tycoon Moses Cohen Mordecai, who lived in a great mansion south of Broad Street in Charleston and had served as *parnass* of Beth Elohim, and Henry Gintzberger, the immigrant peddler who had arrived penniless in Salem, Virginia, in 1860. They had chosen freedom over tyranny and now they had to choose between two versions of freedom—one Union and one Confederate.[7]



Bird's-eye view of Charleston in 1850. By 1861 there was an old and established Jewish community in Charleston. Jews had been living in South Carolina since 1695. There were three synagogues, the Hebrew Orphan Society building next to the courthouse on Broad Street, and prominent Jewish Charlestonians in all walks of life. (Courtesy of the South Carolina Historical Society.)



Bird's-eye view of New Orleans. In 1861 New Orleans was the Confederacy's largest city by far. It was also home to the largest Jewish community in the South. (Courtesy of Library of Congress.)

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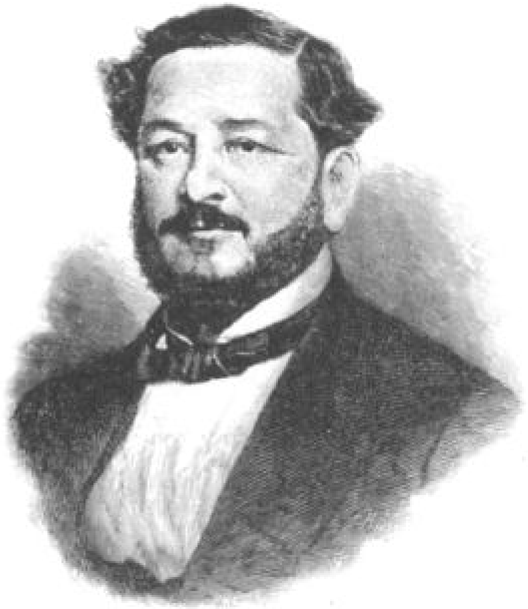


Judah P. Benjamin in 1860. (*Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*.)

On December 31, 1860, the senior senator from Louisiana rose in the Senate Chamber to defend the right of the Southern states to secede from the Union. It was the Christmas season, and the Senate galleries were thronged with a crowd in high spirits. The senator wore a simple black suit. A pocket watch with a long chain hung across his vest. He was a short portly man with black curly hair and black eyes. He was an affable and cosmopolitan man, a popular senator, a dapper dresser, an inveterate gambler whose unusual voice was "silvery [and] sweet and beautifully modulated." He privately felt that secession would be a disaster, but in a few months he would become the Confederacy's lawyer. Over the course of the war, he would become its spymaster.

He spoke for more than an hour. His voice, Mrs. Jefferson Davis recalled in later years, "rose over the vast audience distinct and clear … he held his audience spellbound … so still were they that a whisper could have been heard." He reminded his colleagues that incessant attacks upon "the feelings and sensibilities of a high-spirited people by the most insulting language and the most offensive epithets" would lead to secession. He ridiculed Republican suggestions of coercion without war.

As he reached the end of his remarks, one hand was in his pocket, the other toying with his watch chain. "And now, senators," he said softly, "within a few weeks we part to meet as senators in one common council chamber of the nation no more forever. We desire, we beseech you, let this parting be in peace…. What may be the fate of this horrible contest, no man can tell, none pretend to foresee; but this much I will say: the fortunes of war may be adverse to our arms; you may carry desolation into our peaceful land, and with torch and fire you may set our cities in flames … you may, under the protection of your advancing armies, give shelter to the furious fanatics who desire, and profess to desire, nothing more than to add all the horrors of a servile insurrection to the calamities of civil war; you may do all this,—and more, too, if more there be—but you never can subjugate us."

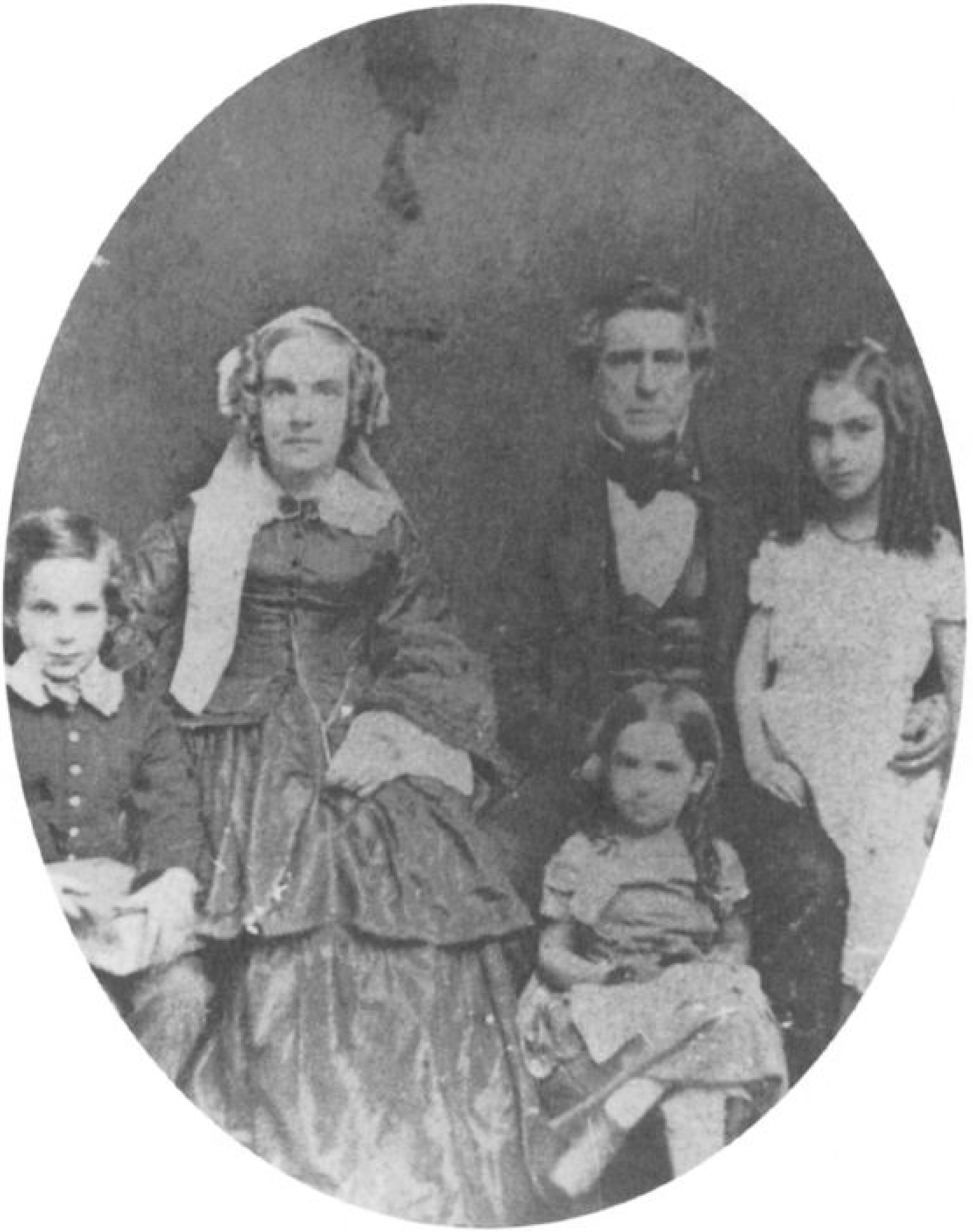
Here, the senator released his grasp of his watch chain, as if the chains which held the South to the Union were now severed. He put his other hand in his pocket, and as he turned to take his seat, he added, "An enslaved and servile race you can never make of us—never! never!"[8] The whole gallery burst into uncontrollable applause so loud that the presiding officer, Sen. James M. Mason, attempted to clear the galleries. But the crowd was wild with enthusiasm.

It was one of the most dramatic moments in the history of the U.S. Senate. The senator was Judah P. Benjamin, the brilliant lawyer from New Orleans and the first senator of acknowledged Jewish descent in American history. Benjamin was a Southerner who lived by the Southern code of honor. In 1858, he clashed with Mississippi Sen. Jefferson Davis on the floor of the Senate. Davis declared in a stage whisper that he had “no idea that he was to be met with the arguments of a paid attorney in the Senate chamber.” Benjamin challenged Davis to a duel without asking for a withdrawal or explanation. To his credit, Davis apologized publicly the next day.[9]

On December 31, 1860, Judah Benjamin was at the height of a remarkable career. He was married to a beautiful Louisiana Creole lady. He possessed great wealth, a successful legal practice, and the admiration of the people of Louisiana and the South. He had even declined a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court. He was now about to give up everything he held dear, including the company of his beloved sisters, nieces, and nephews, to support the South, to become the Confederacy’s lawyer and counselor, the friend and ally of Jefferson Davis, and ultimately, to become the chief of espionage operations. Judah Benjamin made his choice.

On January 5, 1861, after South Carolina had seceded, eleven influential Southern senators, including Jefferson Davis, met in Washington. Two of them, Judah Benjamin and David Levy Yulee of Florida, were Southerners of Jewish origin. Most of them had long resisted secession, but now they had all made the fateful choice. They prepared resolutions calling for the secession of the Southern states and a convention in Montgomery, Alabama, in February to create a new government.

Judah Benjamin soon left Washington for New Orleans. He made arrangements to leave his family, his friends, his law practice, and all of his business interests. He made his last public address in New Orleans on February 22 and left for Montgomery. He would never return or see his brothers or sisters again. On February 25 he was unanimously confirmed as attorney general of the Confederacy. David Yulee stayed in Washington hoping to save the Union but also to gather information on the military situation in Florida in the event of secession. He arrived in Fernandina in early February and reported to Jefferson Davis, whom he had known for years. “Everywhere along the route I found among all classes a warm response to [your election which] has quieted concern and raised the popular heart in hopefulness. I doubt if Washington in his day had more entire hold upon public confidence.”[10] A few weeks later he wrote Davis: “I hope you will not have occasion to take the field, but if there is a war … you have the example of Napoleon before you.”[11]



The Solomon Cohen family of Savannah in 1851. Young Gratz Cohen is on the left. (From the collection of Louis Schmier, Valdosta, Georgia.)

Abraham Charles Myers, the great-grandson of Moses Cohen, the first rabbi of Charleston, a career soldier, and a graduate of West Point, surrendered the Federal supply depot in New Orleans to the Louisiana authorities and resigned his hard-earned commission the same day. “South Carolina, the State where I was born,” his letter read, “and Louisiana, the State of my adoption, having in convention passed ordinances of secession from the United States, I am absolved from my allegiance to the Federal government."[12]

"Now we of the South," Solomon Cohen of Savannah wrote his aunt in Philadelphia, "seeing that public opinion, the law of the land in the North, is against all that we hold valuable … and that the government is about to pass into the hands of those who hate us and our institutions, feel that prudence and self-defense demand that we should protect ourselves." Samuel Yates Levy, also from Savannah, joined the City Light Guard and was stationed on Tybee Island. His nephew, seventeen-year-old Octavus Cohen, volunteered for the Savannah Artillery. Isaac Hermann, a French immigrant, had arrived at Castle Garden in New York in 1859 and settled in Sandersville, Georgia. He joined the Washington Rifles, 1st (Ramsey's) Georgia Infantry in June.[13]

Young Jewish Southerners flocked to the Confederate banner. Haiman Kaminski, from Posen, and Solomon Emanuel, also an immigrant, both now living in Georgetown, South Carolina, joined Company A, 10th South Carolina.[14] In May, Adolph Proskauer, the son of a Prussian immigrant from Breslau, enlisted in Capt. Augustus Stikes's company, the Independent Rifles of Mobile, Alabama, which became Company C, 12th Alabama. He was appointed first corporal. A Polish immigrant to Texas, Herschell Kempner (now called Harris Kempner), joined the Ellis County Blues, a local militia unit that eventually became Company H of William H. Parsons's 12th Texas Cavalry. Lewis Leon, a recent immigrant from Germany, left his parents' home on Norfolk Street on the lower east side of New York City in 1858 at the age of seventeen. He settled in Charlotte, North Carolina, and when the war came he enlisted in the Charlotte Grays, 1st North Carolina Volunteers. Eugene Henry Levy of New Orleans enlisted as a private in Dreux's Battery. Two of his brothers, Joseph Calhoun and Julian, also volunteered.[14]

When the Richmond Light Infantry Blues left the capital of Virginia for battle in April 1861, fifteen of its ninety-nine members were Jews, including Ezekiel ("Zeke") J. Levy, its fourth sergeant. There was a Jewish contingent in the Richmond Grays. Myer Angle, the president of Beth Ahabah, the German synagogue, eventually had six sons in the Confederate army. Recent German Jewish immigrants from all over Virginia enlisted: Max Guggenheimer Jr. of Lynchburg, a native of Hurben, Bavaria, in the 11th Virginia; Aaron and Isadore Reinach of Petersburg in the 12th Virginia; and Leopold and Sampson Levy, natives of Altenstadt, Bavaria, in the 1st Virginia Cavalry. Fellow Bavarian Emanuel Gerst of Halifax County joined the 6th Virginia Cavalry.[15]

Thus, overwhelmingly, almost unanimously, some with fear and trepidation, others with courage and enthusiasm, some with reservations, others with a firm unflinching resolve, Southern Jewry cast its lot with the Confederate States of America. Many, like "Ike" Hermann, had found the land of Canaan. Others, like Gustavus Poznanski, had found their Jerusalem, their Palestine. Still others, like Marcus Baum, Jacob Samuels, Adolph Proskauer, and Herschell Kempner, had finally found their fatherland.

When in March 1865 Eugenia Levy Phillips's brother, Capt. Samuel Yates Levy, wrote his father from Johnson's Island, a Union prisoner of war camp, he spoke from his heart: "I long to breathe the free air of Dixie."[16]

* * *

Southern Jews had been breathing the free air of Dixie for two hundred years. No one knows who the first Southern Jews were. Elias Legardo has been said to be America's first known Jew, arriving in Virginia on the *Abigail* in 1621. The first confirmed documentation of a Jew living in Carolina was in 1695. John Locke's Fundamental Constitution of Carolina granted freedom of religion to "Ye Heathens, Jues [*sic*] and other Disenters." It was the first constitution in history to guarantee religious freedom to Jews. South Carolina was, according to Leonard Dinnerstein, the colony "most hospitable to Jews." It was little wonder, then, that the persecuted Jew, like the persecuted Huguenot and German Palatine, emigrated to South Carolina "to find a haven of rest."[17] When the planter Francis Salvador, an immigrant from England, was elected to the provincial Congresses of South Carolina between 1773 and 1776, he became the first Jew in modern history anywhere in the world to be elected to a popular assembly.[18]

The small Jewish community of Charles Town grew rapidly. Beth Elohim was founded in 1749. By 1820, there were 700 Jews in Charleston and 550 in New York City. In 1820 South Carolina boasted the largest Jewish population in the United States, and Charleston was the foremost Jewish community in the nation.[19] London Jewry sent a group of Jews to Georgia aboard the *William and Sarah*, which arrived in Savannah on July 11, 1733. In 1735 they founded K. K. Mikve Israel (Holy Congregation Hope of Israel), the third congregation in America, after New York and Newport, Rhode Island. Richmond's Jewish community established K. K. Beth Shalome (House of Peace) in 1789. By the 1820s, the immigrant Jews of Petersburg, Virginia, organized an informal congregation, and in 1858 Rodef Shalom was organized on Sycamore Street. There were Jewish families and merchants in Charlottesville, where David Isaacs sold goods to Thomas Jefferson, including, so the story goes, the ball of twine Mr. Jefferson used to lay out the first building of the University of Virginia.[20] Jacob De La Motta, a physician, spoke for Southern Jewry when he exclaimed at the dedication of Mikve Israel in Savannah in 1820: "On what spot in this habitable Globe does an Israelite enjoy more blessings, more privileges, or is more elevated in the sphere of preferment and more conspicuously dignified in respectable stations?"[21]

In the 1820s, New Orleans Jews organized Shangarai Chased (Gates of Mercy), the city's first synagogue, located in the French Quarter, where many Jews lived and worked. A New Yorker, Jacob de Silva Solis was in New Orleans on business during Passover in 1826 and was unable to buy matzo, the unleavened bread used during the Passover Seder. He determined to remedy the situation and, together with a number of German and French Jews, organized the first congregation.[22]

The Jews of the South lived in a slaveholding society, and they accepted the institution as part of everyday life. Living in cities and towns, those Jews who owned slaves utilized them as domestic servants, as workers in their trades, or they hired them out. "Acceptance of slavery was," Leonard Dinnerstein wrote, "an aspect of southern life common to nearly all its white inhabitants." Indeed, it was common to its free black inhabitants, who owned more slaves by far than Southern Jews. The free blacks of Charleston, for example, owned three times the number of slaves owned by Charleston Jewry.[23] Mark I. Greenberg points out that Jews adopted the Southern way of life, including the code of honor, dueling, slavery, and Southern notions about race and states' rights.[24]

In 1840 three-fourths of all heads of families in Charleston owned at least one slave, and the incidence of slaveholding among Jews likely paralleled that of their neighbors.[25] In Richmond, a few auctioneers sold slaves, and there was one Jewish slave dealer, Abraham Smith. Richmond's rabbis supported slavery. George Jacobs of Richmond hired a slave to work in his home, although he owned no slaves.[26] Reverend Max Michelbacher prayed during the war that God would protect his congregation from slave revolt and that the Union's "wicked" efforts to "beguile [the slaves] from the path of duty that they may waylay their masters, to assassinate and slay the men, women, and children … be frustrated." Reverend Michelbacher believed, together with the Christian clergy, that slavery was divinely ordained. "The man servants and maid servants Thou has given unto us," he prayed during the war, "that we may be merciful to them in righteousness and bear rule over them, the enemy are attempting to seduce … [and] invite … to insurrection. … In this wicked thought, let them be frustrated, and cause them to fall into the pit of destruction."[27]

Shearith Israel (Remnant of Israel) Synagogue, Wentworth Street in Charleston (between Anson and Meeting Streets). The Orthodox members of Beth Elohim seceded to build this synagogue in the 1840s when Beth Elohim installed an organ and liberalized the service. The building was shelled in the Union bombardment. Charleston Jewry could not support Beth Elohim, Shearith Israel, and Berith Shalome after the war. Shearith Israel was closed, and this building was demolished in the twentieth century. (Courtesy of K. K. Beth Elohim Archive, Charleston, South Carolina.)

The 1840s and 1850s brought a sea change to the Jewish population of the United States. Between 1800 and 1860, 100,000 Jewish immigrants arrived from Poland, Central Europe, and the German states such as Prussia and particularly Bavaria, which “stood first in the row of intolerant states,” infamous for “its Pharaoh-like registration laws,” its restriction of trade, marriage, and even the Jew’s right to reside in the place of his choice. Thus, while the Sephardim had been the earliest settlers, by 1860 Southern Jewry was overwhelmingly Ashkenazic, that is, German and Eastern and Central European. Some of these Ashkenazic Jews were “Anglicized,” or “Americanized,” Jews who had intermarried with and adopted the ways of the earlier Sephardim, who were masters of acculturation. These Ashkenazic Jews identified with Sephardic ideals, considered themselves Southerners, and looked upon the new German-Jewish immigrants as foreigners who needed to be taught local customs.[28]

The older established Southern Jewish families—whether Sephardic or Ashkenazic, German, Polish, English, assimilated, Reform, or Orthodox—were not prepared for this wave of German and Ashkenazic immigrants in the 1840s and 1850s. Their attitude toward the newcomers changed as the numbers increased. Some Sephardic families even said a Kaddish (prayer for the dead) when a Sephardi “intermarried” with a

German Jewish immigrant. By 1860 there were few Sephardic Jews left in the South, most having intermarried with Gentiles and Ashkenazic Jews. Dr. Malcolm H. Stern concluded that “almost the entire early Sephardic community became completely absorbed by the Ashkenazic.”[29]

When the Civil War began, Southern Jewry was an integral part of the Confederate States of America. Louisiana boasted at least five congregations. New Orleans had the seventh largest Jewish population in the United States (Boston was sixth and Chicago eighth).[30] “In Charleston,” I. J. Benjamin wrote, “Israelites occupy the most distinguished places.” With the addition in 1855 of a Polish and German congregation, Berith Shalome, located in a house on St. Philip Street near Calhoun Street, there were now three synagogues in Charleston, as well as the Hebrew Orphan Society building on Broad Street and dozens of Jewish-owned businesses on King Street. There were sizable Jewish communities in Columbia, Sumter, and Georgetown. In 1846 the Shearith Israel (Remnant of Israel) congregation was formed in Columbia. The DeLeon family, Sephardim from Leon, Spain, lived in Charleston, Camden, and Columbia, and by 1860 had become one of the leading Jewish families of the state. Dr. Mordecai H. DeLeon served as mayor of Columbia and was a close friend of the controversial Dr. Thomas Cooper, president of South Carolina College. DeLeon’s sons, David Camden, Edwin, and Thomas Cooper (named for Dr. Cooper), were all to play a prominent role in the life of the Confederacy.[31]

There were Jewish communities throughout Georgia. In 1861, Mikve Israel was located near Chippewa Square, and Jewish businessmen prospered. There were 2,500 Jews in Savannah, Augusta, Macon, Atlanta, Columbus, and numerous small towns and villages throughout Georgia. Jews had lived in Augusta since 1802, and a large influx of German immigrants arrived in the 1840s. By 1846, B’nai Israel (Children of Israel) was founded when the “scattered Israelites of Augusta, Georgia and Hamburg, South Carolina, desirous of uniting as a band of brothers, with a view of publicly worshiping the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” formed a congregation.[32] In 1854 twenty Jewish families in Columbus founded Temple B’nai Israel. In 1859 they bought a house to use as a synagogue.[33]

Eleven German Jews organized Beth Israel (House of Israel) in Macon in 1859. By 1861 members of the congregation were active in the unfolding of events: R. Einstein was a delegate to the state Democratic Party convention, which supported the pro-Southern candidate for president. The Macon German Artillery, consisting of German immigrants, both Christian and Jewish, was ordered into state service in September 1861, and four Binswangers, two Sangers, and an Einstein, a Nordlinger, a Kahn, and other Macon Jews went with their company.[34]

Atlanta, that creation of cotton and the railroad, was a wilderness in 1836. But it grew dramatically after the railroad arrived in the 1840s and 1850s. From 20 families in 1845 it grew to 9,554 in 1860. Its population consisted of native Southern whites and a few immigrants. The first Atlanta Jews came for the same reason non-Jews came: economic opportunity. Jacob Haas and Henry Levi, peddlers from Hessendarmstadt, came in 1845 to open a dry goods store. They soon built one of the town's largest stores. Aaron Alexander, a Sephardi from Charleston, came in 1848 and operated a drugstore at the "Sign of the Negro and the Mortar," where he, like many Jewish merchants, sold medical and dental supplies, paint, window glass, perfume, and wine and liquor. Aaron Alexander's wife, Sarah Moses Alexander, established the first Jewish Sabbath school, which, as Henry Aaron Alexander wrote in 1954, "she conducted in the forest around her home with fallen logs for benches," stressing the Ten Commandments and how and when to say the *Shema*, then pronounced *Shemang* ("Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One").[35]

Georgia Jewry reflected the variety of the Jewish experience in the South. Louis Merz from Durkheim, Bavaria, emigrated in 1853, arrived at Philadelphia, and went to live in LaGrange in westernmost Georgia for a time. A peddler, he eventually settled in the small town of West Point between LaGrange and Columbus when the railroad came to the town. He was a merchant, a quiet, intellectual man who became a part of small-town Georgia life. His sister Betty also came to America and settled in Cincinnati. She later married Herman Heyman, her brother's partner, and moved to West Point. Their brother Daniel also came to West Point, while Merz's parents and one sister remained in Bavaria. Merz was to enlist in the West Point Guards, Company D of the 4th Georgia.[36]

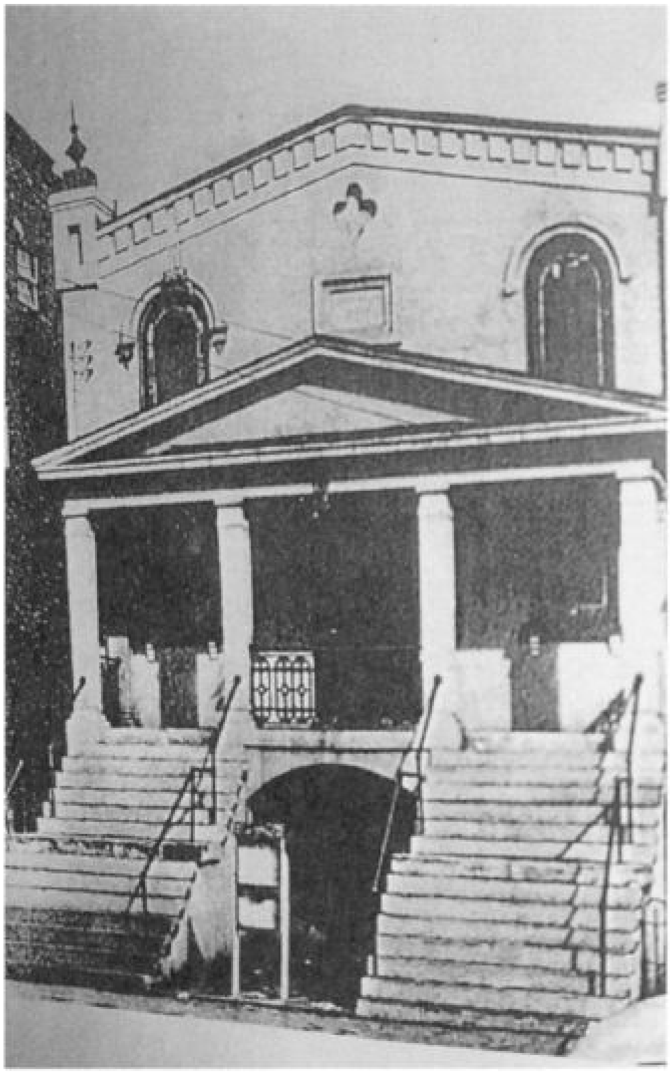
Not far from West Point in Columbus, Georgia, Raphael J. Moses, a fifth-generation Sephardic Jew, lived on his plantation, The Esquiline, named for one of the Roman hills. Moses had worked as a peddler, retail merchant, and a farmer, and eventually became a planter and a lawyer after speculating in land in Florida. One of the first Georgians to successfully grow and market peaches and plums, Moses is credited with shipping the first peaches from the South. His family was completely acculturated into Columbus society while remaining devout Jews. Moses became involved in politics and, being a South Carolinian by heritage and upbringing, was a committed secessionist.[37]

Moses had always been a strong supporter of states' rights. He had favored nullification in the 1830s, was opposed to popular sovereignty in the 1840s, and supported secession in the 1850s. When the war broke out, he had forty-seven slaves. Thus, it was natural that Raphael Moses was in the forefront of secession and war. Like many other Georgians, he and his son, Albert Luria, were in Milledgeville, Georgia, in January 1861 to show the delegates to the secession convention that the people were for it.[38]

Many Richmond Jews likely agreed with Raphael Moses's states' rights position. Richmond's Jewish community had grown so that by 1860 the capital of Virginia was home to three congregations and dozens of thriving Jewish-owned mercantile establishments. There were still a few Sephardic and Anglicized families, but the great majority were Ashkenazic Jews from Bavaria, the Palatinate (western Germany), and the North. Richmond's Jewry could look with pride on its success. In 1861, Beth Shalome, the old Sephardic synagogue, was located on Mayo Street near Franklin. The German Jews had established K. K. Beth Ahabah (House of Love) in 1841 and built a synagogue on Eleventh Street between Marshall and Clay (near the Valentine Museum) in 1848. A Polish congregation, Kenesseth Israel (Congregation of Israel) was established in 1856. As in other Southern communities, Richmond had had a Jewish mayor and Jews were active in civic and military affairs.[39]

K. K. Beth Shalome (Holy Congregation of the House of Peace) Synagogue, Mayo Street, Richmond. Richmond's first synagogue, consecrated in 1822, was built in the center of the city near the capitol. The congregation was founded in 1789. In 1860 it was also called the Portuguese Synagogue. This photograph was taken in 1890. The building was demolished in 1935, and Mayo Street itself became a victim of urban growth. The site today is in the middle of a modern government complex. (Courtesy of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.)

German immigrants also lived in Alexandria, Lynchburg, Harrisonburg, Staunton, Fredericksburg, and Norfolk, Virginia. A small congregation, Beth El, was organized in Alexandria in 1859. Norfolk's early Jewish community was revitalized by the German Jews in the 1840s. Jacob Umstadter, who had been trained as a *shochet* and *hazzan* (cantor), helped organize Chevra B'nai Jaacov (Association of the Sons of Jacob, or House of Jacob) in 1848. By 1859 they had built a synagogue on Cumberland Street.[40]

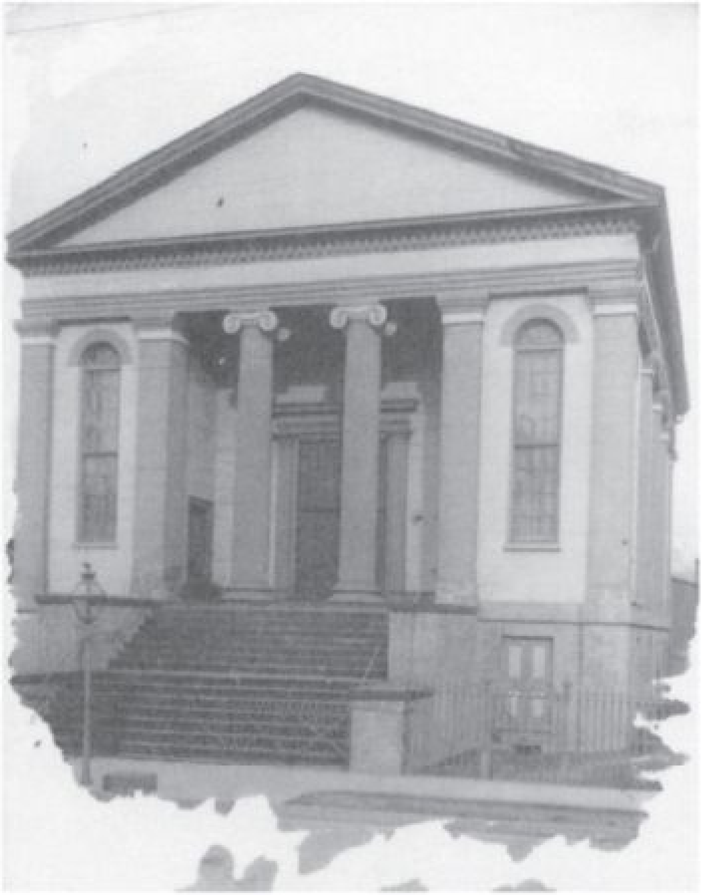


House of Jacob Synagogue, Norfolk, Virginia. The first synagogue in Norfolk, built in 1859 just before the war began. It was named in honor of its founder, Jacob Umstadter. Later called the Cumberland Street Shul, it housed the congregation until 1878, when it became Beth-El synagogue. (Courtesy of Ohef Sholom Temple and the Norfolk Public Library, Sargeant Memorial Room.)

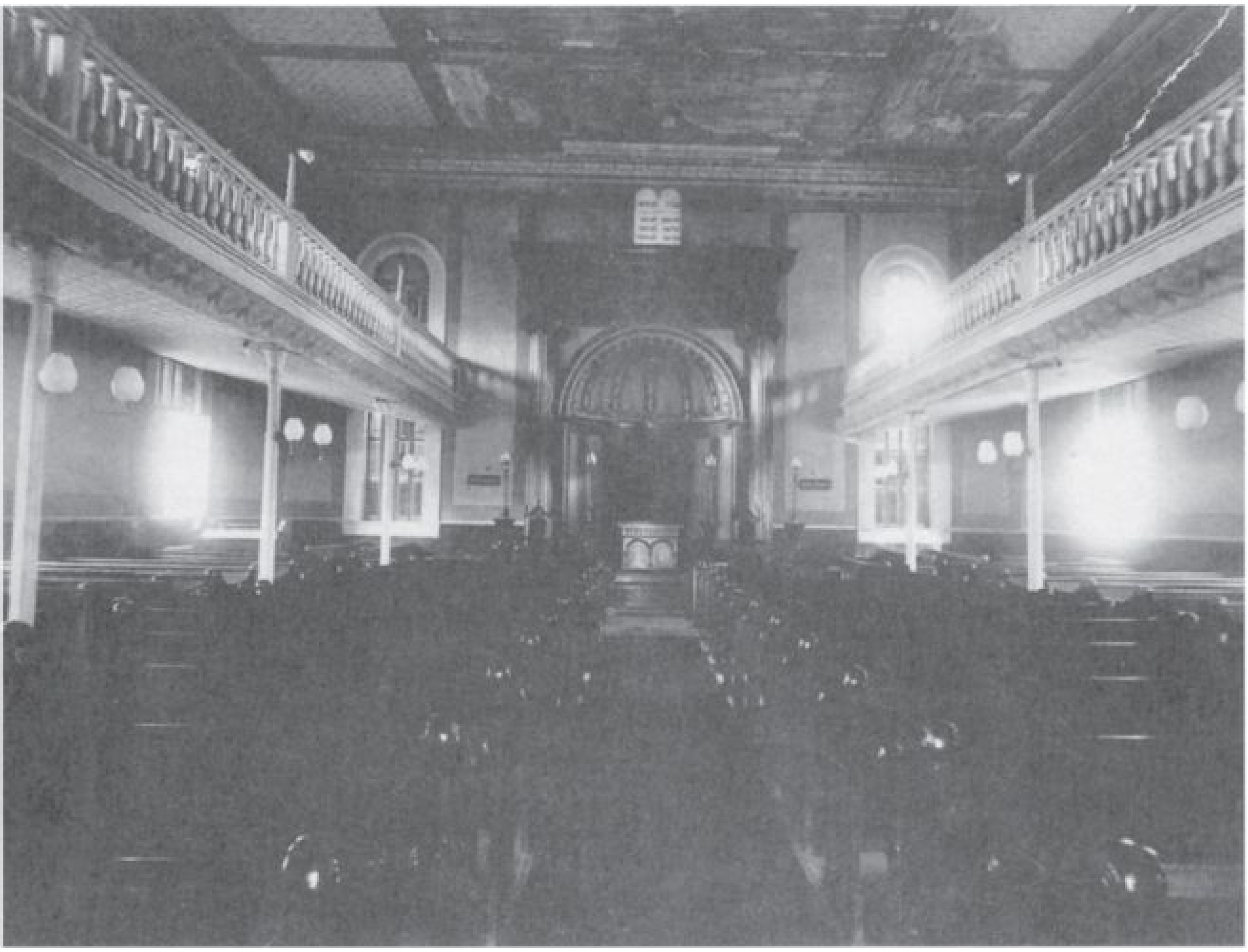
After Richmond and Appomattox, Manassas is the most well-known place-name in Virginia's Civil War history. It was named for a Jew who kept an inn there in the eighteenth century. In the Bible, Manasseh (*Menasheh* in Hebrew) was the name of Joseph's firstborn son and also one of the twelve tribes of Israel. There was an innkeeper named Manasseh who, according to the *Richmond Enquirer* in August 1861, was "a caterer for the traveling public, we believe a Jew, who for a long time had his house of entertainment there." The innkeeper was widely known and much esteemed for his good cheer, and many a horseman would travel a little longer "that he might spend the night with ‘Old Manasseh.’ … In short, he was as well known as his gap, and from him the latter caught its name of Manasseh’s Gap.”[41]

On the eve of the Civil War, there were approximately two thousand Jews in the Old Dominion. Most agreed with Edmund Myers, who wrote to his uncle, Sam Mordecai, “I am with [Virginia]—bound to her for the issue be it weal or for woe.”[42]

Native Jewish Southerners and German Jewish immigrants, like their fellow Southerners and Americans, went west during the antebellum period and helped settle Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas, the remaining states of the Confederacy. Many Jews from the German states and Central Europe settled in Mobile in the 1840s and 1850s. The first congregation in Alabama, Sha’arai Shomayim U-Maskil El Dol (Congregation of the Gates of Heaven and Society of the Friends of the Needy) was organized in the early 1840s. A synagogue on Jackson Street was dedicated in 1853. Protestant and Catholic clergy attended. “The synagogue is worthy in all respects the high character of our Jewish brethren for wealth, intelligence and character,” the *Mobile Register* exclaimed. “How proud must the enfranchised descendants of the patriarchs have felt yesterday who were some time since the slaves and serfs of Russia, Austria and Prussia.” A second synagogue on Jackson Street burned down in 1856, and a new synagogue was built on Jackson Street between St. Louis and St. Michael in 1858. There were congregations in Montgomery and other smaller Alabama towns.[43]



Gates of Heaven, Mobile, Alabama. This synagogue, also known as the Jackson Street synagogue, stood at the northeast corner of St. Michael and Jackson. It was occupied by the congregation from 1853 to 1907. This photograph was taken in 1907. (Courtesy of Gates of Heaven [Sha'arai Shomayim] Temple Archives and Robert J. Zietz, Mobile, Alabama.)



The Interior of Gates of Heaven. This photograph, taken in 1907, shows the interior of the Jackson Street synagogue. Note the balconies for the women, who must sit in a separate section from the men according to Orthodox Judaism. (Courtesy of Gates of Heaven [Sha'arai Shomayim] Temple Archives and Robert J. Zietz, Mobile, Alabama.)

Mayer Lehman arrived in Montgomery, Alabama, at the age of eighteen from the village of Rimpar near Würzburg, Bavaria, in 1850. His older brother Chaim, who changed his name to Henry, had arrived four years earlier and became a peddler. Another brother, Emanuel, came in 1847. The brothers opened a shop on Commerce Street. Eventually, Henry Lehman & Brothers moved to 17 Court Square near the courthouse. As Montgomery and the cotton trade grew, so did the Lehmans' business. Montgomery became the state capital and a center of the booming cotton economy. Warehouses and cotton trading abounded. One traveler noted that the people "buy cotton, sell cotton, think cotton, eat cotton, drink cotton, and dream cotton. They marry cotton wives, and unto them are born cotton children." The Lehmans became cotton dealers as well as grocers, dry goods merchants, and suppliers to the cotton planters. Emanuel traveled to New York and Henry to New Orleans to buy goods and broker cotton. When Henry died of yellow fever in 1856, the two younger brothers, Mayer and Emanuel, carried on the family business.[44]

On the eve of the Civil War, Lehman Brothers was a large and successful cotton brokerage house with offices in New York City. Emanuel moved to New York. Mayer married Babette Newgass of New Orleans, also an immigrant from Würzburg, and they lived in Montgomery. The Lehmans were prominent citizens of Montgomery. Alan Nevins wrote that they lived in a house “roomy enough to permit the clerks in the general store to come in—after a general custom of the time—for meals. This was no great hardship to the young wife, for they had household slaves.” They traveled back and forth to New Orleans on business and for family and social occasions. Mayer Lehman was a typical Alabama merchant. A staunch Democrat, he was well connected in political circles. He was also a practicing Jew in a town with a small but active Jewish community.[45]

In Mississippi and Arkansas, German and Central European Jews settled in small towns and hamlets, opening stores and putting down roots. There were small Jewish communities in Woodville, Natchez, Vicksburg, Fayette, and Jackson. B’nai Israel in Natchez was organized in 1840, although no synagogue was built prior to the war. Typical of Mississippi Jewry, Aaron Beekman emigrated in the 1840s from Forets, Germany, opened a store on Franklin Street in Cotton Square, and helped oversee the Natchez Hebrew School with twenty-five children. Other congregations were also founded in Mississippi prior to the war. Gemiluth Chassed was organized in Port Gibson in 1859, and a congregation gathered upstairs at Bernard Yoste’s Levee Street building in Vicksburg. Congregation Beth Israel built a synagogue in early 1861 in Jackson on South State and South Streets, which was burned by Union troops during the war.[46]

Mayer Lehman. The Lehmans, immigrants from Bavaria, settled in Montgomery and became successful cotton brokers and dry goods merchants prior to the war. Lehman made strenuous efforts to aid the Alabama Confederate prisoners held in Union prisoner of war camps. He was the father of Sen. Herbert H. Lehman of New York, whom he named for his lawyer, a Confederate colonel. (Courtesy of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.)

Louisiana in 1860 was a phenomenon in American Jewish history. That keen correspondent for the *London Times*, William Howard Russell, the author of *My Diary North and South*, wrote: “It is a strange country, indeed; one of the evils which afflicts the Louisianians, they say, is the preponderance and influence of South Carolinian Jews, and Jews generally, such as [Edwin Warren] Moise, Mordecai, Josephs, and Judah Benjamin, and others. The subtlety and keenness of the Caucasian intellect give men a high place among a people who admire ability and dexterity, and are at the same time reckless of means and averse to labor. The Governor is supposed to be somewhat under the influence of the Hebrews.”[47]

Canal Street in the Civil War era. Many Jewish businesses were located on Canal Street, as was the Dispersed of Judah synagogue prior to 1860. (Courtesy of the Louisiana State Museum, New Orleans.)

The Jewish Orphans House in New Orleans. By 1856 the large and prosperous Jewish community of New Orleans was able to build the only such Jewish home in America. Unfortunately, the city's epidemics made such an institution necessary. The building no longer exists. (Courtesy of the Louisiana State Museum, New Orleans.)

Judah Benjamin was the most famous of these "South Carolinian Jews." Lt. Gov. Henry M. Hyams was Benjamin's cousin, having come to Louisiana with Benjamin from Charleston in 1828. Edwin Warren Moise had served as Speaker of the Louisiana House and was to serve as a Confederate judge. When young Salomon de Rothschild, of the great French Jewish banking family, arrived in New Orleans in 1861, he was amazed at the success of the Jews of Louisiana. "What is astonishing here … is the high position occupied by our coreligionists, or rather by those who were born into the faith and who, having married Christian women, and without converting, have forgotten the practices of their fathers. Benjamin, the attorney general of the Confederate States, is perhaps the greatest mind on this continent. Hyams, the [lieutenant] governor of Louisiana, Moyse … [that is, Edwin W. Moise, the Speaker of the House], etc. And, what is odd, all these men have a Jewish heart and take an interest in me, because I represent the greatest Jewish house in the world."[48]

Estimates of the Jewish population are wholly unreliable, but in 1860 Louisiana was home to at least 8,000 Jews, and likely many more. The total number of Jews in the eleven states of the Confederacy was in the range of 20,000 to 25,000, which means that Louisiana was home to 25 percent to 40 percent of Southern Jewry. New Orleans in

1860, was the South's largest city by far. Its population of 168,675 dwarfed Charleston's (40,522), Richmond's (37,910), Mobile's (29,258), and Savannah's (22,292). Like the growing cities of the North and West, New Orleans beckoned to immigrants and they came.[49]

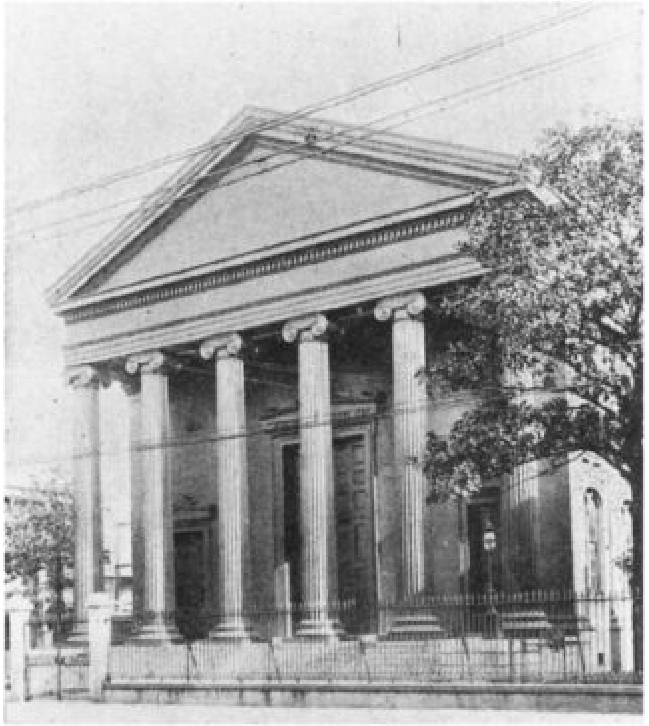
By 1850 New Orleans Jewry supported a number of Jewish institutions. In 1845 the small Sephardic community had organized its own congregation, K. K. Nefutzoth Yehudah (The Dispersed of Judah), rejecting an appeal to join with the German synagogue. In 1847, the philanthropist Judah Touro purchased an Episcopal church at the corner of Canal and Bourbon Streets in the French Quarter, renovated it, and presented it to the Dispersed of Judah congregation. In 1856, Dispersed of Judah built a larger facility on Carondelet near Julia Street. In 1851 Gates of Mercy moved to a new building on Rampart Street between St. Louis and Conti.[50]

In the 1850s Central European and German Jewish immigrants in the working-class suburb of Lafayette City, just up the river from downtown New Orleans, founded Shaarai Tefillah (Gates of Prayer). This area was populated by the Irish and the Jews and was later known as the Irish Channel, the Garden District, and part of Central City. Most members of this congregation worked in the clothing or dry goods business, or were petty merchants or peddlers who arrived from Bavaria and Alsace. In 1855, the congregation bought a little schoolhouse at the corner of St. Mary and Fulton Streets, known as the "Old Lafayette Schule." The last New Orleans synagogue to be founded before the Civil War was the "Polish Congregation," Temime Derech (the Right Way), organized in 1857.[51]

The Solomon family of New Orleans was typical of older Southern Jewish families. Solomon and Emma Solomon were born and raised in South Carolina. Sephardim, they traced their ancestry to England and possibly the British West Indies. They were part of the Jewish "haute bourgeoisie," who, according to Elliott Ashkenazi, "were reasonably successful financially, mixed well with the general white southern population, intermarried regularly, and adopted many southern customs, including slave ownership, but still retained a Jewish identity." Their teenage daughter, Clara Solomon, was very Americanized in her speech and writing, but occasionally used a Yiddish expression (such as *ponum* for "face"). She had many Christian friends and acquaintances. The Solomons belonged to Dispersed of Judah and attended services on Carondelet Street, within walking distance of their home on Hercules Street (now Rampart) in the lower Garden District.[52]

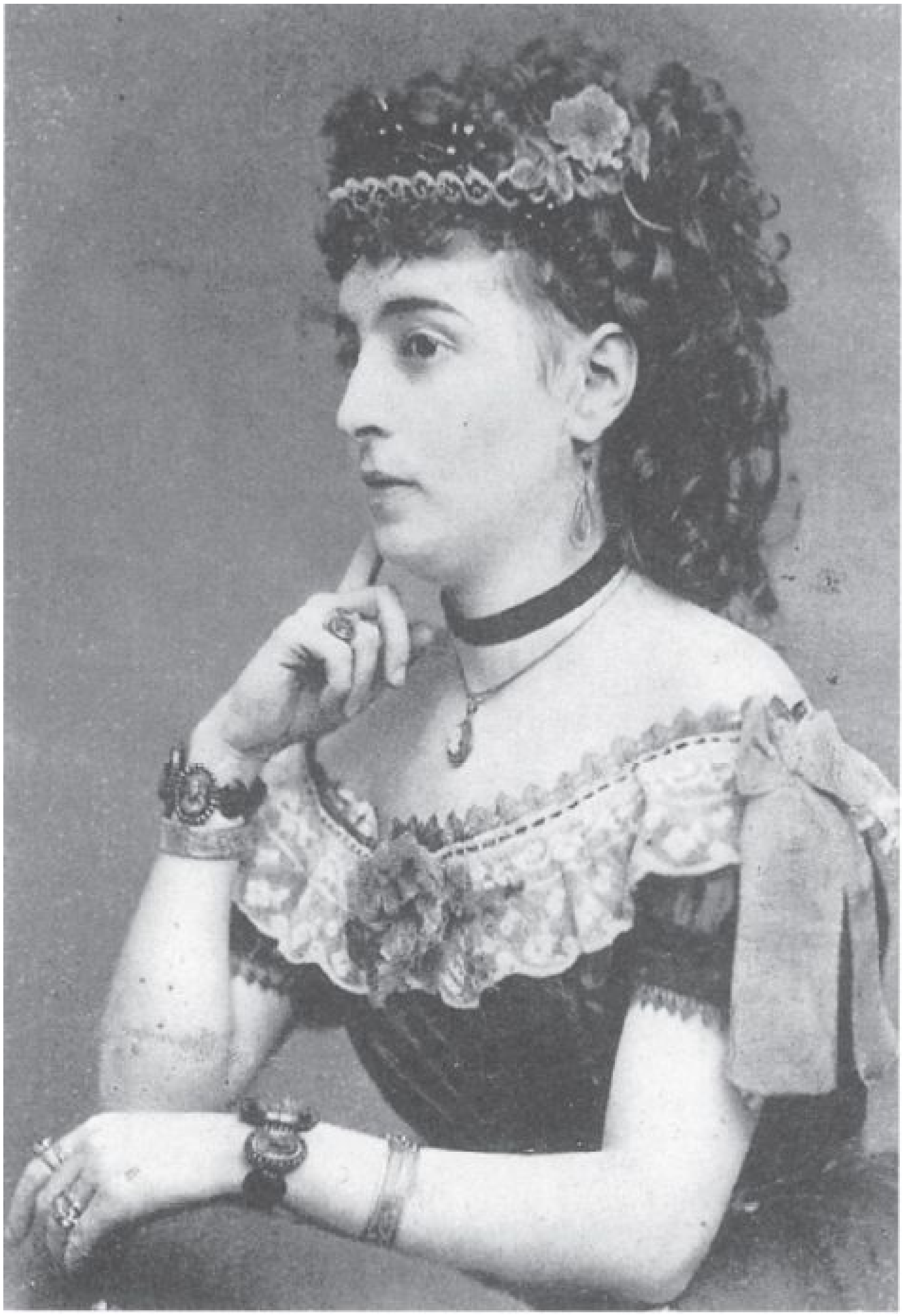
In 1861 the New Orleans Jewish community was the largest in the South by far, numbering an estimated four thousand souls. A 1905 history of the Jewish Orphan's Home puts the number of Jews at two thousand in 1854, the year after the yellow fever epidemic, which was the immediate cause of the creation of the home. If these figures are accurate, then the size of the Jewish community in New Orleans doubled in the seven years preceding the Civil War, a fact which is consistent with the city's general history.[53]

New Orleans Jewry, like the city's population in general, was a different mix from Charleston or Savannah. Like Macon and Mobile, it consisted largely of recent immigrants. There were relatively few old New Orleans Jewish families. While there were four congregations, most Jews had little identification with the Jewish community. The Jewish leadership did not necessarily influence the Jewish population. Unlike Charleston, Savannah, or Richmond, where Jewish families considered themselves a long-established part of the city, New Orleans's most successful Jews had completely assimilated and lost their Jewish identity. Thus, this large mass of immigrants lacked a strong link to the past and to the traditions of the city. And New Orleans was a different city from the other great Southern cities in the East. In 1850 one-fourth of the free population of Louisiana was foreign born, and this figure was undoubtedly much higher for New Orleans.[54]

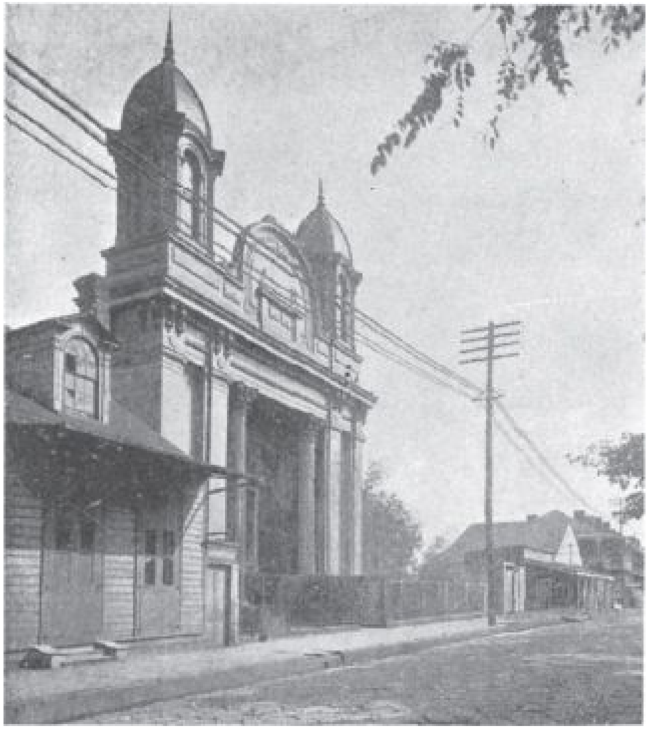


K. K. Nefutzoth Yehudah (Holy Congregation of the Dispersed of Judah). This Sephardic or "Portuguese" congregation was organized in 1845, rejecting an appeal to join with the German synagogue, Gates of Mercy. By the Civil War, the synagogue was located on Carondelet near Julia Street. Gates of Mercy and Dispersed of Judah merged after the Civil War in 1881 to form the Touro Synagogue. The building is no longer in

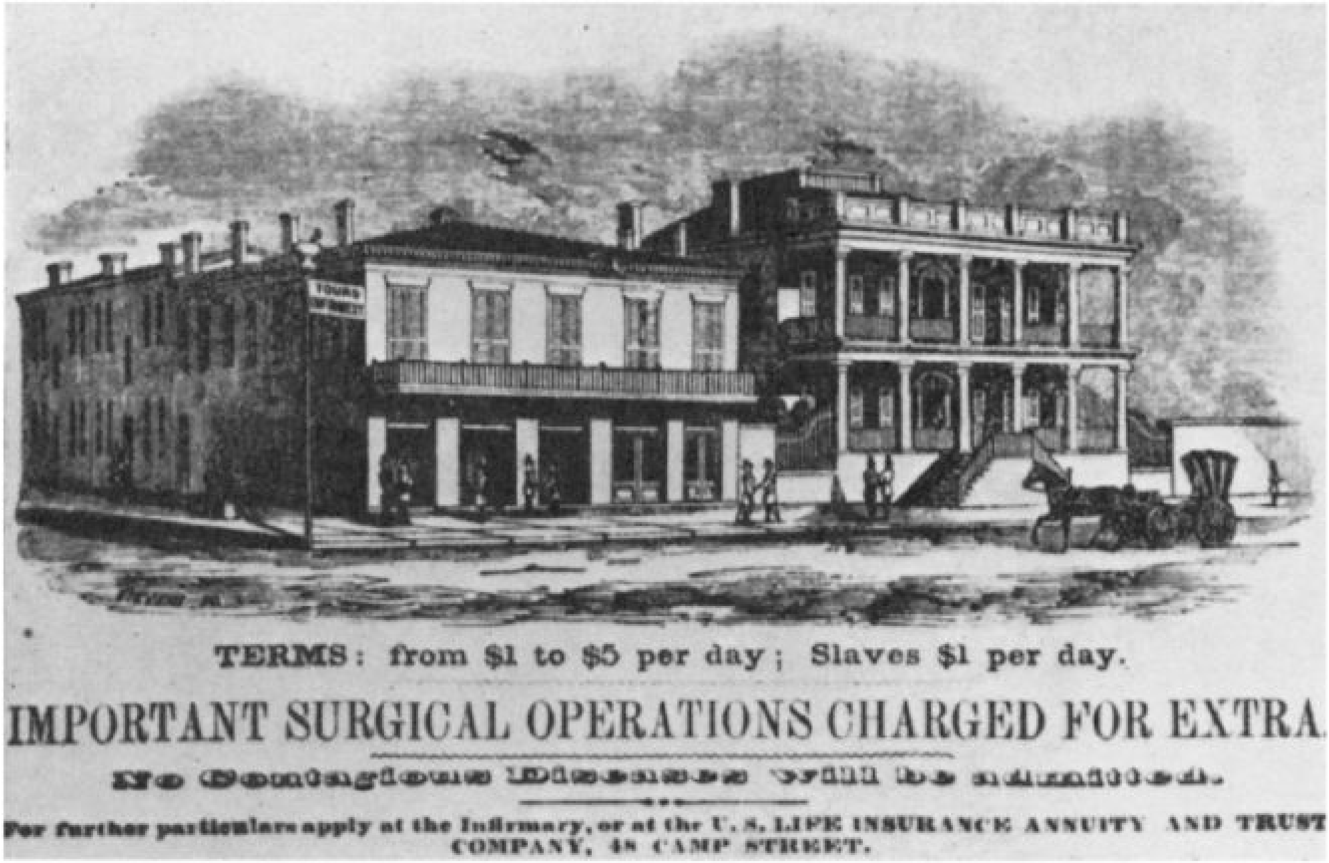
existence, although the Touro Synagogue congregation still exists in a handsome building on St. Charles Avenue near Napoleon. (Courtesy of the Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans. Photograph from *The History of the Jews of Louisiana*, likely taken in the early 1900s.)



One of six Solomon girls, Clara was sixteen when the war broke out. She was studying at the Louisiana Normal School to become a teacher. (Courtesy of Alice Dale Cohan of Great Neck, New York.)



K. K. Shangarai Chased (Gates of Mercy), "the Old Deutsche Shule." The congregation, New Orleans's first, was founded in the 1820s. It was known as "the German congregation." By the 1860s, the congregation was worshiping at this synagogue on North Rampart Street. The building was demolished. (Courtesy of the Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans.)



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The Touro Infirmary, New Orleans. Judah Touro endowed this hospital, which served the entire New Orleans community. It was located at New Levee and Gaiennie streets, south of Canal Street. (Courtesy of the Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans.)

Rural Louisiana was also home to many Jews. Many recent immigrants set out to make their living in the small towns, villages, and crossroads of rural Louisiana. By 1860 the number of Jews living in rural Louisiana equaled the Jewish population of New Orleans.[55] The experience of the Hyams family, although hardly typical, is illustrative.

A merchant family, the Hyamses were originally from Charleston, where they were members of Beth Elohim. In 1828, at the age of twenty-two, Henry Michael Hyams came to New Orleans with his cousin Judah P. Benjamin. Young Hyams had been a founding member of the Reformed Society of Israelites in 1825. He explored Louisiana looking for opportunities and began his career as a cashier at the Canal Bank in Donaldsonville in the early 1830s. He became a planter, amassing a fortune and becoming one of the largest landholders in Louisiana. In 1835 Hyams was active in anti-abolitionist activities and served on a vigilance committee whose mission was to stop antislavery propaganda in the area. In 1840 he owned forty-two slaves. Over the years, Hyams was involved in the railroad and insurance business, real estate, planting, politics, and law. In 1859 he became lieutenant governor of Louisiana, the first Jew elected to that office in American history. In 1861 the impressionable young Salomon de Rothschild found Hyams to be “a topnotch man … on whose shoulders rests all the work of the State of Louisiana.” Although he married outside the faith, Hyams always regarded himself as a practicing Jew and attended services at Dispersed of Judah. He was proud of his Jewish lineage, which was both Sephardic and Ashkenazic.

In 1860 the second largest Jewish community in Louisiana was in Shreveport, a town in northwestern Louisiana at the opposite end of Louisiana from New Orleans. Jewish immigrants from all over Europe came to Shreveport. By 1850 there were thirty Jews in the town, and in 1859 the Har El (Mountain of God) congregation was chartered. When the war came, at least seventy-eight Jews from Shreveport served in the Confederate armed services. Almost all of them were German, Polish, or Central European. The congregation resolved in May 1861 to “scorn and repel” the advice of the *Jewish Messenger* of New York to stand by the union and affirmed their devotion to the Confederacy.[56]

Jews settled up the Mississippi in Memphis, Tennessee. According to tradition, a Charleston Jew, Joseph J. Andrews, the son-in-law of the Revolutionary patriot Haym Salomon, was the founder of Memphis Jewry.[57] B’nai Israel (Children of Israel) was founded in 1853. Judah Touro bequeathed the small congregation $2,000, and in 1858 the former Farmers and Mechanics Bank Building on the corner of Main and Exchange Streets in Memphis was rented by the congregation and dedicated as the first synagogue in Tennessee. There had been individual Jews in and around Nashville since the late 1790s, but it was not until the late 1840s that services were held at the home of Isaac Garritson. In August 1852 Garritson wrote Isaac Leeser that the Hebrew Benevolent Society “is at present very small yet numbering only 5 families and about 8 young men.” This simple description illustrates the preponderance of young men in the new immigrant Jewish population of the South in the years leading up to the war. K. K. Mogen David (Shield, or Star, of David) was chartered by the legislature in 1854 and was located on North Market Street. Tradition has it that the name was chosen in honor of Davidson County, in which Nashville was located. A second Orthodox congregation, Ohava Emes, was founded in 1859 and was located over Fry’s store on South Market.

The Felsenthals of Tennessee came from Alsace. The family took its name from *Fels und thal* (“rock and dale”), and family tradition has it that Herz Felsenthal attended the historic Sanhedrin assembled by Napoleon in 1806. Jacob (“Jake”) Felsenthal left Munchweiler, in the Alseng, for America and settled in Brownsville, Tennessee. He was soon followed by his brother, Joseph. In 1856 they established a mercantile business that became Felsenthal Department Store. The brothers married two sisters in Germany. Joseph married Regina, and Jacob married Karolina. Cecilia Felsenthal, a descendant, wrote that “their home became a haven for other relatives. Two nieces lived with them and, in due time, there was to be a double wedding." Since Brownsville had no newspaper, Uncle Jake had handbills printed announcing "Double Jewish Wedding at the First Baptist Church."[58]

Pvt. Joseph Felsenthal of Company B, 9th Tennessee. (Courtesy of Betty Santandrea and the Felsenthal family.)

Texas was America's Southern frontier in the 1850s. "Thousands of acres of land can be bought, within settled portions of the state, for the small sum of from 25 cents to $1 per acre," Lewis A. Levy wrote a New York Jewish newspaper from Houston in 1850. He advised fellow Jews to come to Texas, "where a man can make his living to his liking, and [be] more independent than the Autocrat of Russia, or the Emperor of Austria." Beginning in the early nineteenth century, Jews began trickling into the Lone Star State. Spanish Jews came as well as Ashkenazic. Jacob De Cordova, for example, was born in Jamaica to a planter family and emigrated to New Orleans and then Texas. He arrived in Galveston in 1837 and became a merchant, served in public office, and eventually became an important land developer who publicized Texas in three books and through his land agency. In 1858 he wrote that, as Texas was an agricultural country, the "immigration of the children of Israel has been very limited." However, he continued, Texas "is a country where the poor man can easily obtain land." And while the state was indeed "a land flowing with milk and honey,' it is necessary to FIRST MILK THE

COWS AND GATHER THE HONEY.” He moved to Houston, then to Bosque County near Waco, in the 1850s. During the war he was a tax collector.[59]

A typical Texas Jew in this era, Harris Kempner arrived in New York City in 1854, “another face in a boatload of Polish immigrants,” according to a descendant. He was seventeen, a German-speaking Pole escaping from the czar’s tyrannical rule of Russian Poland. “Harris” was the Americanized version of “Herschell,” his Hebrew name. A tall, muscular youth, ambitious and aggressive, Kempner began his career at twenty cents an hour as a bricklayer’s assistant, and, by dint of hard work, saved his money and moved to Texas. He settled in Cold Springs, San Jacinto County, a cotton-growing and timbering region in southeast Texas, which may have reminded him of his boyhood village. Beginning as a peddler, he built a general merchandise store and developed a good reputation.[60]

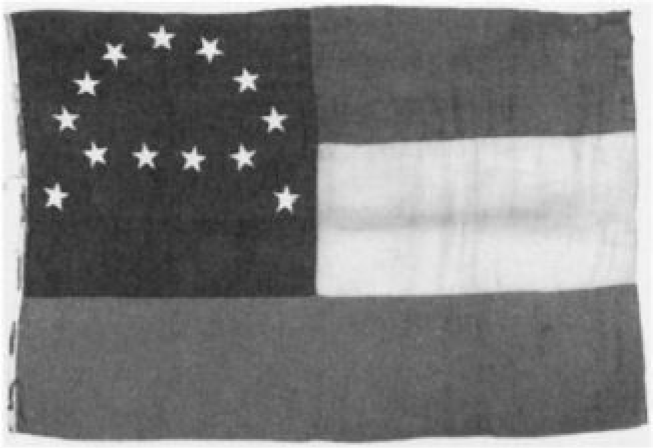
Texas had a small Jewish community in 1860. There were, for example, only 108 Jews in Houston in 1860, only one of whom had been born in Texas. Most had come from Germany, some from Poland and Eastern Europe. Many were single men from Bavaria and Poland.[61] Galveston was a bustling pioneer town in the 1850s. Michael Seeligson was elected mayor in 1853, but no synagogue was built until after the war. (The first synagogue in Texas, B’nai Israel, was built in Galveston in 1871.) Congregation Beth Israel in Houston was founded in 1854 and chartered in 1859.

★ ★ ★

As we have seen, the Old South was remarkably free of prejudice against Jews. Historians, travelers, residents, newspapers, business leaders, and all contemporary observers agree that the Old South was a hospitable climate for Jewish Southerners. Historians of the American Jewish experience reached a consensus long ago that Jews were more accepted in the antebellum South than in the North. “For Southern Jews,” Howard M. Sacher wrote in *A History of the Jews in America*, “loyalty to the Confederacy often was a matter of intense personal gratitude. Nowhere else in America had they experienced such fullness of opportunity or achieved comparable political and social acceptance.”[62]

Joseph Kershaw, the founder of Camden, South Carolina, left “To God’s Anticent [*sic*] people the Jews [a lot] for a Burying ground and place of worship whenever they may incline to build upon the same.” In Savannah, the Gentile community helped fund the renovation of Mikve Israel in the 1850s. In 1859, an improbable journalist, Israel Joseph Benjamin, set out to emulate a famous medieval traveler, Benjamin of Tudela, who had made a circuit of the known world about 1170 “to describe the scattered remnants of the tribes of Israel.”[63] Benjamin, from the Turkish province of Moldavia, wrote his accounts from 1859 to 1862. He reached this conclusion about Southern Jewry: “The southern states, however, for natural reasons, outdid, in many respects, the northern states in hospitality. The white inhabitants felt themselves united with, and closer to, other whites—as opposed to the Negroes. Since the Israelite there did not do the humbler kinds of work which the Negro did, he was quickly received among the upper classes and easily rose to high political rank. For this reason, until now, it was only the South which sent Jews to the Senate. Benjamin came from Louisiana; Yulee from Florida; Louisiana has elected Hyams lieutenant governor.”[64]

I. J. Benjamin's belief that Jews, being white, were a welcome ally against blacks is simplistic. The Jews were in mercantile trade, which was more respectable than manual labor, and they were frequently more accepted in Southern society than the Irish.[65] The South attracted few immigrants, and white minorities were therefore more readily accepted. Most importantly, the planter elite and Southern aristocracy were more tolerant in matters of religion than of social class. Unlike New England in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, where Puritanism spawned anti-Semitism, the Southern leadership tended to be Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Methodists, the most tolerant of the Protestant denominations, and were cosmopolitan and educated people who appreciated those qualities in their Jewish neighbors. While the "mob calls him, 'Mr. Davis's pet Jew,' a King Street Jew," Mary Chesnut wrote of Judah P. Benjamin, her husband, Senator Chesnut, thought Benjamin "the very cleverest man we had in the Senate."[66] The Southern aristocrats were not threatened by Jews as competitors, and their quality of life was enhanced by the presence of Jewish teachers, musicians, innkeepers, lawyers, doctors, druggists, merchants, and men of learning. The planters certainly did not need the Jews as allies against the blacks. First, the Jews were an insignificant fraction of the population, and, second, the planters could have persecuted the Jews *and* kept the blacks enslaved as was amply demonstrated by the Ku Klux Klan in the twentieth century. The acceptance of the Jews in the Old South was a simple matter of a small, law-abiding, educated, and productive minority who brought diversity to Southern life, together with much-needed mercantile skills and loyalty to the existing order.



Gen. Robert E. Lee's headquarters flag. Lee's flag was flown at his headquarters when he encamped. According to Joseph H. Crute Jr. in *Emblems of Southern Valor*, its star pattern represents the Ark of the Covenant and was "symbolic of the Bread of Life which is the symbol of spiritual nourishment." Nineteenth-century Southerners identified Jews

with the ancient Hebrews and were much taken with Old Testament symbols. Whether Lee's flag actually depicted the Ark of the Covenant or not, the imagery was consistent with Southerners' fascination with ancient Israel. (Courtesy of the Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia. Photograph by Katherine Wetzel.)

Mary and James Chesnut of South Carolina were typical of aristocratic Southerners. The Jews they knew were cosmopolitan and educated, qualities Mary admired.[67] But Jews were different, and Mary was keenly aware of that difference. She referred to her friend Miriam ("Mem") DeLeon Cohen in her diary as "My Hebrew friend" or "Jewish angel." Mem was a practicing Jew, and Mary respected her friend's religion.[68] She wrote, "Mem is proud of her high lineage," and "Cohen is a high name among Jews."[69]

Southerners believed fervently in the God of the Old Testament and respected their Jewish neighbors' knowledge of the Bible. The learned Jew of a small Southern town often settled theological disputes among Christians. Isidor Straus's family came to Talbotton, Georgia, in the 1850s. "Our family was received with kindness and hospitality," Straus recalled. "My father, always a student and well versed in biblical literature and the Bible, which he read in the original, was much sought by the ministers of the various denominations, several of whom habitually dined at our house when in Talbotton on their circuit. At such times the discussion usually ran along theological lines. One of my earliest recollections is hearing my father take passages from the Old Testament and translate them literally for the information of these ministers."[70]

Southerners frequently used Jewish references from the Bible and saw the Jewish people of ancient times as noble and heroic. For example, David Clopton wrote to Sen. Clement C. Clay, "Delay is submission, 'to your tents O! Israel' and let the God of battles decide the issue."[71] Mary Chesnut likened the "stay-at-home men" working their plantations to "the old Jews while Noah was building the Ark," and compared Southerners to Jews for believing they were "the chosen people of God. And that he is fighting for us." Keenly aware of the differences in theology, Mary Chesnut wrote that Willie [William B.] Myers "was so angelically beautiful that at first they thought he must be their still expected messiah."[72] Stonewall Jackson was perceived by his men as Moses-like, leading the Southern people across the Red Sea. A well-known Civil War song, "Stonewall Jackson's Way," published in 1862, contained these lines:

Lay bare thine arm,

Stretch forth thy rod,

Amen.

That's Stonewall Jackson's way![73]

An 1861 Southern song, "The Southrons' Chaunt of Defiance" ("You Can Never Win Us Back"), contains these verses:

But the Battle to the Strong

Is not given,

While the Judge of Right and

Wrong sits in heaven.

And the God of David still

Guides the Devil with his will.

There are giants yet to kill.[74]

Rev. J. William Jones remembered that General Lee's "orders and reports always gratefully recognized 'the Lord of hosts' as the 'Giver of victory.'"[75] Lee believed fervently in the God of the Old Testament, who was sometimes called the Lord of Hosts (Hebrew *Yahweh Sabaoth* actually means "God of Armies"). Because God was unconquerable, defeat in the eyes of the ancient Jews was caused by the faithlessness of the Israelites. In August 1863, after his defeat at Gettysburg, Lee issued an order recognizing August 21 as a day of prayer, and he reminded his soldiers that "we have sinned against Almighty God" and that, by confessing, "He will give us a name and place among the nations of the earth."[76]

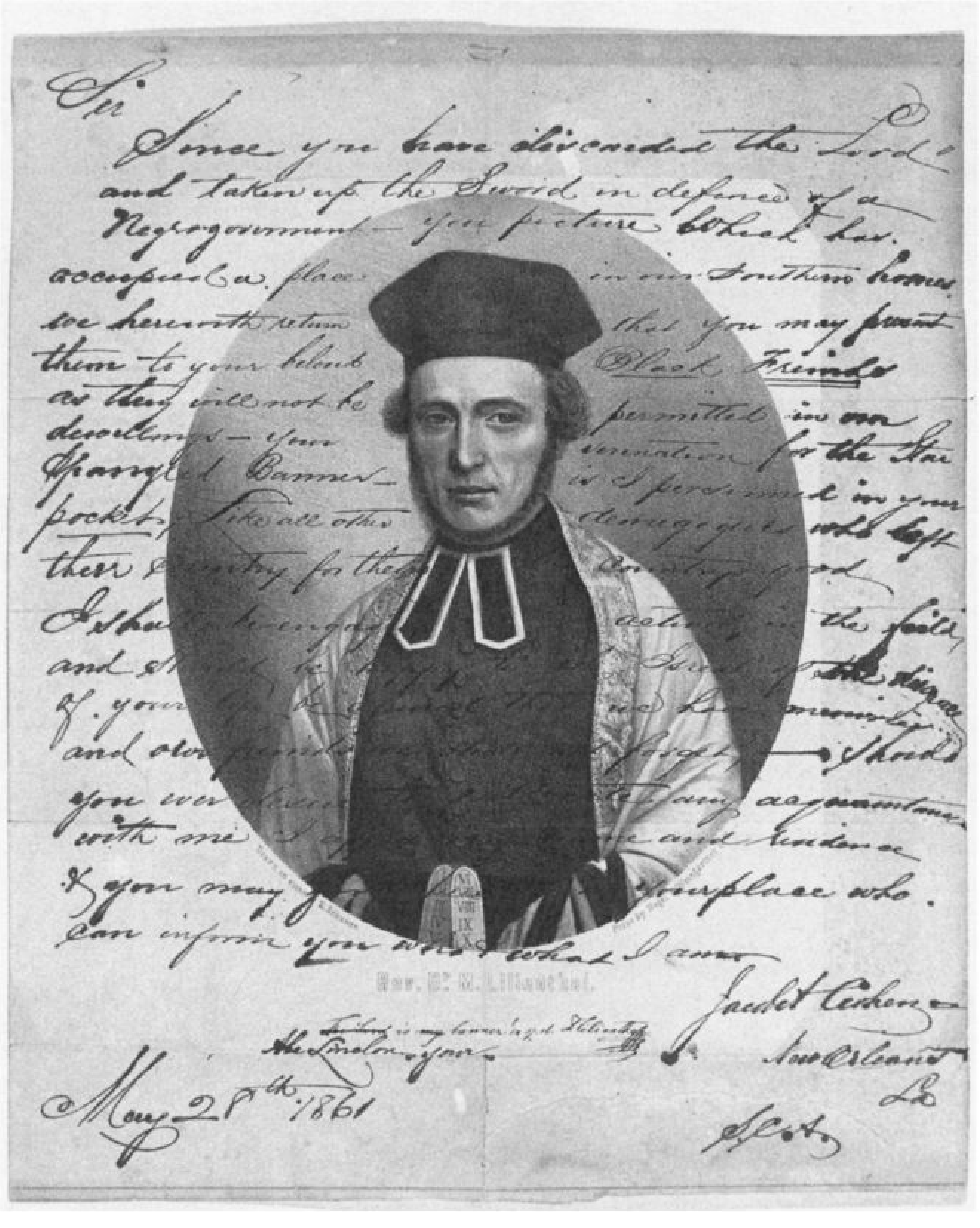
Thus, it is not curious at all that Yulee and Benjamin, the first senators of Jewish descent, were from the South. Nor is it surprising that of the six Jewish members of Congress elected before the Civil War, three were from the South and three were from the North, despite the fact that there were fewer than 25,000 Jews in the South and 120,000 in the North.[77] Numerous Southern Jews served in the state legislatures, city councils, and in other positions of authority. In 1850 a Richmond rabbi, Rev. Julius Eckman, gave the opening prayer at a session of the Virginia House of Delegates, the first time a rabbi had so officiated before a state legislature.[78] In the 1840s the Jews of South Carolina, angered that Gov. Henry Hammond had issued a Thanksgiving Day Proclamation addressed to Christians only, wrote the governor, "we do not sue for toleration, we un-mask it." Their audacity, Abraham J. Peck wrote, was unprecedented.[79] Hammond's successor, Gov. William Aiken, issued a new proclamation on his first day in office excising Christian passages. Aiken's close political relationship with M. C. Mordecai was at work. Even Hammond, who privately called Mordecai's brother "a miserable Jew," described Senator Mordecai as "a man of force and influence in Charleston." As Frederic Jaher has written, "Often descended from old clans that had grown up with the city, Charleston's Jews were rarely labeled alien upstarts or intruders."[80]

This is not to say that there was no prejudice against Jews in the antebellum South. Anti-Semitism was a fact of life in the nineteenth century. Emma Holmes of Charleston wrote in her diary that she disliked "Sumter very much from the prevalence of sand & Jews, my great abhorrences." By 1862 she blamed all of her ills on the Jews. Jews came into conflict with the majority Christian society on issues such as conducting retail businesses on Sunday. In many states, North and South, Jewish businessmen tested or refused to obey these Sabbatarian laws. And, of course, Southerners often found Jewish customs strange. Maria Bryan Connell of Hancock County, Georgia, had a Jewish houseguest. "I did not at all comprehend the trouble occasioned by their notions of unclean and forbidden food until I had a daughter of Abraham under the roof. She will not eat one mouthful of the finest fresh pork or the most delicate ham," she wrote. It was not, Maria concluded, "an unimportant consideration with her. Pray let this be entre nous, for I feel as if I am in some respect violating the duties of hospitality in speaking of it."[81]

The Northern states were not as hospitable as the South to the Jews prior to the Civil War. Colonial Massachusetts, for example, was a hotbed of anti-Semitism. The first known Jew in Boston was "warned out" in the 1640s.[82] Unlike in colonial Charleston, where Jews flourished, Jews were not allowed to live in early colonial Boston.[83] John Quincy Adams referred to David Yulee as the "squeaking Jew delegate from Florida," and Rep. Albert G. Marchand of Pennsylvania as "a squat little Jew-faced rotundity." Indeed, when the South seceded, the *Boston Evening Transcript*, a Brahmin publication, blamed secession on the Southern Jews. Calling Benjamin "the disunion leader in the U.S. Senate," and Yulee ("whose name has been changed from the more appropriate one of Levy or Levi") an ultra fire-eater, the newspaper claimed that "this peculiar race … having no country of their own," desired "that other nations shall be in the same unhappy condition."[84] The *New York Times* contended in May 1860 that Jonas Phillips Levy, Comdr. Uriah P. Levy's brother, was "laying pipes for a ticket to consist of Senators Benjamin and Yulee (representing Louisiana and Florida) as the President and Vice-President of a Southern Jerusalem." By 1864, the *Times* castigated the Democratic Party because its chairman, August Belmont, was "the agent of foreign jew bankers."[85]

Southern Jewry, more secure in their place in Southern society than their co-religionists in the North, accepted their responsibilities when war came. They had experienced a freedom unknown to Jews anywhere else in the world. They had been accepted by their fellow citizens of the Old South, more accepted as Jews than at any other time since the Golden Age of Jewry in medieval Spain. And they repaid that freedom and respect, that right to breathe "the free air of Dixie," by loyalty to their homeland.

It is difficult to determine the opinion of Jewish Southerners about secession. Edwin DeLeon was pro-secession, while his brother Camden DeLeon, an officer in the army, was clearly uncomfortable with disloyalty to his government.[86] Many were concerned about Lincoln's election and the elevation of an avowed opponent of slavery to the presidency. Simon Baruch, a Prussian immigrant and a medical student, carried a lantern in a parade to celebrate secession bearing the words, "There is a point beyond which endurance ceases to be a virtue."[87] Baruch's fellow South Carolinian, the poet Penina Moise, celebrated the Palmetto State's secession in a war ditty, "Cockades of Blue." Solomon Cohen wrote from Savannah that with Lincoln's election, "our enemies have triumphed," and he was worried about control of the Federal government by "those who hate us and our institutions."[88] His son, Gratz, believed the Union was at an end and it was the duty of every Southern state to secede.[89] Like all Southerners, they defended their homeland. "It was quite natural," A. E. Frankland of Memphis wrote, "they sided with the section that was their home."[90] They reacted with anger at Jewish periodicals and rabbis who took up the abolitionist cause. Jacob A. Cohen of New Orleans, soon to be an officer in the Confederate army, returned a lithograph of Rabbi Max Lilienthal of Ohio to him with this message written over the rabbi's face: "Sir, Since you have discarded the Lord and taken up the sword in the defense of a Negro government—your picture which has occupied a place in our Southern homes we herewith return that you may present them to your beloved Black Friends as they will not be permitted in our dwellings. … I shall be engaged actively in the field and should be happy to rid Israel of the disgrace of your life."[91]



Sir

Since you have discarded the Lord and taken up the Sword in defence of a Negrogovernment your picture which has occupied a place in our Southern homes we herewith return that you may present them to your black Black Friends as they will not be permitted in our dwellings — your veneration for the Star Spangled Banner is I presume in your pockets, like all other demagogues who left their country for their country's good

I shall be engaged [illegible] actively in the field and should be [illegible] the dignity of your [illegible] and [illegible] — Should you ever [illegible] any acquaintance with me [illegible] and [illegible] & you may [illegible] your place who can inform you who & what I am

Jacob A. Cohen

New Orleans

La

S.C.A.

Abe Lincoln your [illegible]

May 28th 1861

Lithograph of Rev. Doctor Max Lilienthal. By May 1861 Jacob A. Cohen of New Orleans was disgusted with Rabbi Lilienthal's abolitionist activities. He scrawled a highly critical message over Lilienthal's picture and sent it to him. Notice that Cohen gives his address as "S.C.A." rather

than “U.S.A.” Cohen became a captain of the Shepherd Guards, Company A, 10th Louisiana, and was killed at Second Manassas in 1862. (Courtesy of the Western Jewish History Center, Judah L. Magnes Museum, Berkeley, California.)

Rabbi Simon Tuska of Memphis denounced “rabid” abolitionists. “The Jews of Memphis,” he said, “are ready, in common with their Christian brethren, to sacrifice their property and their lives in defense of southern rights.”[92]

Northern Jews perceived Southern Jewry as proslavery and pro-secession. In 1862 Bernhard Felsenthal, the abolitionist rabbi, wrote an article entitled “Die Juden und die Sclaverei” (The Jews and Slavery), in which he asserted that the “Israelites residing in New Orleans are man by man—with very few exceptions—ardently in favor of secession, and many among them are ‘sincere fire-eaters.’… The reason why these gentlemen take such interest in secession has always been a miracle to me.” Felsenthal explained this seeming anomaly by recalling the condition under which the Jews had lived in Germany: suppression, isolation, and persecution. Felsenthal also believed that because many Germans were “to their immortal honor… outspoken enemies of slavery,” some “Jewish Germans are in favor of it.” He also pointed to the Southern press in Richmond, Charleston, and New Orleans, which published articles entitled “The Jews Are for Us,” referring to Benjamin, Yulee, and some Northern proslavery rabbis. (Felsenthal, a Northerner, concluded that “despite stupidity, narrow-mindedness, and the efforts of a few demagogues the large majority of the American Jewry can be found on the side of freedom.”)[93]

The plain fact of the matter is that, as Rabbi Bertram Wallace Korn has written, “No Jewish political figure of the Old South ever expressed reservations about the justice of slavery or the rightness of the Southern position.”[94] Nor is there any evidence that Jews supported slavery as a result of intimidation or fear of reprisals. The Talmud taught the Jews that “the law of the land is the law,” and slavery was the law of the land. Opponents of slavery, Jewish or Gentile, were a distinct minority even in the North. While there were many Jews in the North who actively opposed slavery, few Jews were conspicuous as abolitionists. Indeed, Rabbi Morris J. Raphall of B’nai Jeshurun in New York City fiercely criticized abolitionists. “How dare you … denounce slaveholding as a sin?” he asked them. “When you remember that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job—the men with whom the Almighty conversed, with whose names he emphatically connects his own most holy name … all these men were slaveholders.”[95] Solomon Cohen wrote his aunt that “God gave laws to his chosen people for the government of their slaves, and did not order them to abolish slavery.”[96] Oscar Straus put it best when he wrote in his memoirs, “As a boy brought up in the South I never questioned the rights or wrongs of slavery. Its existence I regarded as matter of course, as most other customs or institutions."[97]

When in April 1861 the *Jewish Messenger* of New York City called upon American Jewry to "rally as one man for the *Union* and the *Constitution*," the Jews of Shreveport responded with a resolution denouncing the newspaper and its editor. "[W]e, the Hebrew congregation of Shreveport," the resolution began, "scorn and repel your advice, although we might be called Southern rebels; still, as law-abiding citizens, we solemnly pledge ourselves to stand by, protect, and honor the flag, with its stars and stripes, the Union and Constitution of the Southern Confederacy, with our lives, liberty, and all that is dear to us." The resolution, in true Southern fashion, condemned the newspaper "as a black republican paper" and deplored its editor's advice "to act as traitors and renegades to our adopted country," meaning the South. Max Baer, the president of the congregation, asked that newspapers friendly to the Southern cause publish their resolution.[98]

Jewish Southerners perceived New Englanders as abolitionists who were frequently anti-Semitic.[99] Theodore Parker, a leading abolitionist minister, believed Jews' intellects were "sadly pinched in those narrow foreheads," that Jews were "lecherous" and "did sometimes kill a Christian baby at the Passover."[100] William Lloyd Garrison, editor of the *Liberator*, once described Judge Mordecai Manuel Noah of New York as "the miscreant Jew," a "Shylock," "the enemy of Christ and liberty," and a descendent "of the monsters who nailed Jesus to the cross."[101] Similar sentiments came from Edmond Quincy, Lydia Maria Child, William Ellery Channing, and Sen. Henry Wilson of Massachusetts, all leading abolitionists. Child thought Judaism rife with superstition, claiming that Jews "have humbugged the world." John Quincy Adams opposed slavery and derided Jews.[102] It is little wonder then that there was no great love lost between Southern Jews, who were accustomed to being treated as equals, and New Englanders. Southern Jews had even more reason, if it is possible, to dislike the officious New Englanders than did other Southerners, and this undoubtedly influenced their view of secession.[103] Isaac Harby, the Charleston journalist and pioneer of the Reform movement, was typical in his denunciation of "the abolitionist society and its secret branches."[104] Isaac Scherck, a Prussian immigrant who settled in Summit, Mississippi, and enlisted as a private in Company E, 3d Mississippi Battalion, described the North as filled with "puritanic bigotry & humbug." It came as no surprise to South Carolina Jewry to see reprinted in their local newspaper in March 1861 the following from the *Boston Journal:* "The Jew, [Benjamin] Mordecai, at Charleston, who gave ten thousand dollars to the South Carolina Government, had just settled with his Northern creditors by paying fifty cents on the dollar. The ten thousand was thus a Northern donation to secession.” The *Charleston Daily Courier* called the story “a willful, unmitigated and deliberate falsehood.”[105]

Thus, when South Carolina seceded, its Jewish citizens went with their state. The DeLeons, typical of men with their background, stood by the Palmetto State. This was not an easy decision. Like Robert E. Lee, Maj. David Camden DeLeon was a career army officer. He had been a hero in the Mexican War. “Treason and patriotism are next door neighbors,” he wrote his younger brother Edwin, “and only accident makes you strike the right knocker. Revolution is treason even if right, if unsuccessful.” DeLeon agonized over the decision he knew was coming. “A Southern Confederacy seeming as near a fixed fact as human foresight can dive into the future. The wire pullers have fixed their line so that electricity has been infused into the masses.” Having spent his career as a surgeon in the army, Major DeLeon found it difficult to cast aside his loyalty. “I have loved my country. I have fought under its flag and every star and stripe is dear to me. I can forgive and forget.”[106]

Maj. David Camden DeLeon of South Carolina reluctantly resigned his commission in the U.S. Army to join the Confederate army. He became the first acting surgeon general of the Confederacy from May 6 to July 12, 1861. He served later as the medical director of the Army of Northern Virginia and then left the army for reasons unknown. His

military career was undistinguished. (Portrait by Solomon Carvalho. Courtesy of Jacob Rader Marcus Center, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio and the Jewish Museum of New York.)

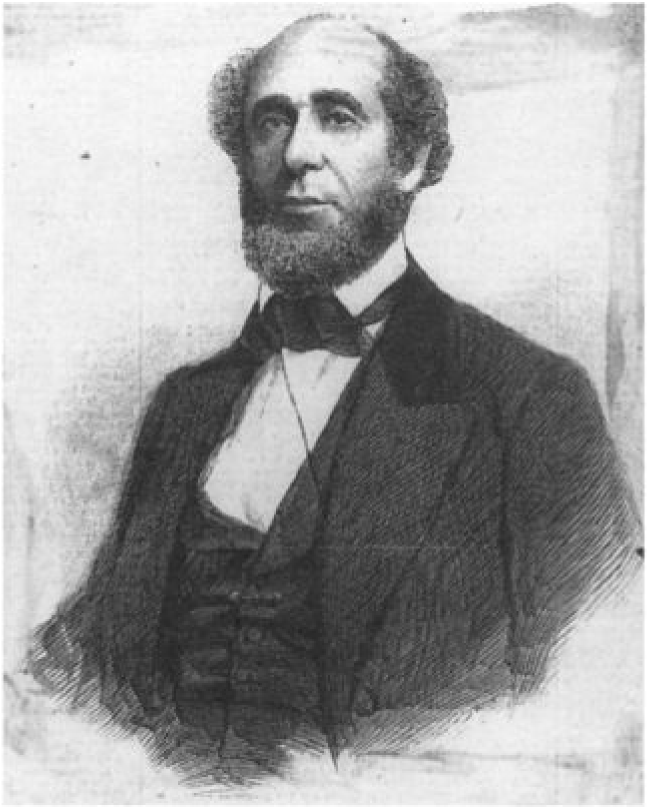
But events forced Major DeLeon to choose. “If time comes when war is inevitable,” he wrote his brother Edwin, “I know my sides, and they will find the difference between howling demagogues and the men of action. As long as I hold the commission I do, I make no promises. But when a Southern Confederacy is acknowledged or inaugurated, then I shall take my stand.” He took that stand a month later in February 1861 when he resigned. His letter of resignation went to Gen. Winfield Scott, his old friend and commander in the Mexican War. Scott pleaded with DeLeon, as he did with many senior Southern officers, to remain in the army and accept a post in the Northwestern frontier, far from his Southern homeland. He was even threatened with arrest if he resigned. “Camden DeLeon, M.D., called fresh from Washington,” Mary Chesnut recorded in February 1861, “says General Scott is using all of his power and influence to prevent officers from the South from resigning their commissions. Among other things, promising that they should never be sent against us in case of war.”[107] DeLeon fled South. Camden’s brother, the journalist Edwin DeLeon, also supported secession. “Of Secession, I may say with the Irish statesman, on a somewhat similar occasion, ‘I sat by its cradle, I followed its hearse,’” he recalled in his memoirs.[108]

State Sen. Moses Cohen Mordecai was not fervent for secession. He had been one of the owners of the *Southern Standard*, which was established in 1851 to oppose the immediate secession of South Carolina without the other Southern states. The majority of South Carolinians in the early 1850s opposed the secession of their state without the cooperation of other slave states. “The Resistance or Cooperation Party of the State was not divided as to her right to secede,” William L. King wrote in a history of Charleston’s newspapers, “but many were convinced that such a movement at that time, would be fatal.” The *Standard* represented these cooperationist views and was successful in bringing about a test vote in 1851 by the people of South Carolina which rejected separate secession. The newspaper flourished for a time but ceased publication in the summer of 1858. By then, most South Carolinians wanted to secede. Mordecai likely held his counsel if he still had doubts about secession.[109] Solomon Cohen of Savannah was a delegate to the Democratic Party’s national convention in Charleston in 1860. He was a member of the minority that stayed when the ultra-secessionists walked out. Avery wrote in his history of Georgia that Cohen was “a gentleman of high social standing and considerable speaking ability. He and his colleagues, while in sympathy with the seceders in principle, remained behind hoping that a better spirit might prevail and justice be done to the South by the Northern Democrats.”[110] Clearly, Cohen, like Mordecai, was a reluctant secessionist.

Moses Cohen Mordecai and Isabel Lyons Mordecai. M. C. Mordecai (pronounced "Mor de key" in the South at the time) was the most prominent Jewish Charlestonian of the 1850s and 1860s. He served as state senator from Charleston and owned the Mordecai Steamship Line. The Mordecais lived on Meeting Street, a prestigious address below Broad Street and near St. Michael's Church. (Author's collection.)

Some of Savannah's German Jews were among the city's German community who met at Armory Hall on May 15, 1861, to "show by words and acts that the German inhabitants of the city were ready with heart and hand to defend the home of their choice." Joseph Lippman called the assembly to order. Magnus Loewenthal served on the program committee and read his committee's resolution, which likened the Southern cause to the 1848 Revolution and the Venetians' hatred for Austrian rule. While they deplored "the necessity forced upon us of perhaps imbruing our hands in the blood of brothers of our dear old Fatherland, yet the cause of the South being our cause, we accept the gage of hostility." E. W. Solomons of Effingham County near Savannah was a delegate to the Georgia Secession Convention and signed the ordinance.[111]

There were at least two Jewish delegates to the Louisiana Secession Convention held in January 1861 in Baton Rouge: Isaac N. Marks, representing Orleans Parish, and Leon D. Marks, representing Caddo Parish (Shreveport). Samuel Hyams was nominated as the secretary to the convention, and a Mr. Leovy of New Orleans was nominated to be the official printer, but neither was elected. Governor Moore orchestrated the secession of Louisiana, and Lt. Gov. Henry Hyams, a loyal Moore ally, was undoubtedly active on its behalf although he was presiding over the Senate and was not a delegate to the convention. (The *Daily Picayune* reported on March 26, 1861, that Hyams "made a most beautiful and touching response" in the Senate to a resolution thanking him for his services.)[112]



Benjamin Mordecai was a patriotic Charleston merchant. He received a great deal of notoriety in both the Northern and Southern press for his "magnificent" donation of $10,000 to the State of South Carolina to be used by the governor "for such purposes as will best advance the interests and honor of our noble commonwealth." "This evidence of your devoted patriotism," the governor's aide-de-camp replied, "is most gratifying and is most highly appreciated by His Excellency Gov. Pickens." He was thanked by a resolution of the Secession Convention (Mordecai to Governor Pickens, January 1, 1861; Lucas to Mordecai, January 1, 1861, AJA). (Courtesy of South Carolina Historical Society).

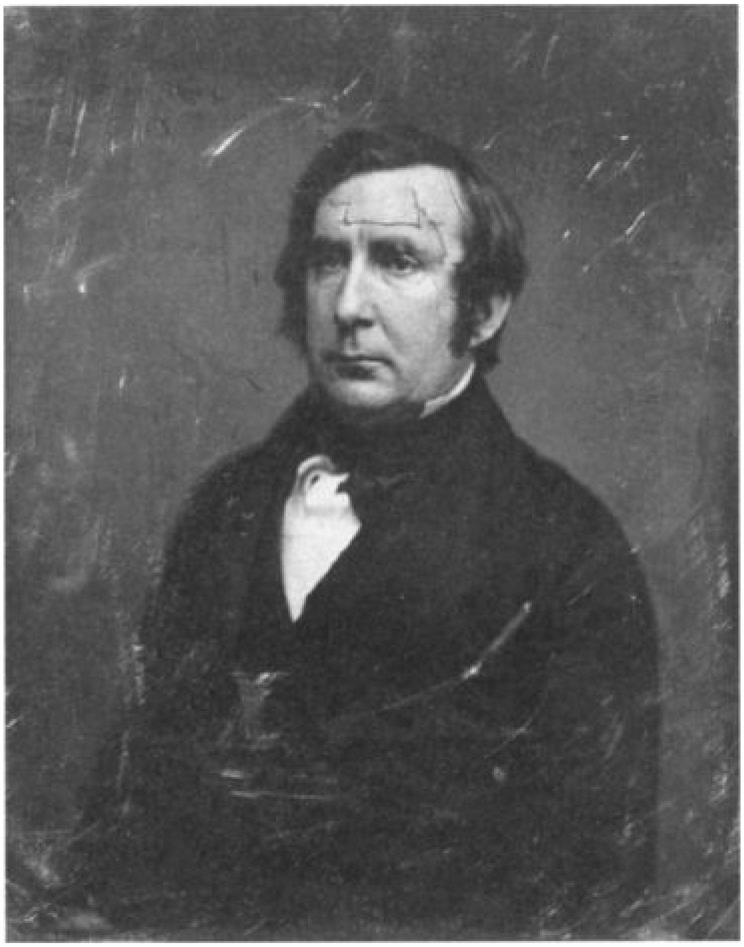
Unlike the Hyamses, the Lemann family of Donaldsonville opposed the war. According to Elliott Ashkenazi in *The Business of Jews in Louisiana, 1840–1875*, Jacob Lemann's career was "a success story in the best tradition of Jewish immigrants to the American South." Lemann emigrated to Donaldsonville from the Duchy of Hesse in 1836, and he soon graduated from peddler to owner of a general store to commercial banker and real estate investor. He married Marie Berthelcor, a Gentile who converted and even formally adopted Judaism before a rabbinical court in New York in 1852. She changed her name to Miriam. He continued trading with the owners of sugar plantations, the wealthiest in Louisiana, right up to 1861. He also continued keeping his personal accounts in his native Yiddish, which also guaranteed secrecy. The Lemanns were living in New York, Newport, and Louisiana in the mid-1850s and apparently had no truck with the Southern cause. The family purchased a mansion in Newport in 1854 and lived in the North more than the South. The self-indulgent son of the Lemann family, Bernard, left Louisiana a month after Sumter for Europe. His diary, replete with references to historic sites, monuments, parties, and high society, never mentions the war being fought by the young men of his generation. Clearly, the family went to Europe to escape the conflict as Bernard returned to Donaldsonville in December of 1863 and declared his allegiance to the Union.[113]

In New Orleans, unlike Charleston, Richmond, and Savannah, some Jews questioned the wisdom of secession and were reluctant to fight in a war in which they perceived no stake.[114] "Secession was never as popular in Louisiana as in her sister States of the lower South," Ralph A. Wooster concluded, and its large immigrant population may have been one of the reasons.[115] Christian German immigrants were divided on the wisdom of the war. A leading German American, New Orleans attorney Michael Hahn, was an outspoken abolitionist, and many German immigrants were opposed to slavery. John Frederick Nau concludes in *The German People of New Orleans, 1850–1900*, that many German New Orleanians "looked upon the conflict as purely an American 'family' affair and did not take an enthusiastic or active part in it."[116] The same was true of other immigrant groups. And, of course, not every native Southerner favored secession.

Jake Weil, a German immigrant, veteran of the Mexican War, and a cotton factor in Montgomery, enlisted in the 4th Alabama Home Guard and enthusiastically endorsed secession as the only realistic alternative. He was at the capital in Montgomery when Jefferson Davis was inaugurated. He found Davis to be "a man both imposing and impressive," but, he wrote his brother Josiah, "I fear he has not the stomach nor the verstandt [understanding] to lead us through the struggle that ensues." Weil felt there was "no place left" for a man of reason; of "two evils I choose the one more familiar. This land has been good to all of us," he wrote his brother Josiah in Prussia. "We shall not be deprived of rights or property.… I shall fight to my last breath and to the full extent of my fortune to defend that in which I believe." Weil was not a proponent of slavery. He and his brother Henry had set their slaves free, except for their household servants, when there were enough settlers in Montgomery to lease their lands. "In truth one man never has right another man to own," he wrote Josiah. "But," he continued, "one man has no right to sell property to another and after he has invested the proceeds claim that the buyer is evil and should divest himself of his property."[117]

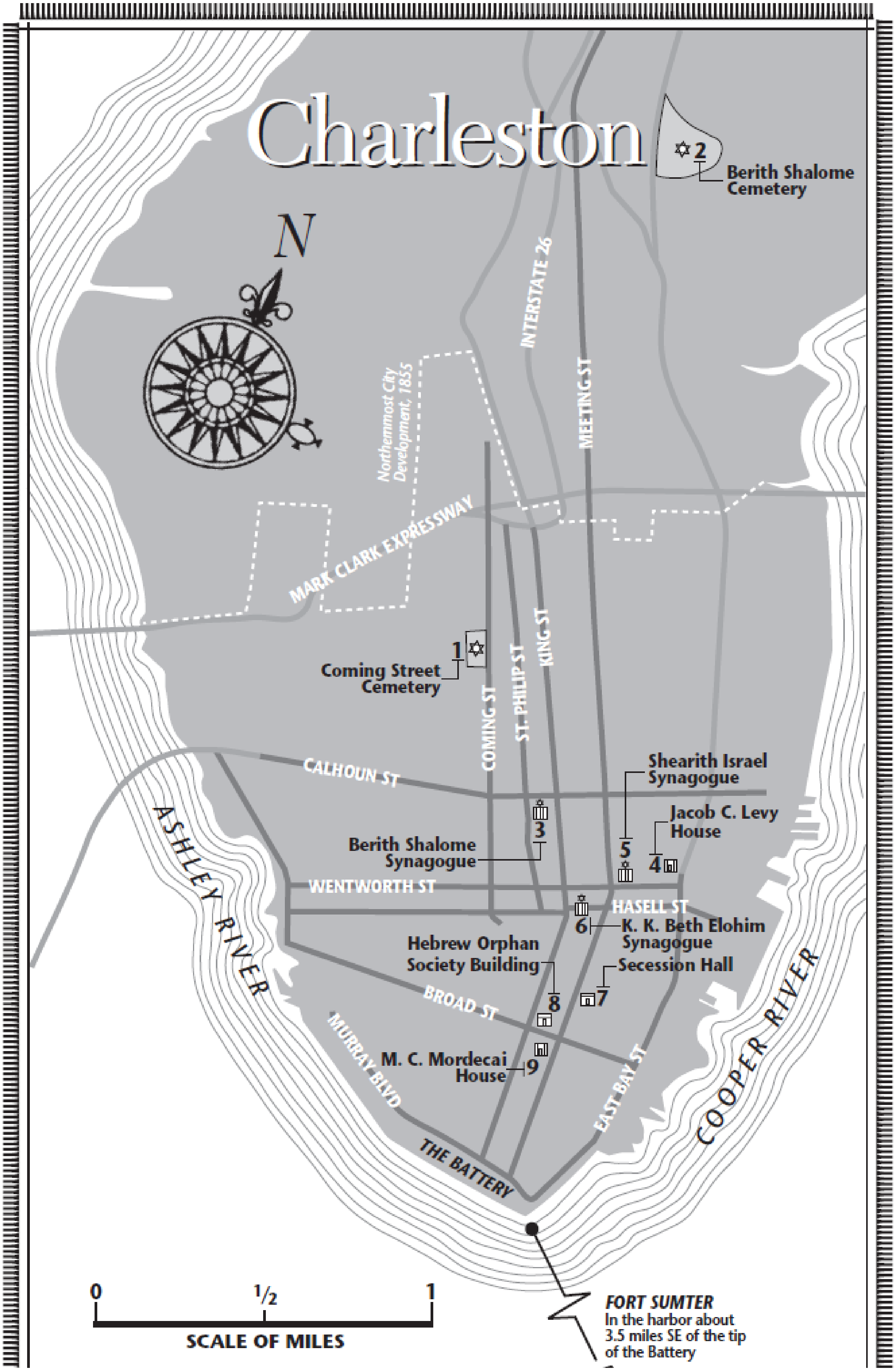
The Jews of Richmond favored secession but hoped for peace. Both Reverend Jacobs of Beth Shalome and Reverend Michelbacher of Beth Ahabah published prayers in the newspapers in January 1861 in response to President Buchanan's request for prayers of national unity. Likening Southerners to the Children of Israel crossing the Red Sea, Michelbacher asked that if "union and peace may not be preserved, because of perpetual and opposing interests," then "grant, Father of all, that a way may be opened whereby we, the people of the South, may pass with dry feet safely to the position of peace and plenty, attended with the Protection which Thou gavest to thy chosen people of old." Jacobs asked that God instill in "the hearts of all classes the knowledge that, as brethren how good and how beautiful it is for us to dwell together in unity." But that "if it be Thy will, O Lord! Who weighest the destinies of all nations," that secession was to come, then let it come without “the horrors of civil warfare … [and] that brother shall not lift up hand against his brother, but that an equitable and peaceful separation may take place.”[118]

Both Jacobs and Michelbacher soon became ardent supporters of the Confederate cause. The Mordecai family of Virginia and North Carolina was sorely divided. Major E. T. D. Myers, whose mother was a Mordecai, wrote his uncle Samuel Mordecai from Georgetown near Washington, D.C., that “impending ruin frowns heavily here…. I … can truly sympathize with Mr. Hunter of the State Department who assured me the other day that he was ashamed to look the delegates of foreigners in the face!” But, he would go with his state. Capt. Alfred Mordecai, Samuel Mordecai’s brother and the most respected Jewish officer in the U.S. Army in 1860, agonized over his future course. He declined an offer of a commission from Jefferson Davis, but his older sister Ellen, who lived in Richmond, begged him to fight for the South: “I avail myself of a private opportunity,” she wrote him in May 1861, “to express to you the anxiety I feel with every member of our family and all our friends that you should come where you are not only desired but needed in directing the military affairs of your native state. All eyes of the south are turned towards you, and from various places, wishes expressed that you should come.” Mordecai was married to a Northern woman and his son was raised in Pennsylvania. He resigned his commission and spent the war years in Philadelphia, unable to lift his sword against his native South or his Northern family. His son, Alfred Mordecai Jr., became an officer in the Union army. This infuriated the family that had sent four young Mordecais to serve in the Confederate army. Dr. Solomon Mordecai of Mobile, another brother, wrote Ellen: “I do not see how he could conscientiously have acted otherwise…. Yet how deeply this is to be regretted! His services in our cause would have been invaluable.”[119] Mordecai was not alone. Other Southern Jews had serious reservations about secession. Edwin Warren Moise, a Charlestonian living in Columbus, Georgia, opposed secession, while his employer, Raphael J. Moses, supported it.



Congressman Philip Phillips of Mobile, Alabama. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress.)

Eugenia and Philip Phillips of Mobile disagreed about slavery and secession. As in many marriages, the partners differed markedly in their temperament. Philip, one of the most respected Jewish lawyers in America, was calm and moderate, a conservative who supported the Union. Eugenia, the daughter and friend of Southern aristocrats, was an ardent Southern partisan. Her entire family supported the war. Sister Phoebe recalled that the "women of the South had been openly and violently rebellious from the moment they thought their states' rights touched. They incited the men to struggle in support of their views, and whether right or wrong, sustained them nobly to the end. They were the first to rebel—the last to succumb." Philip thought secession foolhardy and slavery an impediment to the South's progress. He even attempted a mission to the South on behalf of President Buchanan to stem the tide of secession. Phillips knew that the South would never give up slavery or that "the spirit of abolitionism which now dominated the North would be content with anything less." Yet, like many Southerners, he did not believe that Lincoln's election justified secession. "I looked with profound amazement," he later recalled, "upon the efforts made by many of the Southern leaders to induce the South to believe that secession would be peacefully acquiesced in by the North.… What little influence I possessed was exerted to prevent the proposed action of the Southern states."[120]


Charleston
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INTERSTATE 26
MEETING ST
Northernmost City Development, 1855
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ST. PHILIP ST
KING ST
CALHOUN ST
Shearith Israel Synagogue
Jacob C. Levy House
3 Berith Shalome Synagogue
5
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WENTWORTH ST
HASELL ST
6 K. K. Beth Elohim Synagogue
Hebrew Orphan Society Building 8
Secession Hall 7
ASHLEY RIVER
BROAD ST
MURRAY BLVD
M. C. Mordecai House 9
EAST BAY ST
COOPER RIVER
THE BATTERY
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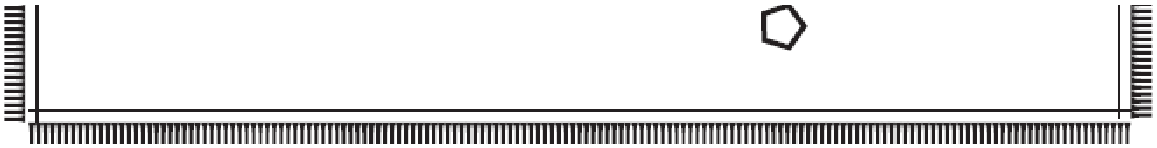
1
SCALE OF MILES
FORT SUMTER
In the harbor about 3.5 miles SE of the tip of the Battery



Map of Charleston showing key Jewish Confederate sites. Map drawn by Tim Belshaw.

Maj. Robert Anderson, the Union commander at Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor, did all he could to avert war, but in April President Lincoln sent a relief expedition to the beleaguered fort. Jefferson Davis ordered an attack on Fort Sumter before it could be reinforced. In the early morning hours of April 12, 1861, a heavy mist covered Charleston harbor and the nearby islands. Through the gloom came “the brilliant flash of exploding shells from the batteries all around the bay, while the deep hoarse tones of talking cannons echoed over the waters.”

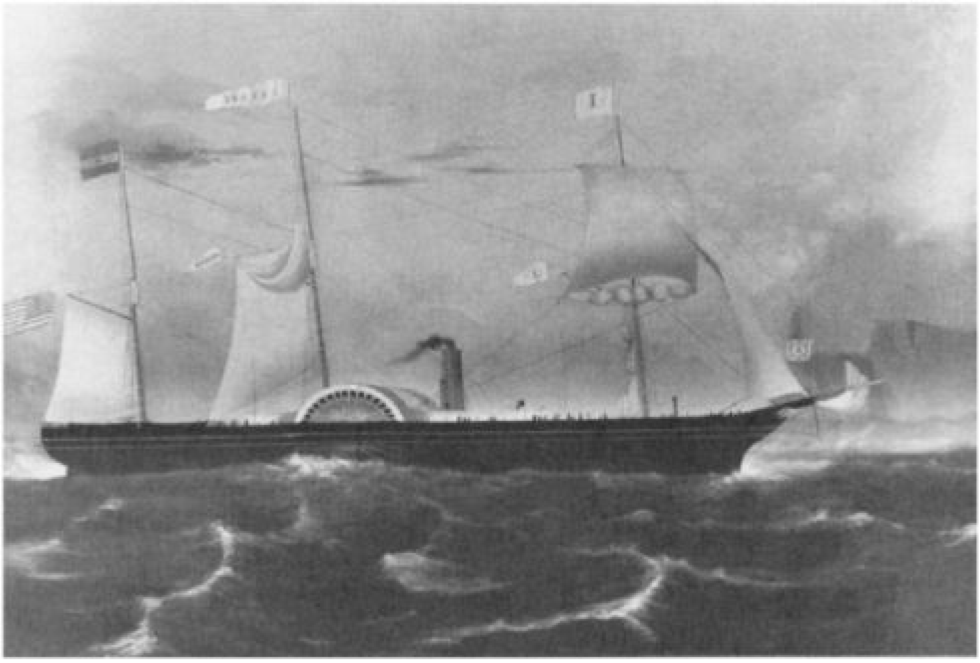
In that mist and gloom, among the soldiers ringing Fort Sumter were Jewish Confederates from Charleston. Moses E. Lopez served as a private in the Palmetto Guards. He was assigned to the Ironclad Battery on Morris Island on this fateful day. A Jewish physician, Columbus DaVega, apparently designed and served in a ten-bed hospital attached to a floating battery used in the attack on Sumter. Also in that mist and in command of a few of those “talking cannons” was Lt. Jacob Valentine of Company K, 1st South Carolina, a veteran of the Mexican War who had been wounded at Churubusco. There were four Valentine boys—Emanuel, Jacob, Isaac, and Hertz. Their ancestors had, according to family legend, served “with credit” in the Prussian army during the Napoleonic Wars. Valentine commanded the enfilade battery at the end of Sullivan’s Island nearest Charleston and overlooking Fort Sumter. It was the mission of this battery, consisting of four cannons, to rake the enemy line.[121]

The bombardment was furious and constant for the first two and a half hours. “There stands the bold defiant fort,” one observer wrote, “as quiet as death.” After daybreak, Sumter fired back. “The firing from Fort Sumter against our battery was heavy,” Valentine reported to Lt. Col. Roswell S. Ripley, “but, I am happy to say ineffective, and resulted in neither injury to the battery or to the men.” The bombardment had commenced at 4:30 a.m. and firing became general at 5:00 a.m. from the ring of forts and batteries on Sullivan’s Island, Morris Island, and James Island. Fort Sumter returned fire at 7:00 a.m. with a vigorous assault on Cummings Point. “The enemy next directed his fire upon the enfilade battery on Sullivan’s Island,” the official report continued.[122]

The bombardment continued into Saturday, April 13. Thousands of people watched, including Eleanor Cohen, a young Jewish girl from Charleston, and Perry Moses of

Sumter, who was a student at the Citadel. Sumter was firebombed, and the officers' quarters and barracks caught fire. Beauregard was concerned that Maj. Robert Anderson, his old instructor at West Point now facing him as his enemy, would be injured by an explosion of the fort's magazine before he could surrender. Beauregard therefore sent a boat with a fire engine over to Sumter under the direction of M. H. Nathan, chief of the fire department, to put out the fire. Prominent in the Jewish community, Nathan served as a commissioner of markets in the 1850s.[123]

Fort Sumter surrendered on Sunday, April 14, while the Federal fleet floated outside the bar of Charleston harbor. At 11:00 a.m., a Mordecai Lines steamer, the *Isabel*, arrived at Sumter's wharf. Major Anderson stood on the deck of the *Isabel* while his cannon fired a salute to the American flag. Two of Anderson's men were accidentally killed in the salute, the first casualties of the Civil War. They were laid in a grave in the middle of the parade ground, "after the earth had been heaped upon the sacred spot, a volley was fired, the drum beat its solemn roll, and the garrison was transferred to The Isabel." The steamer took the small Union garrison out to the Federal fleet waiting off the bar. The Palmetto flag was raised over the fort by Franklin J. Moses Jr. and J. L. Dearing of the governor's staff. Fire Chief Nathan was sent to put out the fires.[124]



The *Isabel*, named for Isabel Lyons Mordecai, was owned by the Mordecai Steamship Line. It transported Major Anderson and his men from Fort Sumter to the awaiting federal fleet. (Courtesy of the Maryland Historical Society.)

The war no one believed would happen, the war Solomon Cohen and M. C. Mordecai dreaded and Eugenia Phillips and Raphael J. Moses welcomed, was under way, and the Jewish Confederates made their choice—to go to war.

Why did Southern Jewish boys and men flock to the Confederate banner? What was their motivation? Why did men who, in many cases, had only recently come to the South risk their life and limb for the Southern cause? It is a truism that the Civil War was brought about by the dispute over slavery. One need only consult the secession conventions' resolutions to ascertain their reasons for seceding or, in the South's view, declaring independence. The South Carolina Declaration of the Immediate Causes of Secession rests the case for secession on slavery: "The Northern states 'have denounced as sinful the institution of slavery,' they have encouraged abolitionist societies, and have incited 'servile insurrection.' Lincoln has declared himself an enemy of slavery and the Republican Party 'announced … that a war must be waged against slavery.'"[125] And this resolution, together with the convention's address to the slaveholding states, constituted South Carolina's official reasons for seceding from the Union. Texas adopted a "declaration of causes," which included the election of Lincoln and the lack of protection of slavery in the territories.[126] Gov. Thomas O. Moore of Louisiana called for a secession convention because he did not feel that "it comports with the honor and self-respect of Louisiana, as a slaveholding state to live under the government of a Black Republican."[127] Solomon Cohen of Savannah perceived early on that the war was about slavery. "I fear," he wrote his aunt, "that the epitaph long since written for us is about to be engraved upon the tomb of the Union: 'Here lies a people who in seeking the liberty of the Negro, lost their own.'"[128]

Some Jewish Confederates, like many of their Gentile comrades, fought for what they termed their "liberty" and freedom, which included the right to own slaves. Pvt. Eugene Henry Levy of New Orleans reflected the sentiments of many a Johnny Reb when he wrote in his diary in October 1864 that he objected to a proposal made by Judah P. Benjamin that slaves who fought for the Confederacy be freed. The principle "that slaves are in their proper sphere as they are at present situated within the boundaries of the Confederacy is one of the grand incentives to the waging of war against the United States."[129] Like their fellow Johnny Rebs, a small percentage of Jewish Confederates owned slaves themselves, although many came from slaveholding families, and all came from slaveholding communities where relatives, friends, business associates, and customers owned slaves. And even those who owned no slaves had a stake in the South's racial caste system.

Pvt. Simon Mayer of the Natchez Southrons detested the Yankee invaders and believed them to be a gang of abolitionists. "I sympathize," he wrote his family with "the poor victims of abolition despotism." He accused the "damnable followers & supporters of Abraham Lincoln" of "making war upon decrepit old age, defenseless women & helpless infancy," of "rapine, destruction & murder," of burning Southern homes and of "starving our people" into subjugation and even "their new doctrine of 'miscegenation.'" "I doubt not," he concluded, "that the amalgamation doctrine would be of benefit to the *Yankee* race."[130]

It is also true, however, that individual Confederate soldiers had their own reasons for fighting which did not include slavery or race. In fact, most Jewish Johnny Rebs, like their fellow countrymen, believed they were fighting for their own liberty and in defense of their homes. They believed they were patriots fighting for independence, life, liberty, and property as the soldiers of 1776 had done.[131] Gustavus Poznanski Jr., the son of the former rabbi at K. K. Beth Elohim in Charleston, came back to his native Charleston from Canada to join his comrades in the defense of his native city. At "the breaking out of the war," his obituary reads, Poznanski "was temporarily residing at the North where his parents were forced to spend much of their time on account of impaired health.… His parents are still in Canada having been unable to obtain the requisite passes to come South." Obviously, neither he nor his parents, who were residing in Canada, owned slaves. And it strains credulity that Poznanski returned to South Carolina and gave his life at the age of nineteen to defend the institution of slavery. "No one more willingly gave a life," another Poznanski obituary read, "to free the soil from the invader. In giving it away, he had that glorious consolation that has cheered the dying moments of so many who have fallen for liberty."[132]

Jewish Johnny Rebs were also motivated by a sense of duty and honor, powerful emotions in Victorian America. "Victorians," McPherson wrote, "understood duty to be a binding moral obligation involving reciprocity: one had a duty to defend the flag under whose protection one had lived." A fallen Jewish Confederate, Cpl. Isaac Valentine, mortally wounded in the same battle as his comrade Poznanski, said on his deathbed that he had done his duty and died for his country.[133]

Moses Ezekiel of Richmond at the age of twelve. Ezekiel was too young to enlist when the war began, but he saw action later as a VMI cadet and participated in the famous Battle of New Market. After the war, with the encouragement of Robert E. Lee, he pursued his dream of becoming a sculptor. This photograph was taken in 1856. (Courtesy of American Jewish Historical Society, Waltham, Massachusetts, and New York City.)

Letters, memoirs, and obituaries reflect the Jewish soldiers' chief reasons for fighting: To do their duty, to protect their homeland, to protect Southern rights and liberty and, once the war began, loyalty to their comrades in arms. Philip Rosenheim of Richmond had just returned home from marching to the Chickahominy and had "fallen into sweet slumber" when his sister Rebecca awoke him. The bells had tolled, informing his militia company to gather. "I was very weak and had a severe headache," he wrote his family, "but still I dressed myself buckled on my accouterments, thinking I would not shrink from my duty and would follow the company wherever it goes, as our Flag says, when duty calls tis ours to obey."[134] Julius Yaretzky, a Polish immigrant who lived in Shuqualak, Mississippi, and served as first sergeant in Company A, 33d Alabama, spoke for many of his fellow Jewish Confederates when he wrote his son after the war, "The war between the states was for principles of states' rights."[135] "We were thoroughly imbued with the idea," Moses Ezekiel of Richmond wrote in his memoirs, "that we were not fighting for the perpetuation of slavery, but for the principle of State's rights and free trade, and in the defense of our homes, which were being ruthlessly invaded."[136]

Slavery was an evil that Virginia had inherited, and "we wanted to get rid of … [Virginia] tried to arbitrate for peace … but it failed. No slavery question entered the matter at all, but when [Lincoln] called upon Virginia to furnish her quota of troops to help subjugate her sister Southern states … Virginia … seceded from the Union."[137] Isaac Hirsch of Fredericksburg, a soldier in the 30th Virginia, visited the battlefield at Second Manassas, where Stonewall Jackson defeated General Pope's army. "It is bad," he wrote in his diary, "that the dead Yankees could not be buried as I don't like to see any human being lay on the top of the earth and rot, but it is a fit emblem for the invader of our soil for his bones to bleach on the soil he invades, especially of a people that wish to be left alone and settle down to their own peaceful pursuits."[138] J. Gottlieb wrote from Corinth, Mississippi, in June 1861 on stationery decorated with the Stars and Bars that he wished "to face the Lincolnites as soon as possible. Our cause is a right one & we will be victorious."[139]

Jewish men, like other Southern men, were encouraged to fight by their mothers and sisters. At the start of the war, Catherine Ezekiel, Moses's mother, said "she would not own a son who would not fight for his home and country."[140] Mary Chesnut wrote of her friend "Mem" Cohen's dedication to the cause. "Our soldiers, thank God, are men after our own heart, cries Miriam of the house of Aaron," Mary wrote in her diary in May 1862.[141] Phoebe Pember recalled that the women of the South had urged their men to resist the enemy with force if necesary[142]; see page 44.

It speaks volumes about the South that many a Jewish youth left the German fatherland to *avoid* military service only to *voluntarily* enlist in the Confederate army soon after arriving in Dixie. Myer Schwabacher left Germany to avoid military service and arrived in Richmond just as the war began. He enlisted, although as a foreigner he had no obligation to do so. Charles Wessolowsky's parents sent him to America in 1858 because they dreaded his being forced into the Prussian army. His older brother, Asa, had settled in Georgia, a place, he said in letters home, which was a land of freedom and opportunity. When Charles arrived, his brother sent him off to peddle goods in the "wilds" of rural Georgia. Given his experience with anti-Semitic Prussians, Charles was afraid to go out into this strange land. But he found, to his surprise, that his customers, the rural farmers of Georgia, were definitely not prejudiced Prussians. Instead, he was warmly received. Asa and Charles had the respect of their countrymen and they enlisted on May 7, 1862, in Company G, 57th Georgia (later Company E, 32d Georgia).[143]

Pvt. Theodore Kohn was a young immigrant from Fürth, Bavaria, who settled in Orangeburg, South Carolina. When war was imminent, his father, who lived in New York, practically ordered him to leave the South and come live with him so that he would not have to "serve as a soldier-slave for an unjust cause." Kohn, however, enlisted in the Edisto Rifles, Company A, of Hagood's 1st South Carolina Volunteers. (Courtesy of Julian Hennig Jr. of Columbia.)

Theodore Kohn of Orangeburg, South Carolina, came from Fürth, Bavaria, to live with his uncle. His parents settled in New York. In February 1861 Theodore's mother wrote that she hoped "no civil war will break out," but if it did, the "ones guilty of high treason will be all hanged." When war was imminent, Philip Kohn wrote his son, Theodore, in German: "I want to tell you my very desire, that you leave this un-happy country [South Carolina] as soon as possible, because it will be ruined within a few years. … I got [you] away from the old world, from the old ‘rust’ fatherland, so that [you would not have] to serve as a soldier-slave for an unjust cause. For what? … the Lord make your mind clear and lead you as soon as possible!” Ignoring his father’s earnest entreaties, Theodore enlisted enthusiastically in Company A, Hagood’s 1st S.C. Volunteers, the Edisto Rifles, one of the first to volunteer. His sergeant, William V. Izlar, recalled Kohn in his company history as being “thoroughly Southern in sentiment and principle,” and that he had been among the first to heed the call to arms. He served throughout the war, rising to the rank of corporal in Company G, 25th South Carolina, the Eutaw Regiment, and saw action in Charleston, North Carolina, and Virginia. Kohn fought at First Manassas, Battery Wagner, Petersburg, Cold Harbor, and Drewry’s Bluff, where he was wounded. Holding up his hand he told his sergeant, “Look here, Willie, what the d—d Yankees have done to me.”[144]

The social pressure to enlist was also a strong factor in many a young Confederate’s decision to join the army. According to Gary W. Gallagher, 75 to 85 percent of the Confederacy’s available draft-age white population served in the military.[145] And a young Southern male had a difficult time in 1862 and 1863 explaining why he was not in uniform. Simon Baruch, a Prussian from Schwersenz, immigrated to Camden, South Carolina, as did his younger brother Herman. When Simon enlisted he admonished Herman to stay out of the war. But Herman joined the cavalry because, as he told Simon, “I could no longer stand it. I could no longer look into the faces of the ladies.”[146]

There was also the adventure of war and the bounty paid in advance. Young men who worked at jobs they disliked, such as peddlers, mechanics, and store clerks, saw a chance to escape. Lewis Leon was such a clerk. An unmarried immigrant who spoke German as well as English, he enlisted for six months at the age of nineteen in the Charlotte Grays, Company C, 1st North Carolina. (In six months, most Southerners believed, the war would be over.) He was issued a fine uniform. “We were all boys between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one…. Our trip was full of joy and pleasure, for at every station where our train stopped the ladies showered us with flowers and Godspeed. We marched to the Fair Grounds. The streets were lined with people, cheering us.” But Leon also believed he was right. “I still say,” he concludes in his diary, “our Cause was just, nor do I regret one thing that I have done to cripple the North.”[147] Asa and Charles Wessolowsky enlisted in the 57th Georgia in May, 1862, hoping to avoid the battlefield, but glad of the fifty-dollar sign-up bounty. Asa’s daughter recalled that the bonus “looked mighty inviting and was a lot of money for doing nothing.”[148] The 57th was redesignated the 32d, and the Wessolowsky brothers found themselves doing hard fighting at Secessionville, at Morris Island, and in Florida. Charles participated in the defense of Atlanta in 1864 and was captured.

Another young Jewish volunteer, Isaac (“Ike”) Hermann, sounded the same theme: “I found in this country [the South] an ideal and harmonious people; they treated me as one of their own; in fact for me, it was the land of Canaan where milk and honey flowed.” Hermann believed his fellow countrymen were imposed upon by their Northern brethren, and that is why he joined in their defense. Hermann, like Leon, was an immigrant. He arrived from Alsace-Lorraine in 1859 in a four-masted schooner at Castle Garden, a massive structure at the tip of Manhattan, and settled in Sandersville, Washington County, Georgia. His cousin Abe Hermann was a merchant and ran a store at Fenns Bridge. From the beginning of the war to the end of his life, Hermann believed in the righteousness of the Southern cause. The “Slave States … had a perfect right” to secede, he argues in his 1911 *Memoirs of a Veteran, Who Served as a Private in the 60s in the War between the States*.[149]

Jewish Confederates, like other immigrants and African Americans, had a special burden during the war. They had to prove that Jews would fight. One of the staples of nineteenth century anti-Semitism was that the Jews were citizens of no country except the Jewish Nation. The “Wandering Jew” was a staple of folk anti-Semitism, found in prose, poetry, music, and even in names of plants and birds. Jews were said to be disloyal, unpatriotic, and cowardly They had lived in ghettos in Europe, kept to themselves, refused to intermarry or assimilate with their neighbors, and had fled Europe to avoid military service.[150] Many a Southern Jewish boy set out to disprove these calumnies.

Simon Mayer was as fervent in his support of the Confederate cause in 1864 as he was when the war began. In a letter to his family in April 1864, he unsuccessfully urged his brother Henry, who had not enlisted, to join his unit, the “Natchez Southrons” or, failing that,

> to at least join the Army now battling for our rights and independence. I hope he has awakened to the realities of the situation, & no longer can remain passive to the scenes that are daily enacted in the grand drama now in full play upon this continent, but that he sees that he too has a part to play, and will with light heart & strong arm, backed by a determination to do or die, come forth and take his place on the broad arena. I am in full earnest in regard to the course I have marked out for him, and I do not want it said, when Peace shall once more gladden our hearts, that a brother of mine, who had nothing to keep him back, acted the coward, and was afraid to come out & meet his would be masters, and subjugators. I hope that my pleadings in the last few letters that I have written are not in vain.[151]

Marx Mitteldorfer of the 1st Virginia Cavalry, on hearing the remark that the Jewish soldiers were in the habit of firing and falling back, invited the accuser to follow him.

“Mitteldorfer rode so far to the front (needless to say, alone) that his captain had to send him word to return to the ranks or he might be shot by his comrades,” wrote Herbert T. Ezekiel and Gaston Lichtenstein in *The History of the Jews of Richmond*, published in 1917.[152]

Other Jews fought to make a place in Southern society for the Jews who would come after them. Philip Whitlock wrote in his memoir that “especially when I was of the Jewish Faith I thought that if I am negligent in my duty as a citizen of this country, it would unfavorably reflect on the whole Jewish race and religion.”[153] Charles Wessolowsky said after the war that “sometimes he felt like a Jewish missionary among the Gentiles to show the way for other Jews to follow.” Early-twentieth-century Jewish historians were anxious to defend the courage and bravery of the generation that preceded them. “There existed no occasion to threaten the young or, for that matter, the middle-aged, with the white ‘feather,’” Ezekiel and Lichtenstein wrote. “None held back or hesitated…. The Jewish youth were no different from the others. Virginia needed them—that was sufficient…. That they did their duty is a matter of such common note as to excite no comment.”[154]

Finally, Jewish tradition also played a part. From the Book of Esther and from Jeremiah (“Seek the welfare of the city to which I have exiled you,” Jer. 29:7) to rabbinical law, Judiaism taught respect and obedience to the established goverment. Jews had traditionally aligned themselves with monarchs and conservative regimes for self-protection from the masses. The traditional Jewish prayer for the government, dating to the sixteenth century, called upon God to “bless, guard, protect, help, exalt, magnify, and highly aggrandize” the king and the royal family and inspire them with benevolence “toward us and all Israel our brethren.” In short, as the new Confedracy was now their lawful government, Jewish tradition demanded loyalty and obedience to it.[155]

Thus, Jewish Johnny Rebs went off to war for a variety of reasons: Patriotism and love of country; to defend their homeland, their yearning for a fatherland they could believe in; Jewish tradition as they understood it; to demonstrate to the North that their rights, liberty, and property, including slaves, could not be assailed; hatred for the Yankees; social and peer pressure; being caught up in the frenzy of secession and war; to escape from home and everyday work and see the world; for adventure, pay, and excitement; and to prove that Jews would fight. “The Jews of the Confederacy had good reason to be loyal to their section,” Rabbi Korn concluded. “Nowhere else in America—certainly not in the ante-bellum North—had Jews been accorded such an opportunity to be complete equals as in the old South.”[156]

Jewish Southerners would not seek shelter nor would they escape from this storm, no matter how “vast and terrible.” They had grown accustomed to breathing the free air of

Dixie and were determined, like the Jews of Shreveport, to stand by, protect, and honor the flag of the Confederacy.

CHAPTER 2

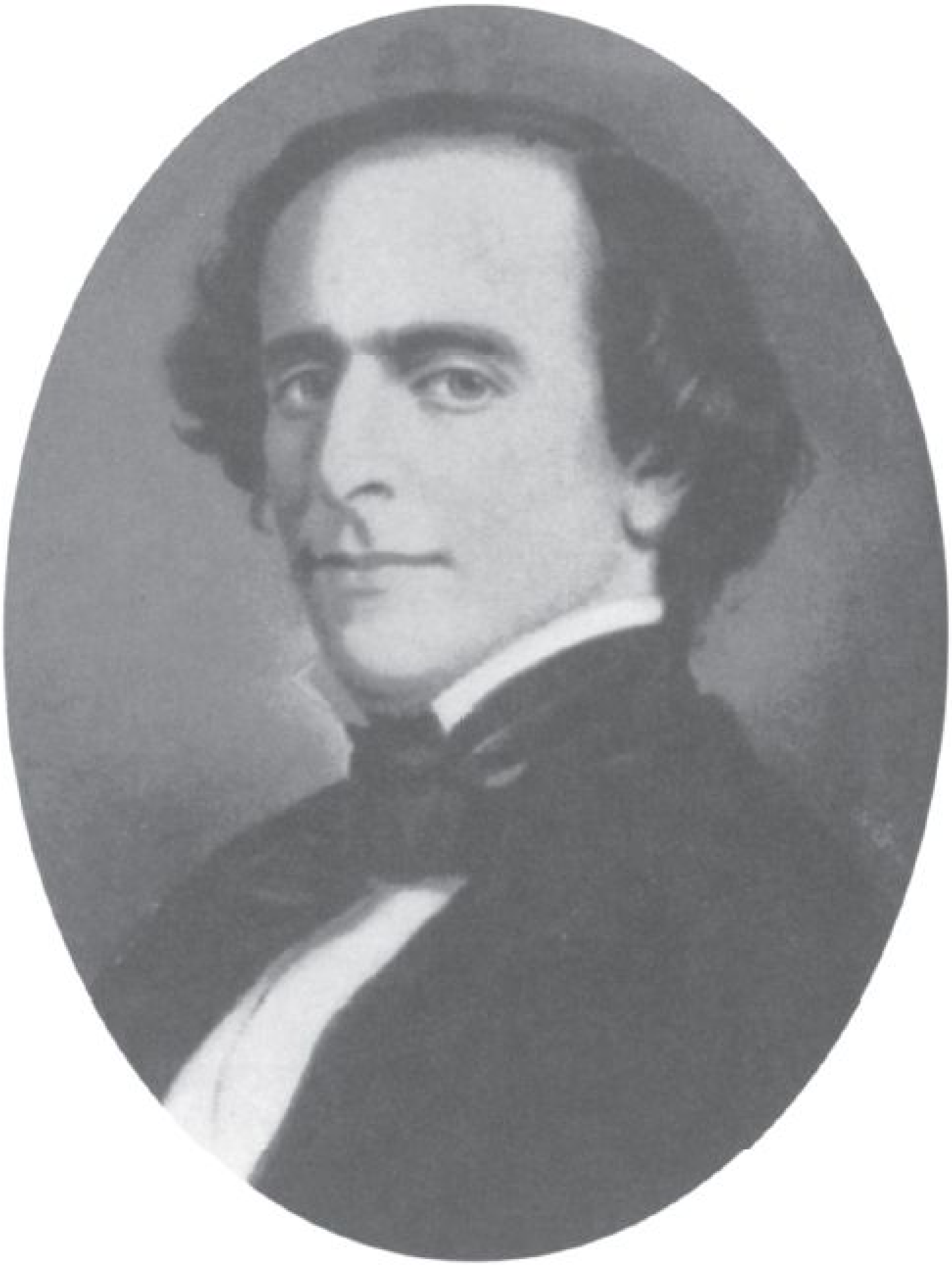
★

Two Sephardic Senators

BOTH JUDAH PHILIP BENJAMIN and David Levy Yulee were Sephardic Jews born in the West Indies, were raised in the South, and were U.S. senators on the eve of the Civil War. Both played a prominent role in secession. Benjamin became a Confederate cabinet officer. Yulee returned to Florida to protect his business interests. But each supported the Confederacy in his own way. Benjamin was born a British citizen on August 11, 1811, in St. Croix in the Virgin Islands, and Yulee (born David Levy) on the island of St. Thomas, then a Danish colony. Benjamin's mother, Rebecca de Mendes, claimed descent from one of the most prominent Jewish families of Spain, although her mother was of Ashkenazic ancestry.[1] The family left the Iberian Peninsula for London and thence to the West Indies. Judah's father, Philip Benjamin, was less illustrious. The elder Benjamin was described by one historian as "a Talmudic scholar, naïve, lackluster, far more concerned with study than with making a living." Pierce Butler was less kind. He described the senior Benjamin as "that *rara avis*, an unsuccessful Jew."[2]

Rebecca, Philip, and their young children moved to North Carolina in 1813 and then in 1821 to Charleston, South Carolina. Philip Benjamin became an American citizen in Charleston in 1826. It was a large family by 1821 with eight children: Rebecca ("Sis" or "Penny"), Solomon, Judah, Joseph, Hannah (whom Philip called "Harriet" or "Hatty"), Julia, Penina, and Jacob.[3] Life was not easy in Charleston. Although free to practice their religion and participate in the life of the community, the Benjamin family were poor. Judah's parents owned a small and not particularly profitable fruit stand on King Street. Mrs. Benjamin kept it open on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, much to the dismay of the Jewish community. As a boy, Judah worked in the shop.

For a time, Judah's father was active in the affairs of Beth Elohim. He joined a group of co-religionists in 1824 in their attempt to "reform" and Americanize the orthodox Jewish service by shortening the service and increasing the use of English. While the early records of Beth Elohim have been lost, Benjamin's modern biographer, Eli N. Evans, believes that "it is probable that Judah was one of the first children confirmed in the new Reformed Society." According to Rabbi Malcolm H. Stern, Benjamin's father had the distinction of being the only member expelled, apparently on account of his failure to pay his dues. Judah was educated at the Hebrew Orphan Society and was probably sent to Yale College by Moses Lopez, a prominent Jewish merchant. He may have taken a Hebrew psalter (prayer book) with him when he left for New Haven.[4]



David Yulee as a young man. (Courtesy of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.)

David Yulee had a more affluent boyhood. He was known as David Levy from the day of his birth until 1845, when he changed his name to David Levy Yulee, apparently to suit his new bride, Nancy Wickliffe, the daughter of a former governor of Kentucky.[5] (In the interest of clarity, he is referred to in this work as “David Yulee.”) His family claimed an even more exotic ancestry than the Benjamins. Yulee's father, Moses Elias Levy, was born in Mogador, Morocco, in 1782, reputedly the son of the grand vizier (counselor) of the emperor of Morocco. Levy told a friend, Maj. George R. Fairbanks, that his father had discovered a conspiracy on the part of the heir to the throne, and the grand vizier caused the young pretender to be imprisoned. When the emperor died and the son came to the throne, the vizier was, in Fairbank's version, forced to flee, taking his family to Gibraltar. In fact, Yulee's grandfather was one of a number of courtiers to the sultan.[6]

Moses Levy left home at a young age and settled in St. Thomas by 1800. A variety of business interests made him wealthy. Judah Benjamin's father or uncle and Moses Levy may have been in business together on St. Thomas in the firm of Levy, Benjamin and Robles.[7] Florida was still a part of the Spanish empire and was governed from Cuba, but he realized that it was only a matter of time before Florida became a part of the United States. Moses Levy purchased a large tract of land in North Florida and in and around St. Augustine, which he intended to turn into a colony for European Jews. With his family, and possibly co-religionists, he became an American citizen. By all accounts Moses Elias Levy was a highly educated, observing Jew, actively involved in Jewish affairs.[8]

Thus, young Yulee grew up in an affluent, cosmopolitan, educated Jewish family. On one of his many trips to the United States, Moses Levy brought his son, David, age nine, not to Florida, which was then a rural backwater, but to Norfolk, Virginia, where he placed him with his good friend Moses Myers, the great merchant. Young David lived with the Myers family in Norfolk for eight years, from 1819 until 1827, when he turned seventeen. According to Yulee's son, C. Wickliffe Yulee, Yulee attended the prestigious Norfolk Academy. These early years were spent in one of the most venerable cities of the Old South, and Yulee's values, beliefs, and social outlook were influenced by antebellum Virginia.[9]

Unlike Yulee, Benjamin had few advantages. As he grew to young manhood, Judah Benjamin built his career on intellectual prowess and a legendary capacity for hard work. He studied at Yale from the age of fourteen to seventeen but left under mysterious circumstances. His enemies later charged him with theft. Benjamin denied it, and the record is inconclusive. After leaving Yale, young Judah and his older cousin Henry M. Hyams moved to New Orleans to seek their fortunes. New Orleans in 1828 was booming. Purchased by the United States in 1803, Louisiana was still very much a multinational and multicultural state. The population was exploding; shipping, trade, and sugar production were rapidly expanding. It was a place where a young Jewish man with talent and determination could succeed.[10]

Judah Benjamin's rise in New Orleans was meteoric. He made friends rapidly, learned French, and studied law in his spare time. He was admitted to the bar in 1832 and began a remarkable legal career. He coauthored a legal digest with a Yale classmate, Thomas Slidell, the brother of John Slidell, the leading politician of antebellum Louisiana. Benjamin perfected his skills in the courtroom, especially as an appellate lawyer. By the early 1840s, Benjamin was widely recognized as an outstanding attorney. A little volume published in 1846, *Sketches of Life and Character in Louisiana*, stated that he was "emphatically the *Commercial* Lawyer of our city, and one of the most successful advocates at our bar. … To his many scholarly acquirements he adds the French language, which he speaks with fluency and elegance." He was admitted to the bar of the Supreme Court of the United States at the same term as Abraham Lincoln.[11]

Judah P. Benjamin's townhouse at 327 Bourbon Street in New Orleans. This house has been identified as Benjamin's townhouse in the Julius Bisno manuscript collection. Benjamin practiced law in New Orleans before the war and could walk up Bourbon Street to his law office across Canal Street at 37 Camp Street, now demolished. Henry Hyams's law office was nearby, at 165 Canal Street. (Author's collection. Photograph by Susan Rosen.)

Unfortunately, Benjamin could not depend upon his wife for support of any kind. In 1833, when he was twenty-one, he had married Natalie St. Martin, a beautiful, witty, vivacious sixteen-year-old Creole from a prominent Catholic family. One daughter, Ninette, was born ten years later. The match was not a good one. Although in the early years the Benjamins lived with the St. Martins and Judah was close to the St. Martin family all his life, his wife did not want to share his life. When he purchased a sugar plantation, Belle Chasse, Natalie found it dull and left for France in 1845, taking their only child with her. Yet he supported her and his daughter for the rest of his life. He visited them in Paris, and on his death left them the bulk of his estate. After his wife left him, Benjamin invited his mother, by then separated from his father, to live with him.[12]

Benjamin climbed the political ladder the old-fashioned way as campaign worker, manager, lawyer, and finally as a candidate for office. He was "a veritable dynamo in the Whig organization in Louisiana," according to Louis Gruss. He was elected to the Louisiana House of Representatives from New Orleans in 1842 and was an active participant in the constitutional conventions of 1844-45 and 1852, called to rewrite the state constitution. His brilliant performance at the 1852 constitutional convention won him many supporters, and he was elected to the Louisiana Senate as a Whig that same year. At the right place at the right time—and with the right connections—Benjamin was elected to the U.S. Senate, a vacancy having coincidentally occurred around the same time.[13]

When he was elected, Benjamin was the first acknowledged Jew in the Senate. Yulee was the first American of Jewish descent to be elected to the Senate, but Yulee denied his connection to Judaism. Benjamin, according to Eli Evans, "acknowledged his Judaism." He was never a member of a synagogue but never renounced Judaism or converted to Christianity (although, on his deathbed, his wife had the last rites of the Catholic church performed). Benjamin was keenly aware of his Jewish appearance. "I first met him at dinner at President Pierce's house." Varina Howell Davis later wrote, "His type was decidedly Hebrew; he had not a marked line in his face which was boyish in the extreme … [He] had rather the air of a witty *bon vivant* than that of a great Senator." On one occasion Benjamin went before a justice of the peace to secure an affidavit. The judge inserted the name "Judas" where "Judah" should have been, whereupon Benjamin was said to have grabbed the paper, thrown it down on the desk, and exclaimed, "My God, man, is not Judah Jew enough?"[14]

On the other hand, Benjamin was a close friend to Jews in his political circle. He was close to David Yulee while they served together in the Senate, and Gustavus Myers, the leading Jewish lawyer in Richmond while Benjamin served there in the Confederate cabinet. He always welcomed Jewish visitors and made no pretense of being anything other than Jewish. Young Pvt. Eugene H. Levy of New Orleans visited Benjamin in wartime Richmond and brought regards from his father, “old Jack Levy,” whom Benjamin knew.[15] The 1846 *Sketches of Life and Character in Louisiana* told its readers what they were undoubtedly curious about: “Mr. Benjamin is by birth, and as his name imports, an Israelite. Yet how far he still adheres to the religion of his fathers, I cannot tell, though I should doubt whether the matter troubled him much.” The *New Orleans Courier* stated in 1844, “Of Mr. Benjamin’s religious views we know nothing.”[16]

In point of fact, Benjamin was completely unconcerned about religion. Pierce Butler, Benjamin’s first biographer, accurately described Benjamin’s feelings: “He did not forswear Judaism or conceal his Jewish origin; he remained always … a firm believer in immortality and in a personal Divinity; he was not ashamed, rather justly proud, of his lineage, and in temperament always retained much of the best of the traits of his people; but he had ceased to hold any active communion with Judaism.” Substitute Christianity for Judaism and this would be an accurate description of Abraham Lincoln’s and Thomas Jefferson’s religious views. Benjamin *“had no positive or active interest in Jews or in Judaism,”* Rabbi Korn concluded.[17]

Benjamin’s Jewishness, although always an impediment to his political career, was not a major stumbling block. He had no public connection to Judaism, and organized religion played no role in his life. And he had married into a Creole Catholic family. He had strong promoters in his law partners and friends at the bar. He was a close friend of the powerful Slidell clan and a protégé of John Slidell. Louisiana in the 1850s was an extraordinarily fluid society with a variety of religious, national, and ethnic groups, unlike any other American state at that time. These factors combined with Benjamin’s personality and his urban and plantation ties, to make his candidacy a logical one in the Louisiana of the 1850s.[18]

Like Judah Benjamin, David Yulee had a poor relationship with his father. In 1827 David and his older brother, Elias, were embroiled in some sort of controversy with their father. The disagreement led the elder Levy to terminate his sons’ education. Elias was forced to leave Harvard and David left Norfolk. Both returned to one of their father’s sugar plantations in Alachua County, Florida, which they managed for several years. Although he lived in relative isolation, David visited St. Augustine often and clearly had his mind set on bigger and better things than farming. Bright and energetic, Yulee decided on a career in law. He studied with Judge Robert R. Reid, later territorial governor of Florida, was admitted to the bar in 1832 at age twenty-one, and practiced in St. Augustine for a few years.[19] Yulee had a natural aptitude for politics. He became clerk to the Territorial Legislature before Florida became a state. In 1837 he was elected to the Florida legislature and in 1838 was a delegate to the convention which wrote Florida’s constitution. In 1841 Yulee campaigned for the office of Territorial Delegate from Florida to the U.S. Congress. He and his fellow Jacksonian Democrats denounced the “Federal, Aristocratic, Bank Paper, Stock Jobbing Party”—that is, the Whigs. The Whigs denounced Yulee as a Jew. He was elected anyway and served in that capacity until 1845, when he was elected Florida’s first U.S. senator.[20] Before Moses Levy died in 1854, father and son, who were completely estranged, attempted a reconciliation, but David’s commitment to his Christian religious beliefs and Moses Levy’s desire to control not only his son’s but his daughter-in-law’s religious beliefs made that impossible. In a loving but firm December 1842 letter to his father, Yulee wrote that he deplored but understood his father’s refusal to address him as his son, reflecting the Orthodox Jewish custom of treating those who convert or marry outside of the faith as dead. “I cannot but pray that time and circumstances will gradually lessen the breach which has divided you from your child,” he told his father.[21]

Yulee devoted his time as Territorial Delegate to what we would now call constituent service. Wheeling and dealing in Washington was his forte. He led the drive to bring Florida into the Union and was the Father of Florida statehood. He was an early advocate of Southern rights. The Southern bloc embraced him, and he was well hated by some New Englanders. John Quincy Adams, the former one-term president, was a member of Congress when Yulee (then called Levy) served as Territorial Delegate from Florida. He disliked Levy intensely on account of his being Jewish. Adam’s diary mentions Levy often: “I found Levy, the Jew Delegate from Florida, making a red hot speech against the President’s message declaring his intention to put an end to the Florida war.” On another occasion Adams refers to Levy as “the alien Jew Delegate from Florida,” and by 1843 he wrote: “Weller moved a reconsideration to let Levy make another hour speech, which he did. I was provoked to the boiling point, but made no reply.”[22]

Once Florida was in the Union, Yulee embarked on a campaign to be elected to the U.S. Senate. It was a bitter campaign complete with the now familiar anti-Semitic slurs. But Yulee prevailed. He served two terms in the Senate, the first from 1845 to 1851 and the second from 1856 until he resigned in 1861. The year 1845 was momentous for Yulee. On March 10, the state of Florida named Levy County in his honor. On July 1, he was sworn in as a senator, and, on December 29, he had his name changed by act of the Florida legislature to David Levy Yulee. It was his grandfather’s name (or one of them) and it was a well-known Jewish name. Soon after, he married Nancy Wickliffe, a great beauty whom he probably met at the White House during John Tyler’s administration. Julia Tyler, the president’s daughter, and Nancy Wickliffe were friends, and Nancy’s father, Charles A. Wickliffe, was postmaster general. Nancy’s brother Robert C.

Wickliffe served as governor of Louisiana from 1856 to 1860. She was a devout Christian and was known to her contemporaries as the “Wickliffe Madonna.”[23]

We do not know what went on in Yulee’s mind with regard to his name change. We do know that he had left the practice of Judaism and had now embraced Christianity, although he apparently never formally converted. His marriage seemed to precipitate his name change, and he may very well have agreed to embrace Christianity in deference to his wife’s wishes. Yulee also began to identify with his grandfather Yulee rather than his father.[24]

Yulee became a Presbyterian, as his letters to his wife of many years attest, but he did not regularly attend church. It was, his daughter recalled in the 1930s, “an event in the Yulee household when he did.” But he was fervent in his religious beliefs. Yulee continued to associate and befriend Jews. He was close to Judah Benjamin when they served together in the Senate, and it was Yulee who convinced Benjamin not to resign from the Senate during Benjamin’s travails with his promiscuous wife. Yulee certainly could never escape being called a Jew. It was an issue in all of his elections. Even though their parents were Presbyterians, the Yulee children—Wickliffe, Margaret, Nancy (or Nannie Christian), and Florida—were brought up as Episcopalians, and Yulee’s son claimed that his grandfather, Moses Elias Levy, was a “Mahometan” and was not Jewish at all. The grandson, who may never have known his grandfather, simply ignored the pioneering efforts Moses Levy made to settle and develop the state of Florida.[25]

Yulee’s service in the Senate was workmanlike. His son accurately described his father’s contribution as giving his time “to that valuable work which is called routine, because there is nothing spectacular about it.” Yulee was a practical man. During his senatorial career, he was a friend to Stephen A. Douglas and a protégé of John C. Calhoun. He represented the views of his constituents and defended the institution of slavery. He was a slaveholder and planter as well as a businessman, lawyer, real estate developer, and railroad promoter. He thus appealed to a wide spectrum of Florida’s electorate, knowing firsthand the feelings of planters and farmers, businessmen and entrepreneurs.[26]

Although Yulee’s father had long been an advocate of the abolition of slavery, Yulee was in the forefront of the defense of the peculiar institution. According to Yulee’s son, the senator was “always solicitous as to the happiness of those dependent upon him,” and would never sell a slave nor buy one if it meant separating families. He did break this rule once, when, according to young Yulee, the slave husband of a shrewish wife insisted on the sale, saying, “Massa, please don’t put yoself out ‘bout dat.” Yulee “became an associate and an ardent admirer of Calhoun,” Dorothy Dodd wrote, “who occasionally honored him by utilizing him as an instrument for the expression of his own views." Yulee deserves much of the credit for the development of the Southern position on the issue of slavery in the territories, arguing long before the Dred Scott decision that the territories belonged to all of the people and therefore slaveholders had a right to take their property wherever they wished. Yulee was an early supporter of Southern rights, was a member of the Congressional caucus which adopted Calhoun's famous 1849 address, and prepared a detailed memorandum on the proposal for a Southern convention, which ultimately materialized in the Nashville Convention of 1850.[27]

Yulee's views on secession were initially radical but, within the context of Southern political thought, became more moderate the closer the nation drew toward civil war. Like all Southern senators, he insisted on the constitutional right of slaveholders to take slaves into the territories. He felt that the North had violated the Missouri Compromise by even proposing the Wilmot Proviso. He signed Calhoun's Address to the Southern People. In the absence of a constitutional amendment protecting Southern rights, Yulee argued for immediate secession. He wrote to Calhoun in 1849 that, absent such an amendment, "the best policy [would be] to take steps at once for a separation." He was intensely involved in the debate on the admission of California as a free state, which he opposed; he voted against the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia; and he opposed the Compromise of 1850 in any form. Newspapers called him the "Florida Fire Eater."[28]

Yulee's views, as it turned out, were too radical for the Florida of the early 1850s. In 1851, Yulee was defeated in an extremely close reelection bid to the senate. Yulee's father-in-law, Governor Wickliffe, wrote Mrs. Yulee, "Mr. Yulee can now devote himself to his own affairs for a few years." And Yulee did turn his attention from politics to his own affairs—namely, developing Florida's railroads.[29]

Judah Benjamin served in the Senate continuously from 1853 to the eve of war. He was on friendly terms with Franklin Pierce, who entertained Benjamin at the White House. Indeed, Benjamin had a national reputation even before his senatorial career. In the late winter of 1852-53, Benjamin was nominated by President Millard Fillmore to the U.S. Supreme Court, an honor he declined. He was, therefore, the first Jew nominated to the Court.[30]

In the Senate, the Whig Benjamin actively promoted Louisiana's commercial interests. He involved himself in trade, treaties, and the development of the railroad. The 1850s, however, were not ordinary times, and slavery, the territories, and sectional conflict dominated the Senate. As the political temperature rose, Benjamin, like his fellow Southern senators, warmed to the subject of the South's right to hold slaves and expand the institution to Kansas, Nebraska, and beyond. Benjamin ably defended slavery and

Southern rights in debate. He once replied to Henry Wilson of Massachusetts by pointing out that the Pilgrims enslaved the Indians and sold them as slaves in the West Indies. He was one of the few senators who could stand his ground against Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, one of the Senate's most scholarly members. Yet he was widely respected by all factions and was his own man. Alone of the Southern senators, he publicly disapproved when South Carolina Rep. Preston S. Brooks assaulted Sen. Sumner and beat him with a cane.[31]

Benjamin was a slave owner who, by all accounts, treated his slaves decently. "Some few of his slaves were still living a year or two since," Butler wrote in 1907, "and would tell visitors all sorts of tales of the master of long ago;—none but kindly memories, and romantic legends of the days of glory on the old place."[32] Benjamin thought of slavery as a necessary evil much as Thomas Jefferson did. He was not, like Calhoun or Jefferson Davis, a proslavery ideologue. In 1860, for example, as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, he reported a bill allowing the Federal government to contract with such organizations as the African Colonization Society to return Africans captured by slave traders engaged in illegal slave trading. Benjamin opposed all of the prominent leaders of his own party to vote for the bill. Benjamin was among the first to propose a Confederate emancipation plan toward the end of the Civil War. He believed slavery to be contrary to natural law.

Benjamin foresaw, as many could not, the ultimate end of the debate over the extension of slavery. In 1854, seven years before the firing on Fort Sumter, he wrote to a fellow Southern Whig: "I am sorry, my dear Sir, that I cannot take quite so hopeful a view of the future as you seem to anticipate." Arguing that the Whigs would divide on sectional lines, Benjamin wrote, "If I be right in this prediction, God knows what awaits us.… What becomes of the Union?"[33]

His responsibilities as a senator were not as time-consuming as those of his modern counterparts in Congress, and Benjamin continued to practice law. Living in Washington allowed him to practice before the Supreme Court, which was then conveniently located in the basement of the Capitol. He continued to negotiate contracts and to represent major commercial clients traveling to distant places. His ability to speak and write fluently in Spanish and French and his encyclopedic knowledge of international law and the law of foreign countries added to his reputation. He was, however, always thought of as a Jew. Once, after making an eloquent argument before the Supreme Court, a justice told his adversary, "You had better look to your laurels, for that little Jew from New Orleans has stated your case out of court."[34]

For a variety of reasons, including the rise of antislavery sentiment in the northern states, the Whig Party fell apart during the 1850s, just as Benjamin predicted it would.

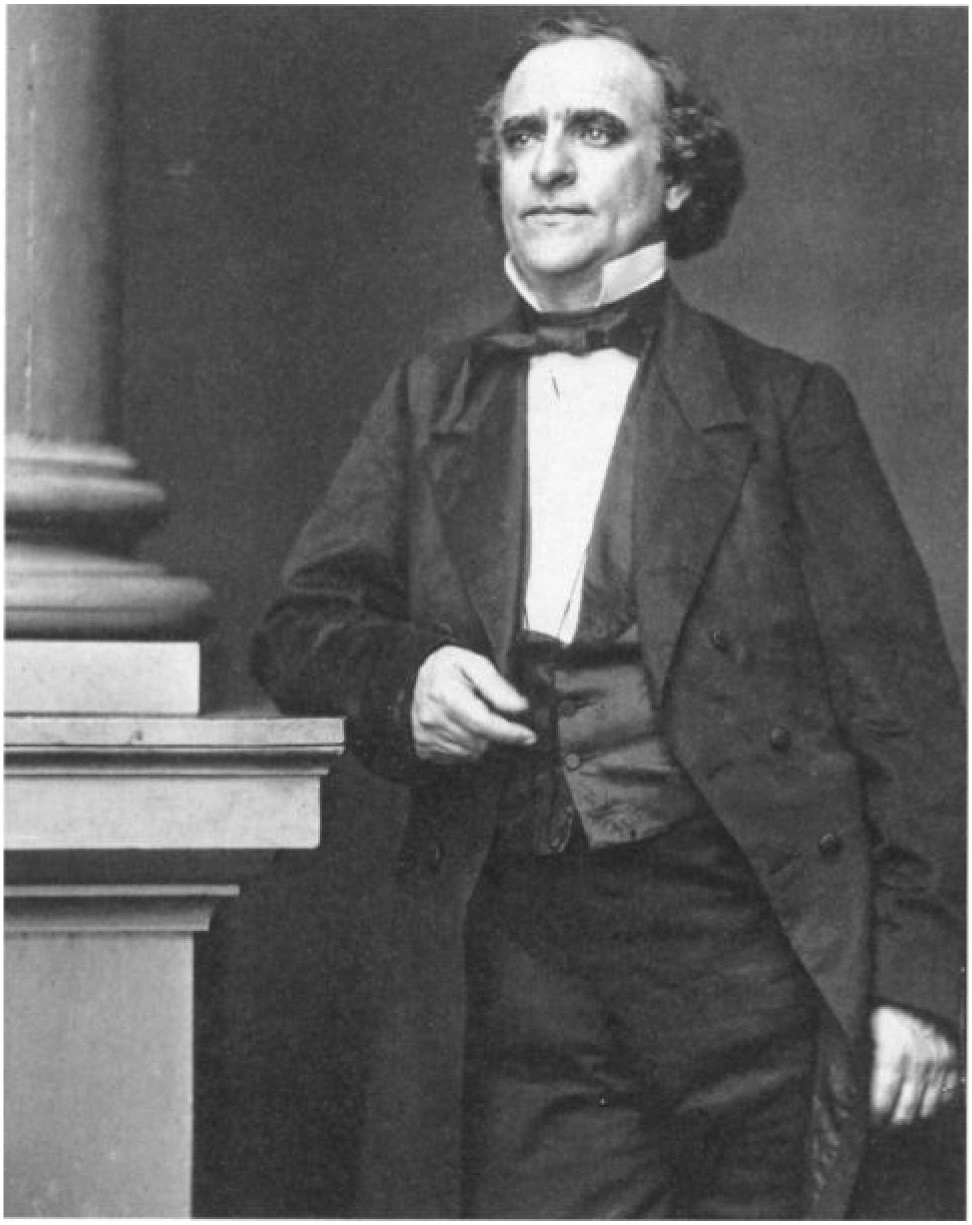
Former Whigs were forced to choose a new party. Benjamin joined the Democratic Party. In 1856, he announced his decision while speaking on the Kansas issue. He argued that the South, which the North perceived as “so excited, so passionate, so violent,” was willing to submit the issue of the extension of slavery into Kansas to the Supreme Court; whereas the “calm, cold, quiet, calculating North” refused to be bound by the Constitution. Sen. John P. Hale of New Hampshire lamented Benjamin’s eloquence. “I have listened,” Hale told the Senate, “with great pleasure, as I always do, on account of [Senator Benjamin’s] acknowledged ability, his great eloquence, his very persuasive powers, his mellifluous voice, his winning and graceful manner. All this only makes me regret that he is in a wrong position.”[35]

Not all of Benjamin’s colleagues were so kind. Sen. Benjamin Wade of Ohio, a violent opponent of slavery, said: “Why, sir, when old Moses, under the immediate inspiration of God Almighty, enticed a whole nation of slaves, and ran away, not to Canada, but to old Canaan, I suppose that Pharaoh and all the chivalry of old Egypt denounced him as a most furious abolitionist … there were not those who loved Egypt better than they loved liberty…. They were not exactly Northern men with Southern principles; but they were Israelites with Egyptian principles.”[36]

Meanwhile, Yulee, out of office, continued to build his railroad empire. He bought a fleet of steamships to complement the railroad. A trunk line was built and the town of Fernandina, owned by the company and located just south of the Georgia line, began to grow into an important port. Floridian boosters saw Fernandina as an eventual rival of New Orleans. Yulee was able to convince northern shipping and railroad interests to invest in the company, and his support and that of his wife’s family for Stephen A. Douglas won him important friends at the Illinois Central Railroad, with which all new railroads hoped to connect.

Yulee, however, could not get politics out of his blood. He had continued to be active in politics and was a leader in Democratic Party politics. Fortunately for his career, the Whig Party collapsed and Florida became solidly Democratic. Thus, in 1855, when a senate seat was once again open, Yulee perceived that the political landscape had changed. Floridians now saw danger in the growing Republican Party, and Yulee’s positions, considered radical in 1850, now drew considerable support. Yulee had also moderated his positions, bringing him closer to the mainstream.

Like all Southern leaders, Yulee was deeply concerned about the growth of the abolitionist movement and the Republican Party. Because of his defeat in 1851, or because he now realized the catastrophe disunion would bring—especially to the railroad industry—Yulee took a more pro-Union stance. He was seen as a political power broker with too much power as well as a candidate and elected official. His enemies campaigned against what they called the “Jew Dynasty” and portrayed Yulee as an “alien, traitor, and proselyte.” But Yulee was an archetypal Jacksonian Democrat who wanted to open up economic opportunities, for the small businessman, the artisan, and the small farmer. He was the embodiment of what Edward Pessen has called the Jacksonian politician: an “astute realist … ambitious for material gain, worldly success and prestige.” Yulee was immensely well liked at this stage of his career. “Although frequently denounced as an alien and a Jew,” Adler concludes, “Yulee became the most popular man in Florida.”[37]



Sen. David Yulee of Florida, the Father of Florida Statehood. (Courtesy of the National Archives, Washington, D.C.)

During his second term as senator, Yulee was more interested in building the Florida Railroad Company than in the great issues of the day. As chairman of the Committee on Post Offices and Post Routes, he helped his brother-in-law Joseph Holt (Holt and Yulee had both married Wickliffe sisters) become postmaster general and influenced the awarding of postal contracts to steamship companies. One postal route, for example, was changed from Charleston/Key West to Charleston/Fernandina, where Yulee and Holt had substantial real estate holdings. It is likely that Yulee saw to it that Holt had an economic interest in Fernandina. He secured a mail contract between Charleston and New Orleans for the Florida Railroad, which was worth $160,000 annually. In the battle over the funding of the post office department late in the Buchanan administration, Holt and Yulee had a falling-out.[38]

Yulee opposed the withdrawal of the Southern delegates from the Democratic Party national convention in Charleston in 1860, but he was still adamant that the South never compromise on the issue of slavery in the territories. “I have never,” he wrote the editor of the *Tallahassee Floridian*, “in any form, nor to any degree … [countenanced] … the idea that the inhabitants of a territory have any power to exclude slave holders.” He urged the South never to abandon that right, or “as I once expressed it, the Liberty of Growth.” He nevertheless urged his fellow Democrats not to send delegates to the ultra-Southern breakaway faction of the party meeting in Richmond, but instead endorsed the action of the regular party convention which was then meeting in Baltimore. This was an unpopular position for a Southern senator at the time. Yulee only broke with Douglas when all was lost and Douglas repudiated the right of secession. Yulee ended up supporting John C. Breckinridge for president in 1860, but his heart was not in it.[39]

Yulee opposed immediate secession in the months leading up to the presidential election. As late as October 1860 he was in favor of preserving the Union. While his fire-eating stance ten years earlier has caused him to be grouped with the radicals, in fact Yulee did not wholeheartedly support secession until after the election of Lincoln. He was actually a “cooperationist”; that is, he favored a solution short of secession until secession became inevitable. He was hopeful a crisis could be averted in November and December, although he notified the legislature in November that he intended to “promptly and joyously” return to Florida if the state seceded. Yulee encouraged Jefferson Davis to serve on the Committee of Thirteen, a group of senators dedicated to compromise. But by January 1861 Yulee had made up his mind to go with his state. He began planning for the secession of Florida. He wrote a blunt letter to the Florida state authorities advising them to seize and occupy Federal forts and arsenals in his state. “The Naval Station and forts at Pensacola are first in consequence. For this a force is necessary,” he wrote, adding that Gov. Joseph E. Brown of Georgia would send a sufficient force to take these facilities if need be. “Lose no time,” he urged, “for my opinion is, troops will be very soon despatched to reinforce and strengthen the forts in Florida." He urged the organization of a Southern government:

> What is advisable is the earliest possible organization of a Southern Confederacy and of a Southern Army. The North is rapidly consolidating against us upon the plan of force. A strong government, as eight States will make, promptly organized, and a strong army with Jeff. Davis for General in Chief, will bring them to a reasonable sense of the gravity of the crisis…. I shall give the enemy a shot next week before retiring. I say enemy. Yes. I am theirs and they are mine….
>
> Yours in haste,
>
> D. L. YULEE

This letter would come back to haunt him.[40]

On January 7, he wrote another letter which enclosed copies of resolutions drawn by a group of Southern senators and explained that "the States should go out at once" and organize "a Confederate Government" no later than February 15. Florida seceded on January 10, 1861, and Senator Yulee was one of the first of the Southern senators to announce the secession of a Southern state on the floor of the U.S. Senate.[41] It was a dignified—and sorrowful—farewell.

Yulee was always remembered as an ardent secessionist because of his original support for it. Just a month before, in December 1860, Sen. Andrew Johnson had attacked Yulee and the State of Florida as unappreciative of being a part of the United States. He chastised Yulee and his fellow Floridians, pointing out that $100,000 had been spent by the United States in negotiating for Florida; $6 million to purchase the state; and $25 million to fight and relocate the Seminole Indians. Was Florida going back to Spain, Johnson asked, or to the Seminoles? But Yulee's views had moderated. Even when secession was an accomplished fact, he urged caution. He counseled against the firing on Fort Sumter. Even as war began, Fernandina remained a stronghold for peace.[42]

By a stroke of bad luck, Joseph Holt, Yulee's estranged former brother-in-law (Holt's wife had died), became secretary of war just as the Union was breaking apart. It was said that within five minutes of his appointment, Holt made plans to provision Fort Sumter and set in motion the sailing of the *Star of the West* for Charleston harbor. Holt, a Kentuckian who had lived in Mississippi, remained fiercely loyal to the Union and convinced President Buchanan to reinforce the Pensacola forts and take a more aggressive stand for the Union. Holt's actions were an affront to the state of Florida and obviously affected Yulee. It was around this time in early January that Yulee wrote his pro-secession letters. It was also around this time that both Yulee and his fellow Florida senator, Stephen R. Mallory, attempted to procure from Holt information on munitions, equipment, and the Florida arsenals. Holt refused to provide the requested information and undoubtedly resented the request, made twice by Mallory and Yulee. All semblance of a relationship between Yulee and Holt ended.[43]

Before leaving Washington, Yulee participated in the Peace Conference called by the governor of Virginia. (His father-in-law, Charles Wickliffe, was chairman of the rules committee.) He also kept his friends informed about the movement of troops and ships. On January 28, 1861, he sent this telegram home: “The Brooklyn is bound to Pensacola. Two companies on board.” [44]

Yulee’s controversial personality has, with some justification, colored history’s view of him. His role in the Civil War was hardly heroic, and his motives in supporting secession have been questioned. Robert L. Clarke argues that it was most likely Yulee’s substantial financial interest in the Florida Railroad Company that caused him to “quickly and heartily” endorse secession. The Florida railroad *was* heavily in debt to northern banks. This was a contemporary charge in the northern press. The *New York Times* in an anti-Semitic outburst charged that Yulee was no longer getting the “fat mail contracts and subsidies” he had received and “it is well known that it was because his Jew heart did not get all it craved that he urged the secession of Florida—and like the base Judean, threw away a pearl richer than all his tribe.” (The Northern Jewish press took great umbrage at this slur, as Yulee was no longer a Jew but “had been an Israelite, long, long ago.”)[45]

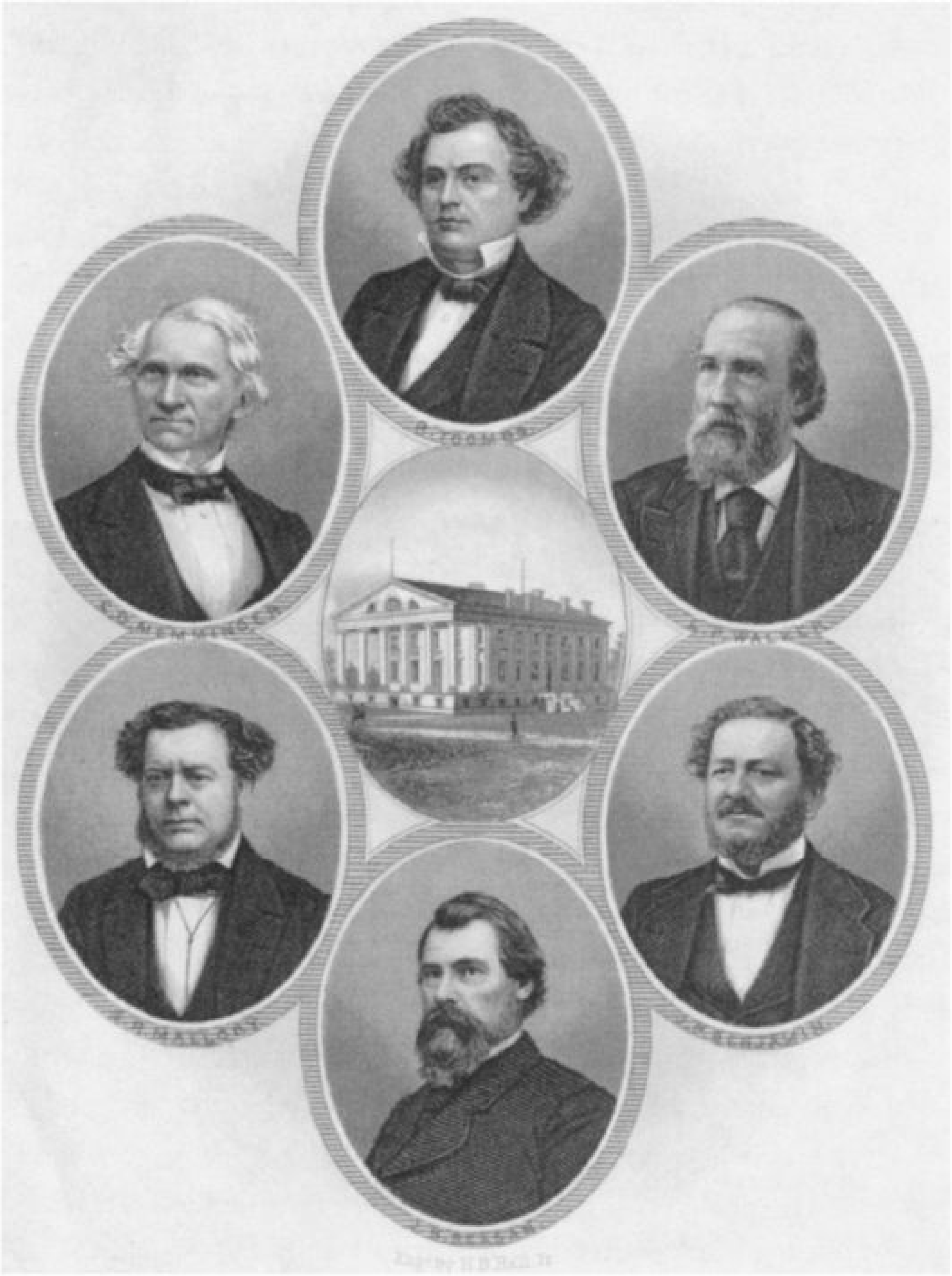
But, it can just as well be argued that Yulee’s investment in the railroad was a reason to *oppose* secession, which, in fact, his son suggests in his biography. Adler argues flatly that “economic factors [that is, the railroad] were primarily responsible” for Yulee’s change of heart. In any event, Yulee was and always had been in favor of the *right* of secession, and many Southerners saw the creation of a Southern confederacy as an opportunity to establish economic independence from the North, to create new wealth, and even to repudiate debts.[46]

* * *

The Lincoln-Douglas debates, the Dred Scott decision, and John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry polarized public sentiment on slavery and secession. Feelings reached a fever pitch by early 1860. Judah Benjamin disagreed with both Lincoln and Douglas: "I have no stomach for a fight in which I am to have the choice between the man who denies me all my rights, openly and fairly [Lincoln], and a man who admits my rights but intends to filch them [Douglas]." Unlike some other Southern politicians, he never underestimated Lincoln and in fact stated frankly that "it is impossible not to admire [his] perfect candor and frankness."[47]

Benjamin, though ultimately a secessionist, was not a leader in the movement.[48] Like many Southern politicians, Benjamin failed to grasp the popularity of secession. From August to November of 1860, Benjamin was involved in a trial in California. By October it was clear that Lincoln could be elected, but opinion in Louisiana was divided on secession. The emotion sweeping westward from South Carolina, however, was overwhelming. According to one historian, the Louisiana leadership, including Benjamin, now "thought it wise to fall in line and even when possible to lead the fast-growing parade … lest their office-holding futures and reputations as loyal Southerners be seriously impaired."[49]

On December 14, 1860, Benjamin signed the "Address of Certain Southern Members of Congress to Our Constituents" urging secession and on December 31 made his eloquent speech defending the right of secession. Louisiana seceded on January 26, 1861, and Benjamin bade farewell to the Senate on February 4. "We are told," he said, "that … the South is in rebellion without cause and that her citizens are traitors. Rebellion. The very word is a confession.… When, sir, did millions of people as a single man rise in organized, deliberate unimpassioned rebellion against justice, truth and honor?"[50] As if to illustrate what the future held, he wore a pistol.



The first Confederate cabinet. Clockwise from top center: Robert A. Toombs of Georgia, secretary of state; Leroy Pope Walker of Alabama, secretary of war; Judah P. Benjamin of Louisiana, then attorney general; John H. Reagan of Texas, postmaster general; Stephen R. Mallory of Florida, secretary of the Navy; and Christopher G. Memminger of South Carolina, secretary of the Treasury. Stephen Mallory of Florida was a close friend of Eugenia Phillips. Robert Toombs was a close friend of Raphael J. Moses of Columbus, Georgia. (Author's collection.)

On Washington's birthday, February 22, he gave the main address to 20,000 people in New Orleans, where he noted soberly that "our independence is not to be maintained without the shedding of our blood." This was the last public speech he would ever make in his adopted home. He made provisions for his sisters, who were living in his New Orleans residence, urging them to stay there if war came. He then left for Montgomery, Alabama, where the new Confederate Congress was in session. He never saw his sisters, his nephews and nieces, or the Crescent City again.[51]

On February 25, 1861, Judah P. Benjamin was confirmed as attorney general of the Confederate States of America. "A Hebrew of Hebrews, for the map of the Holy City was traced all over his small, refined face, the attorney-general was of the highest type of his race," Thomas Cooper DeLeon recalled in *Belles, Beaux, and Brains of the '60s*. "Small and rotund, he was yet of easy grace in manner, and his soft voice was not only pleasant of sound, but always carried something worth hearing. That he was a great and successful lawyer all knew, and that he was an omnivorous devourer of books and of wonderful assimilative capacity." His high profile as a former Southern senator and a Southern Jew sparked blatantly anti-Semitic criticism. Henry Wilson, senator from Massachusetts, exclaimed that Benjamin was part of a "foul and wicked plot to … overthrow the government of his adopted country which gives equality of rights even to that race that stoned prophets and crucified the Redeemer of the world."[52] Andrew Johnson referred to him as a "Jew—that miserable Benjamin!" and attacked Benjamin for belonging "to that tribe that parted the garments of our Savior and for his vesture cast lots" and as "a sneaking, Jewish, unconscionable traitor."[53] A Boston newspaper in a reference to Benjamin hissed: "We ask whether the Jews, having no country of their own, desire to put other nations in the same unhappy condition."[54] A Jew in the spotlight of national politics was rare in the nineteenth century, Benjamin Disraeli notwithstanding. William H. Russell, correspondent of the *London Times*, in his famous Civil War memoir, *My Diary North and South*, wrote of the new attorney general that he was a "short, stout man, with a full face, olive-colored, and most decidedly Jewish features, with the brightest large black eyes, one of which is somewhat diverse from the other, and a brisk, lively, agreeable manner, combined with much vivacity of speech and quickness of utterance." He also described Benjamin as "the most brilliant perhaps of the whole of the famous Southern orators," and the most "open, frank, and cordial" as well.[55]

Judah Benjamin was not a close personal friend of Jefferson Davis before the war. He was chosen for his new post because he was one of the South's leading constitutional and commercial lawyers, and Davis wanted each state to have a place in his cabinet. All of Benjamin's biographers agree that it was a waste of talent. Meade writes that Benjamin was unsuited for the position because "it was too unimportant a place for a man of his ability."[56] The Confederacy, after all, had no courts and when war came, there was little litigation. *Inter arma silent leges* (In time of war, the laws are silent).

His good humor and his grasp of the situation at hand commended him to the president, the members of the cabinet, and the leadership of the new nation. While the capital of the Confederacy was still temporarily in Montgomery, Benjamin was addressing the practical problems of the new nation. Leroy P. Walker, the first Confederate secretary of war, noted Benjamin's foresight in an anecdote: At the time, Mr. Walker said, he believed there would be no war. In fact, he had gone about the state promoting secession and promising to "wipe up with my pocket-handkerchief all the blood that would be shed." Walker recalled that when the Confederate cabinet met, there was only one man who grasped the real situation, and that was Benjamin. Benjamin proposed that the government purchase as much cotton as it could, at least 100,000 bales, and ship it to England. With the proceeds of a part of it he advised the purchase of arms and munitions. The rest of the cotton was to be held for credit. "'For,' said Benjamin, 'we are entering on a contest that must be long and costly.' All the rest of us fairly ridiculed the idea of a serious war," Walker concluded. "Well, you know what happened."[57]

While Benjamin's talents were wasted in the attorney general's office, his energetic and affable personality were well suited to Confederate Richmond. He became a popular member of Richmond society. Thomas Cooper DeLeon recalled that Benjamin was highly sought after at social occasions. He was that "polished and smooth brevet bachelor … with the plus sign. There was no circle, official or otherwise, that missed his soft, purring presence, or had not regretted so doing…. He moved into and through the most elegant or the simplest assemblage on natural rubber tires and well-oiled bearings, a smile of recognition for the mere acquaintance, a reminiscent word for the intimate, and a general diffusion of placid *bonhomie*."[58]

Jefferson Davis began to rely on his attorney general for advice and support. When Secretary Walker resigned, Davis asked Benjamin to serve as acting secretary of war. Davis, early in the war, perceived in Benjamin a capacity for hard work and personal loyalty that was lacking in other subordinates. Benjamin proved efficient as well as devoted to Davis personally. He served as acting secretary of war from September 17, 1861, to November 21, 1861, when he was confirmed as secretary of war by the Confederate Senate.[59]

His appointment was greeted with favor by the press and the public. The *Richmond Examiner* mentioned the new secretary as a possible candidate for vice president. Benjamin inherited severe problems. His predecessor resigned for many reasons, but the most obvious were a lack of supplies and transportation and of organizational ability. The plan to purchase arms, for example, had foundered. Unfortunately, the new secretary was not a military strategist, and this was not a propitious time to learn how to communicate with military men. Benjamin had written a note to General Beauregard in which he acknowledged that he was only a civilian "who knows nothing of war." One

Confederate soldier agreed: “Mr. Benjamin was a brilliant lawyer, but he knew as much about war as an Arab knows of the Sermon on the Mount.” In fact, Jefferson Davis acted as his own secretary of war. “In Judah Benjamin,” Evans concludes, Davis “developed the perfect alter-ego and technician.” To some degree, Benjamin was the lightning rod for Davis, but this was also true of other cabinet members.[60]

Benjamin brought to the War Department his well-known capacity for hard work and his organizational abilities. He made the department more efficient; he recognized the problems of inadequate railroads, communication, equipment, arms, ordnance, ammunition, and a lack of trained officers and troops, and he did his best to remedy them. He worked closely with Col. Josiah Gorgas, the chief of ordnance in the War Department, but he failed in his relationships with generals and eventually with the Congress. Early on he earned the enmity of Joseph E. Johnston and P. G. T. Beauregard, two of the Confederacy’s highest-ranking generals and foes of Jefferson Davis. He also quarreled with the heroic but dour Stonewall Jackson and lost the encounter when Jackson threatened to resign. Benjamin did, however, have a consistently pleasant relationship with Robert E. Lee.[61]

Benjamin was bombarded with requests for reinforcements of the defenses of Roanoke Island. The North Carolina coast guarded a water route from Norfolk, Virginia, and the railroad, an important link with Richmond, was nearby. The defense of Roanoke Island was in the hands of an aristocratic but not particularly competent Charlestonian, Maj. Gen. Benjamin Huger. On January 7, 1862, a former governor of Virginia, Brig. Gen. Henry A. Wise, was in charge of the island and reported to Huger. Wise wanted more men. Benjamin looked to General Huger, who demurred. Wise went out of the chain of command and spoke directly to the secretary of war, a gross violation of military law. Benjamin ordered Wise back to his post. When Roanoke Island fell to the Union army and navy in February 1862, 2,500 Confederates, including many prominent Richmonders, were taken prisoner. Governor Wise’s popular young son was killed, and the new secretary of war was held accountable for the debacle. There was bitter criticism of Benjamin, Huger, and President Davis as well. Benjamin had relied on Huger, a graduate of West Point, but his reliance was misplaced.[62]

The Roanoke Island defeat hurt Benjamin’s reputation in Richmond. Not only could it have been avoided, but the soldiers involved were Virginians from the capital city itself. There was constant criticism of the secretary, who, after all, was in charge of the war department. “Laws,” Benjamin remarked, “cannot suddenly convert farmers into gunsmiths.”[63] There was a clamor for Benjamin’s resignation when the news arrived that Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant captured Fort Henry and Fort Donelson in Tennessee, and Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston’s retreat from Nashville confirmed low opinions of his military judgment.

A no-confidence resolution was introduced in the Confederate Congress in March 1862, which unleashed a torrent of anti-Benjamin, anti-Semitic rhetoric. Congressman Henry S. Foote of Tennessee, a rabid anti-Semite and virulent opponent of Davis, referred to Benjamin as "Judas Iscariot Benjamin" and the "Jewish puppeteer" behind the "Davis tyranny." There was a congressional investigation, and the secretary of war told the committee repeatedly that he took personal responsibility for the defeat at Roanoke.[64]

Davis did not seek Benjamin's confirmation as secretary of war under the new, permanent constitution, but instead on March 17, 1862, appointed Benjamin secretary of state of the Confederate States of America, a promotion, as one contemporary observed, in "the very teeth of criticism." He had served six long months as secretary of war and was now among the highest-ranking officers of the Confederacy. John M. Daniel of the *Richmond Examiner* reacted to Benjamin's appointment as secretary of state by remarking that "the representation of the Synagogue is not diminished; it remains full."[65]

While Judah Benjamin labored in wartime Richmond, David Yulee protected his railroads in Florida. He held no political or military office during the war. Given Yulee's interest in politics, it is puzzling that he sought no appointed or elected position in the Confederate government. He was asked to run, and he would likely have been elected to the Confederate Senate. Perhaps his reasons were just what he said they were: He had tired of politics and wished only "to enjoy the relief of a home life" and tend to his business concerns. Unlike Judah Benjamin and many other politicians, Yulee had a happy marriage and did in fact wish to tend to his businesses. Service in Richmond, away from his family, had no allure for him, and he may have doubted the success of the South's war for independence. He had no military training and never served in the armed forces, although, according to his son, he paid the expenses of "a couple of companies of infantry" to protect his home county.[66]

His son, Wickliffe, saw a little fighting as a volunteer in a cavalry company but never joined the army. According to family tradition, Yulee's brother, Elias, became an officer in the Washington (Georgia) Rifles. Mrs. Yulee was an adamant Confederate. "I pity those who have no country to love or to fight for!" she wrote from her home in Florida. "It is this very country of yours and mine that induces me to write this letter…. Tax! tax! tax our people to half we have, if necessary, but let the world know we are paying! Ten victories will not give the Yankees such a blow as this fact… we are not discouraged. I have never felt a doubt of my country, but dark and painful trials are yet before us, perhaps!"[67] Yulee acted as a kind of unofficial ombudsman helping his former constituents with their problems, injecting his opinions about everything from military strategy to taxes, legislation, and the conduct of the war, and as an ambassador-at-large and roving counselor to the governor, to generals, and to the Confederate cabinet.[68]

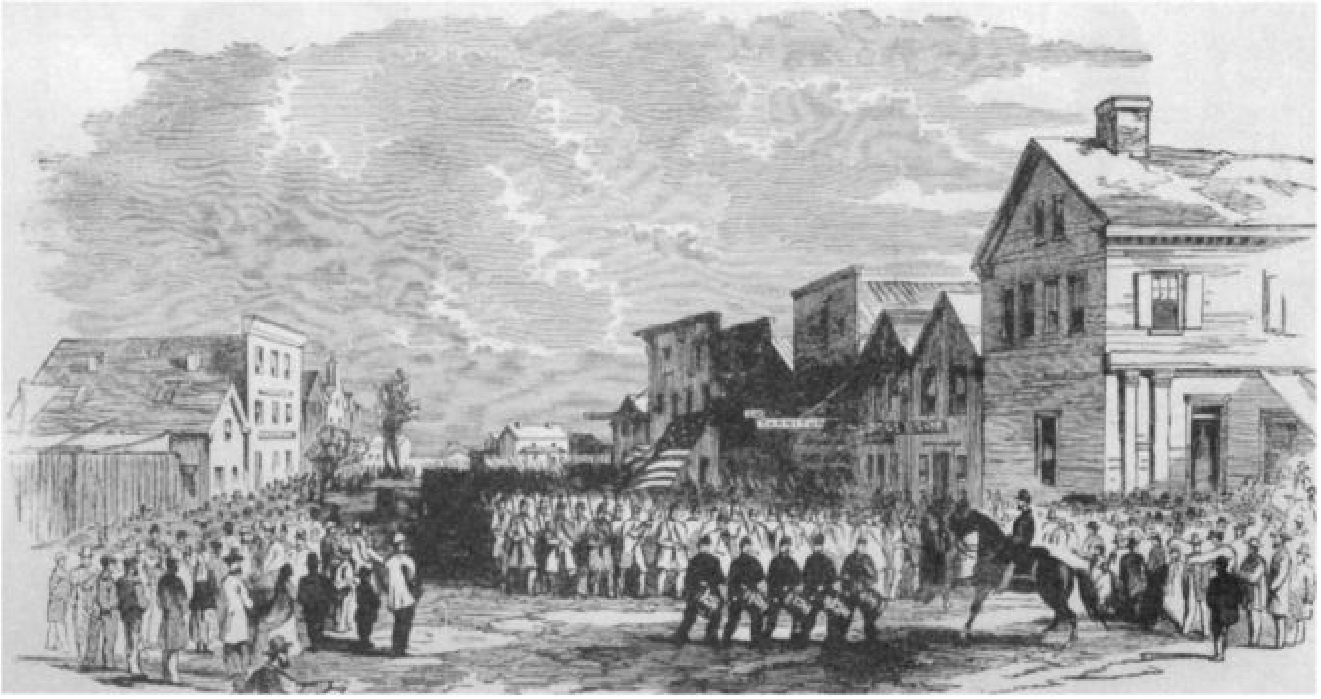
Yulee used the war to wrest control of the Florida Railroad Company from its northern stockholders. While the Florida line, like most Southern railroads, remained local in nature, Yulee envisioned a Florida line tied into a national network. He also realized early that, as the irascible war clerk John B. Jones phrased it, “The iron was wanted more than anything else but men.” Yulee’s involvement with the railroad constitutes his most significant activity during the war. The northern stockholders may have had control before secession, but they were now “enemy aliens,” and Yulee, the largest Southern stockholder, was able to take over the company.[69]

War is beyond the control of businessmen, and the Union invasion of coastal Florida severely limited the use of the railroad. Yulee asked Gen. Robert E. Lee, who in the early days of the war was given the lackluster assignment of defending Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina, for assistance in protecting the line. Lee took a steamer to Fernandina in November 1861 to meet with Yulee and informed him that Brig. Gen. James H. Trapier, whose appointment Yulee had helped engineer, was under orders to establish himself at Fernandina and protect the harbor. But Lee politely declined to devote his limited resources to protecting Yulee’s railroad. This did not deter Yulee, who continued to try and convince anyone who would listen that the defense of Fernandina and the railroad were “vital for the defense of the entire Gulf States region.” He personally arranged for General Trapier to purchase a steamer, which he thought would make “a capital gun boat” to protect Fernandina, and then wrote his old Senate colleague Stephen Mallory, now secretary of the Confederate navy, to pay for it. “We have no boat, in Florida upon which a gun can be carried,” he wrote Mallory, “Georgia & So Ca have monopolized them & this is the only boat available.” Men were sent to defend Fernandina and Amelia Island as a result of his efforts.[70]

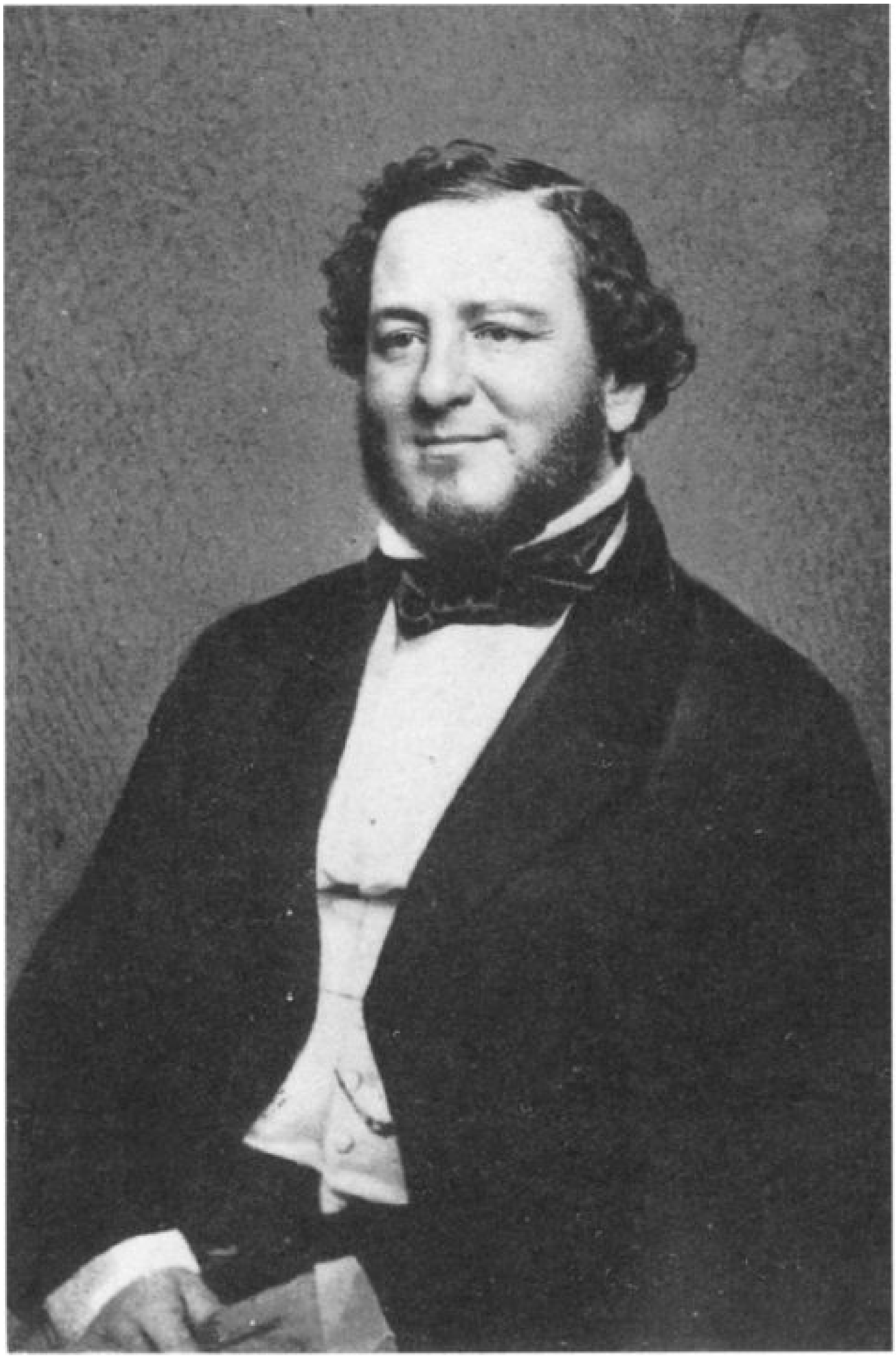
Yulee traveled to Richmond early in the war to take the measure of the Confederate government; influence the selection of military commanders in Florida; lobby for his railroad and for the defense of Fernandina; and to reinforce his contacts, particularly his relationship with his old friend Judah Benjamin, now acting secretary of war. He lobbied successfully for the appointment of General Trapier as commander of the Department of Eastern and Middle Florida. At times, it seemed to those in the state government that Yulee was running the Confederate military operation in Florida. He wrote Benjamin in October 1861 asking him to direct General Trapier to raise ten companies and bring “the post at Fernandina under better command.” Benjamin immediately complied. Lee continued to communicate directly with Yulee about the defense of the Florida coast sometimes to the exclusion of the Florida government. Lee tried to convince the state to protect itself and Yulee tried to convince Lee to send Confederate troops and a naval defense. Typical were Lee’s telegrams to Yulee of December 14 and 16, 1861: “I will reinforce all I can,” and “Call the Florida troops to Fernandina—they are not wanted [that is, not needed] elsewhere.”[71]

He tried his best to keep the railroad and port facilities in both Fernandina and Cedar Key operational, but the Union army and navy would not cooperate. Yulee continually implored the Confederate government to send men. In January 1862, he complained to Benjamin that Trapier's department was partly in Lee's command and partly in another's and that this was inefficient. He requested two more cannons and added a postscript: "General Lee is a capital commander." In January 1862, the Federal navy landed a small detachment at Cedar Key. They spiked cannons and burned eight ships, seven freight cars, the railroad depot, and a warehouse. Yulee sent a train to evacuate the women and children. In February 1862 he wrote Lee, "The line across the peninsula between Ferna[ndina] and C Key constitutes the necessary base of all military operations in Florida. I think the constant presence & vigilance of a competent head upon this line is indispensable." Lee replied that he had referred the matter to General Trapier, but that in his opinion the Yankees were unlikely to try to capture the entire railroad.[72]

By 1862 Yulee had moved his family from Fernandina to his Gulf Coast home, Margarita, on Tiger Tail Island at the mouth of the Homosassa River. There they remained safely for two years. Fernandina was captured in March of 1862, and Yulee was on the last train to escape. He was forced to remove his business operations to Gainesville, which remained his headquarters from 1862 to 1864. Yulee turned his attention to safeguarding the Cedar Key terminus and procuring a military presence. He could not visit his family very often on the Gulf Coast because the Union army and navy were looking for him and the area swarmed with Union gunboats. A letter from a captured Confederate soldier, who was an involuntary passenger on such a gunboat, confirmed that the Yankees wanted to arrest Yulee and that "when in possession of him, he would be hung as a traitor. They also said that they knew where his plantation was, & that they did not mean to let him make any more sugar for the rebels, as they styled us."[73]



Federal troops occupy Fernandina, Florida. (Author's collection.)

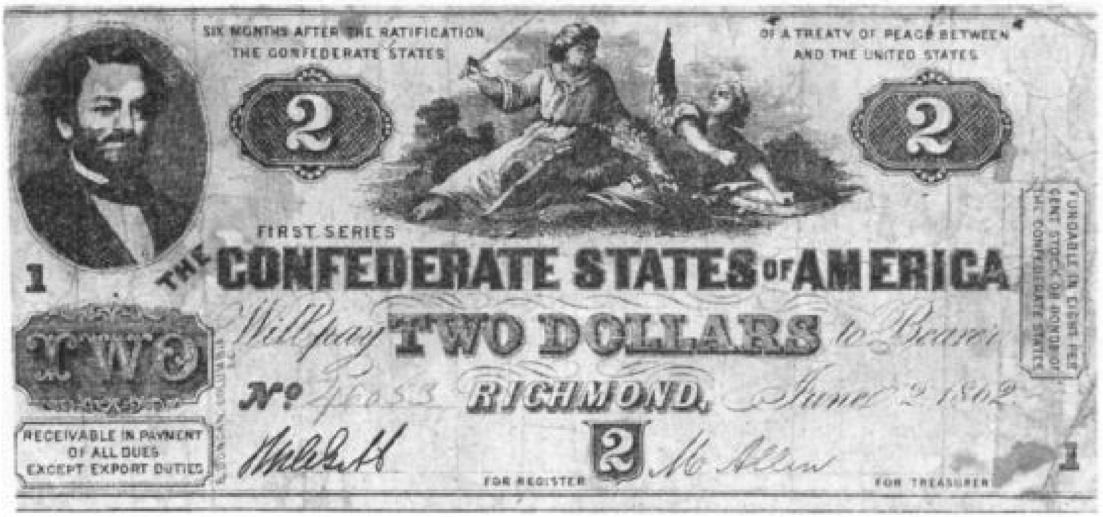


Judah Philip Benjamin was the first attorney general, the second secretary of war, and the third secretary of state of the Confederate States of America. He was a lawyer who turned down a nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court and a slave owner who proposed freeing slaves to fight for the Confederacy. This photograph was taken early in the war by Charles Anthony. (Courtesy of Bob Marcus, Springfield, Virginia.)

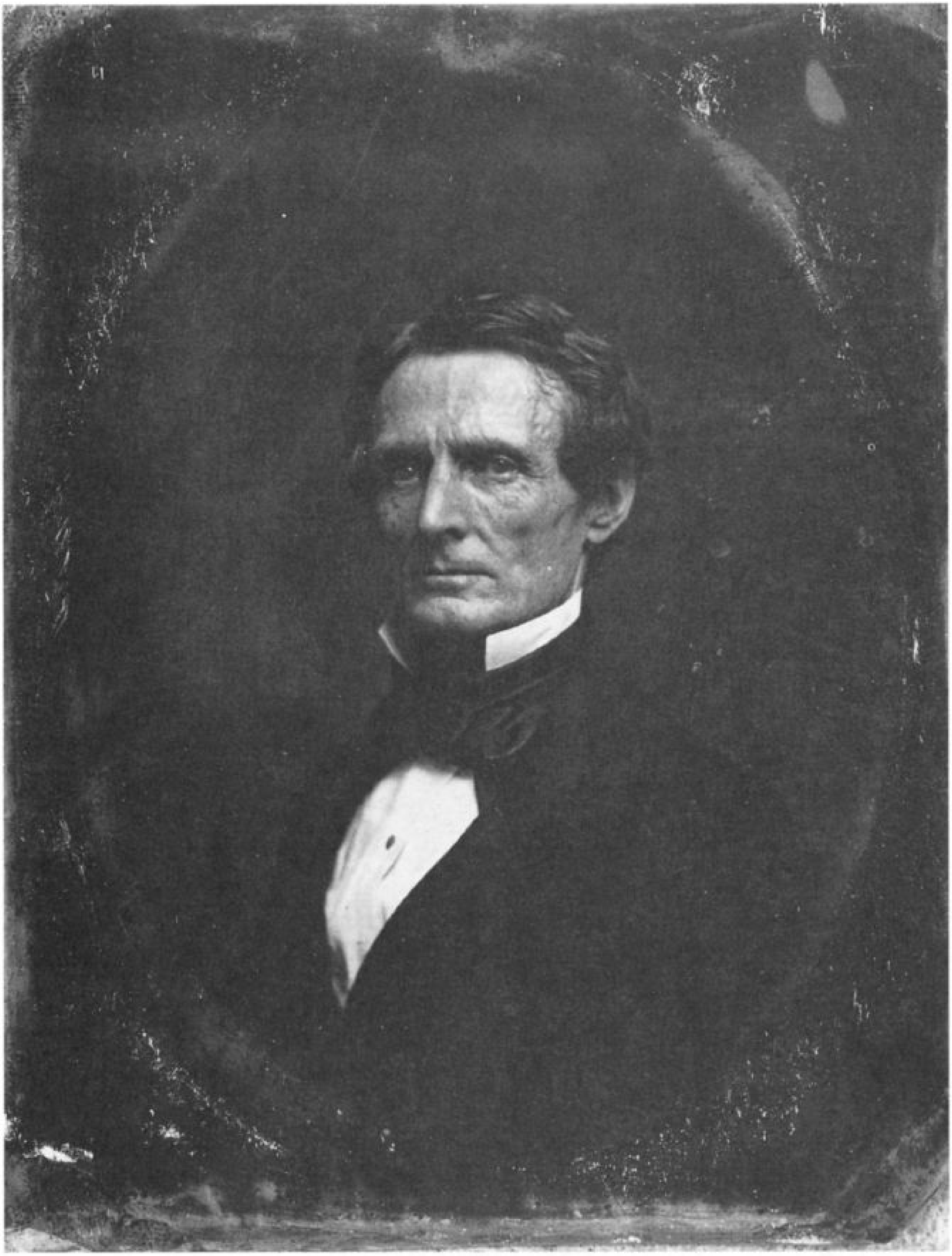
Back in Richmond, Benjamin served as secretary of state from March 1863 until the last days of the Confederacy in April 1865. He was to the civilian government what Lee was to the military: a loyal, stalwart, indefatigable, and uncomplaining patriot. He was the most well-known Confederate official next to the president and vice president and third in order of succession.[74] Historians early on referred to him as the "brains of the Confederacy," and Varina Howell Davis called him her husband's "right arm."[75] Charles P. Roland described Benjamin as "the President's most intimate friend and counselor."[76] His office was located near Davis's in an executive office building, formerly the Federal customs house, in downtown Richmond, and the two men worked "like galley-slaves, early and late," according to Mrs. Davis. "Mr. Davis came home … perfectly exhausted," she added, "but Mr. Benjamin was always fresh and buoyant."[77] While the War Department had thousands of employees, the State Department had six clerks. His chief assistant was Lucius Quinton Washington, a distant relative of the first president.

Like his predecessors, the new secretary's main goals when he took office were to achieve foreign recognition of the Confederacy and to lift the Union blockade. Failing that, he hoped to preserve European neutrality, secure shipments of material, and borrow money from European bankers. He failed to obtain recognition but succeeded in borrowing money. The European powers were wary of recognizing a country that could not achieve military victory. The British and French governments, as opposed to the British and French people, hoped for the success of the Confederacy, and early in the war there may have been some chance of recognition. From the diplomatic point of view, the South's most optimistic moment probably came in the fall of 1862. In October, William Gladstone, then chancellor of the exchequer, said, "Jefferson Davis and other leaders of the South have made an army; they are making, it appears, a navy; and they have made what is more than either—they have made a nation." But Gladstone's oratorical flourish proved to be a political mirage.[78]

The opportunity quickly faded. After Gettysburg and Vicksburg in the summer of 1863, recognition was not a real option. From March 1862 until that fateful July 1863, however, Benjamin used all of his considerable energy in trying to convince, cajole, and even bribe the British and French governments.


SIX MONTHS AFTER THE RATIFICATION
THE CONFEDERATE STATES
OF A TREATY OF PEACE BETWEEN
AND THE UNITED STATES
2
2
FIRST SERIES
1
THE CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA
Will pay TWO DOLLARS to Bearer
TWO
No
RICHMOND, June 2 1862
RECEIVABLE IN PAYMENT OF ALL DUES EXCEPT EXPORT DUTIES
2
FOR REGISTER
FOR TREASURER
1
FUNDABLE IN EIGHT PER CENT STOCK OR BONDS OF THE CONFEDERATE STATES

Confederate two-dollar bill. Benjamin's portrait is at left. He may be the only Jewish American whose likeness has appeared on currency. (Author's collection.)



Jefferson F. Davis, president of the Confederate States of America. Davis had longstanding relationships with many Jewish Southerners both before

and during the war. He was a close friend of the Phillips family in the 1850s. Judah P. Benjamin was his closest advisor, and according to Eli Evans, the beleaguered president's alter ego. This daguerreotype was taken prior to 1860. (Courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.)

Benjamin's real value as secretary of state was a personal acquaintance with European political figures, lawyers, bankers, and businessmen. His wife and daughter lived in Paris, and John Slidell, his political mentor and former Senate colleague, was the Confederacy's emissary to France. Louisiana had considerable economic and social connections with France, and Benjamin was an experienced international lawyer. He was familiar with the court of Emperor Napoleon III and knew it to be corrupt. His strategy for obtaining French recognition was simple. Shortly after his appointment, he instructed Slidell to offer the emperor commercial concessions such as the duty-free importation of French products and 100,000 bales of cotton valued at $4.5 million or more if necessary. He would also support the emperor's military and political adventures in Mexico. Napoleon Ill's position was too insecure to allow him to take the offer. Indeed, the emperor tried in vain to convince the British and the Russians to propose an armistice and an end to the Union blockade. But the British could not be moved, and Napoleon felt that the risk of supporting the South—even for a $5 million bribe—was too great.[79]

Benjamin, however, continued to press the French connection because it appeared to have a greater potential for success than the British. The famous Erlanger loan, in which the Confederacy received $2.5 million in badly needed cash, was an outgrowth of foreign policy initiatives and previous efforts by the Confederacy to borrow money against Southern cotton crops. Benjamin personally negotiated the loan with Baron Emile Erlanger in Richmond. He hoped the involvement of the banking house of Erlanger & Cie and the Erlanger family, close friends and advisors of the emperor of France, would somehow bring the French government closer to the Southern cause.[80]

John Slidell's daughter was engaged to marry Baron Erlanger. The connection was obvious. (The Slidells were further connected to the Jewish community through the marriage of Slidell's niece to August Belmont, the well-known New York lawyer who represented the Rothschild family.) The Erlangers hoped to reap a substantial profit from the transaction, and the original plan called for a loan of $25 million to be repaid with bonds and the sale of cotton. The Erlangers wanted a 23 percent commission and various concessions for handling the bonds at 8 percent. Benjamin thought the terms usurious; but, because the Confederacy was so desperate for money, the government had agreed in principle to the terms requested by the Erlangers. After extensive face-to-face negotiations in Benjamin's office between the South's leading diplomat and France's leading banker, Benjamin was able to modify the arrangement in the Confederacy's favor. "The conflict of these two Jewish brains—Benjamin and Erlanger—caused modification very beneficial to the Confederate Government," Burton J. Hendrick concluded. The interest rate declined to 7 percent, and the Erlanger profits were reduced.[81]

Speculators and investors in Europe snapped up the bonds, and the Erlangers made a handsome profit. The Confederacy received a timely infusion of much-needed cash. The pro-Davis faction thought Benjamin brilliant. "Everything Mr. Benjamin said, we listened to," Mary Chesnut wrote, "bore it in mind, gave heed to it diligently." The anti-Davis faction thought Benjamin an enemy of the people: "On the occasion of the recent visit of Mr. Erlanger," Congressman Foote huffed and puffed, "Minister Plenipotentiary, Envoy Extraordinaire from his Highness, the Emperor of France, to his Highness the would-be Emperor of the Confederate States, Judas Iscariot Benjamin had spoke for two hours in French." In the end, European speculators lost a great deal of money on the transaction.[82]

None of it mattered. Napoleon III refused to risk recognition of the Confederacy without Great Britain, and Great Britain, under the cautious leadership of Lord John Russell, the foreign secretary, and Lord Palmerston, the prime minister, would not budge. Benjamin focused his diplomacy on Great Britain. In April of 1862, he drafted instructions to the Confederacy's ambassador arguing against the legality of the Union blockade and its ineffectiveness. Under international law, an ineffective blockade was not legally binding on neutral nations. He pointed out how Lord Russell had misunderstood, or deliberately misconstrued, applicable treaties which demonstrated his point—but to no avail. Cotton was not king after all. To Russell, the risk of war with the United States and the risk of alienating the great majority of the British public were too great. Judah Benjamin had to bow to these basic facts. By August 1863 Benjamin was thoroughly disenchanted with the British treatment of the Confederacy and its minister, James Murray Mason. He recalled Mason and asked for the recall of all British consuls in the Confederacy. Benjamin had exhausted his diplomatic arsenal.[83]

As the war dragged on, the Confederacy's options dwindled. On February 12, 1864, the Confederate Congress voted in secret session to create "bodies for the capture and destruction of the enemies' property." The Bureau of Special and Secret Service came into existence, and funding for these operations went to the State Department. Benjamin, as secretary of state, was the likely head of the bureau and chief of Confederate covert activities. Shortly thereafter, important agents of the Confederacy arrived in Montreal. "A few months later," Roy Z. Chamlee Jr. writes in *Lincoln's Assassins*, "John Wilkes Booth opened a bank account in the same Montreal bank used by the Rebels."[84]

Benjamin had now taken on the most dangerous assignment Davis had given him—and his last assignment for the Confederacy—that of spymaster. He established spy rings and sent political propagandists to the North and to Canada. He enlisted the seductive Belle Boyd, the “Cleopatra of Secession,” to travel abroad, rallying public opinion for the southern states. He sent emissaries and agents to Ireland to stem the tide of Irish volunteers entering the Union army. He planned the burning of Federal medical stores in Louisville and the burning of bridges and boats in strategic locations across the occupied South. He also oversaw the suppression of treason against the Confederacy. Special commissioners who investigated and arrested those disloyal to the government reported to Benjamin. For example, Col. Henry J. Leovy, a close friend of Benjamin from New Orleans, served as a military commissioner in southwest Virginia. His job was ferreting out traitors.[85]

Benjamin, like many other Confederate leaders, believed the Northern public would not support Lincoln indefinitely. Serious efforts were made to exploit the difference between the eastern and western states, to increase public disaffection in the North for the war, and to raid prisoner of war camps. Provocateurs attempted to capture Federal property in the far north. Confederate agents tried to disrupt the monetary system by urging people to convert paper money to gold. There was even an attempt—probably unknown to Benjamin but involving his agents—to set New York City on fire. Benjamin oversaw the most ambitious mission, a $1 million Canadian covert operation headed by Jacob Thompson. Canada was a potential Confederate ally. Its governor was friendly, and it provided a base for blockade-running, spy operations, and offensive military operations. In April 1864, the State Department requested $1 million from the Confederate treasury, an astronomical sum by the standards of the time. The warrant for the funds was issued pursuant to the Secret Service Act and signed by Davis “in favor of Hon. J. P. Benjamin, Secretary of State.”[86] Thompson reported to Benjamin.

Meanwhile, in Florida David Yulee continued to grow sugar, which was desperately needed by the Confederacy. In early July 1863, the Confederate army tried to purchase sixty-four hogsheads of Yulee’s sugar weighing 49,898 pounds, but would not pay the market price. The Confederate commissary officer, using a fixed schedule to pay for goods which fluctuated dramatically in price, then impressed—that is, took—the sugar, and years of litigation followed until Yulee recovered his right to fair compensation. The case was decided in the Florida Supreme Court.[87] In partnership with other investors, Yulee also engaged in blockade-running, exporting cotton and tobacco to Cuba, and bringing in rum, paper, quinine, and clothing.[88]

A year earlier, in March 1862, the Confederate army had become a bigger threat to the Florida Railroad Company than the Federals had been. Yulee’s friend Trapier agreed with the Confederate command that the rails were needed. “Railroads are,” he had said in December of 1861, “at one and the same time the *legs* and the *stomach* of an army.” The Confederacy, however, did not have the capacity to manufacture rails. According to Robert C. Black, not a single new rail was manufactured in the Confederacy after 1861, and the Confederate government proved incapable of coordinating the use of the Southern railroads. Existing lines became valuable as “iron mines,” as the Confederate government realized that its railroads could only be maintained by cannibalizing existing rails. After Fernandina fell, General Trapier ordered the taking up of the rails to a defensible point inland so that another line, the Lawton-Live Oak route, could be built further west.[89]

Yulee’s rail line ran east-west, but the Confederate government needed to ship Florida’s foodstuffs, particularly beef, north. Yulee had the rails. The Confederacy wanted them. Florida Gov. John Milton, who, unlike other Southern governors, prided himself on his cooperation with the Richmond government, ordered the arrest of anyone who interfered. He urged Yulee to support the cause of Southern independence “rather than engage in a neighborhood fight for a little railroad iron.” Yulee, however, not only refused to cooperate, he went into state court and obtained an injunction restraining the Confederate army from removing the rails. “I humbly trust,” he had previously informed Gov. John Milton, “I may not be wanting at any time in necessary & dutiful sacrifices & contribution to the great cause in which all citizens are engaged, and will gladly unite with yourself & other Trustees [of the Internal Improvement Fund] in liberal & patriotic devotion of our own means. But, I have not the right to make myself free with the property of others, nor to seek merit for a generous patriotism at another’s cost.” This angered the Confederate military, the governor, and Jefferson Davis.[90]

Yulee delayed the Confederate army for two years while Northern stockholders prodded the Union army to take every step possible to regain control of the line. The Battle of Olustee in February 1864 was the final straw for the Confederate government. “Had the gap between Lawton and Live Oak been filled by a line of railroad,” Gen. P. G. T. Beauregard complained, “the enemy would at once have been driven out of Florida.” In May 1864 a young Confederate lieutenant, J. M. Fairbanks, decided to ignore the state court injunction and take up Yulee’s rails. When he informed Yulee of his intention to do so, and also informed him that it was Confederate government policy to buy or replace the rails within six months after the end of the war, Yulee went back to court. Judge James B. Dawkins, incensed that the army did not obey his order, ordered Fairbanks to appear before him on contempt charges. Fairbanks escaped arrest only because his soldiers kept the local sheriff from carrying out Judge Dawkins’s order. Although he disagreed with the order, Governor Milton was angry that the army would not obey an order of a Florida court. The Confederate government then filed suit on behalf of the Sequestration Fund, claiming the assets of the company because it was owned by alien Northerners.[91]

Yulee was protecting his investment. In this, he was not alone. Black observes in *The Railroads of the Confederacy*, “The owners of companies designated as iron mines were normal men.” When war came, they committed their resources to the Confederate cause, but when asked to give up their rails, they offered pretexts, they got angry, and rallied to the banner of states’ rights. They soon resorted to litigation, going into state courts and obtaining injunctions against the Confederate government. Yulee fought off the Confederate lawyers just as he fought off the armies of both sides. He delayed the sequestration proceedings by various strategies, including muddying the facts about his own personal financial relationship with the company. The war ended before any of these issues were resolved, although some of the rails were taken up by the Confederate army.[92]

Wickliffe Yulee’s explanation for his father’s seemingly unpatriotic behavior was that he was protecting the assets of the railroad in his fiduciary capacity as president of the company and that he was protecting the interests of his Northern partners. His partners, however, did not see it that way. Neither did the Confederate government. Although it was untrue, Yulee believed that a warrant had been issued by the Confederacy for his arrest. The arrest incident led to a lifelong estrangement between Davis and Yulee. The Northern press seized on this incident in the spring of 1864 and reported that Yulee was in favor of abandoning the war and for reconstruction of the Union. Yulee vehemently denied these allegations and further denied that he had declined the office of Confederate senator because of a lack of commitment to the Southern cause. He said he wholeheartedly supported the Confederacy and the prosecution of the war “until the Sovereignty of the Confederate States is allowed.” But the combination of Yulee’s fight against the Confederacy for his railroad line, his failure to seek office, and the Fernandina area’s general desire for peace led many to believe he was a Union sympathizer.[93]

Preservation of the Florida Railroad Company and its rails was not just a matter of money to Yulee. He had dedicated his adult life to bringing Florida into the modern world, first by bringing it into the Union, and then by joining Florida to the Union by rail. Indeed, one historian concludes that “the completion of the Florida Railroad must rank as one of his most notable achievements,” and it became “his main ambition in life.”[94]

By 1864 Judah Benjamin was convinced that unless slaves could be drafted or persuaded to fight for the Confederacy, the South would soon exhaust its manpower. He privately argued for the use of black troops and granting freedom to slaves who would fight for the Confederacy. It was clear to Benjamin that slavery was at an end. That fact was less clear to most Confederate leaders and the great majority of white Southerners. Cooperating with Varina Davis and Robert E. Lee, both of whom agreed with his assessment, Benjamin finally convinced Jefferson Davis to act. The president authorized his secretary of state to send an emissary to the British government to offer gradual emancipation in exchange for recognition. Benjamin then began to work in earnest behind the scenes to convince the Confederate Congress and the public of the need to use black troops. It was an exhausting ordeal. Benjamin offered to give a public speech "to feel the pulse of the people," Mrs. Davis recalled.

On February 9, 1865, Jefferson Davis's lawyer argued his last public case for the Confederacy to more than ten thousand people assembled in and around the African Church near Capitol Square.[95] After the invocation, Jefferson Davis made an impassioned speech against Lincoln, Yankee rule, Grant, and Sherman, and pledged that the South would never return to the Union as "a conquered people." Sen. Robert M. T. Hunter of Virginia spoke vigorously in the same vein.[96] When it was Benjamin's turn, he appealed to the patriotism of the assembled crowd. He argued that Southerners should reject Lincoln's demands "that you should bend the knee, bow the neck, and meekly submit to the conqueror's yoke." The "fire of freedom burns unquenchably in your souls." But more was needed, he said. Cotton and tobacco must be sacrificed for the Confederacy. The crowd applauded. Cheers interrupted him. Men were needed, both black and white, he said. "I am going to open my whole heart to you," Benjamin confided to his audience. "Look to the trenches below Richmond. Is it not a shame that men who have sacrificed all in our defense should not be reinforced by all the means in our power?" He then spoke in exaggerated figures of the difference in manpower: 3,000,000 men fighting for the North; 1,644,000 for the South. More were needed. "Our resources of white population have greatly diminished," he thundered, but the South still had 680,000 black men of fighting age. Could "Divine prophecy have told us of the fierceness of the enemy's death grapple at our throats—could we have known what we now know, that Lincoln has confessed, that without 200,000 negroes which he stole from us, he would be compelled to give up the contest, should we have entertained any doubts upon the subject?" Benjamin then publicly advanced the proposition that slaves who fought for the Confederacy be freed: "Let us say to every Negro who wishes to go into the ranks on condition of being made free—'Go and fight; you are free.' If we impress [draft] them, they will go against us."[97]

Reactions varied to this radical proposal. Varina Davis believed that Benjamin had never been more eloquent. But a resolution in the Confederate Congress which stated that Benjamin was "not a wise and prudent Secretary of State" failed on a tie vote. Benjamin offered to resign, but Davis would not consider it. In early March, a month before Appomattox, the Confederate Congress passed a watered-down act allowing slaves to fight for the Confederacy if their masters "volunteered" them. Emancipation was not included. Benjamin had lost his last case for the Confederate States of America.

The Southern nation began to dissolve. Casualties were high in Lee’s army. Survivors deserted. Desperate, Davis and Benjamin considered their options. Surrender was not one of them. A plot to kidnap Lincoln and blow up the White House was. (For more on this episode, see chapter 8, pp. 314–15.)[98]

As the war came to an end in 1865, Judah Benjamin prepared to escape from Richmond with Jefferson Davis and the Confederate cabinet. David Yulee, his plantation, business, and railroads in shambles, prepared to face an uncertain future. These two former powerful Southern senators, these two Sephardic senators, had made their respective choices. Each now had to face the disastrous consequences and whatever fate had in store.

PART 2

Be Strong and of a Good Courage

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE SOLDIERS

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God *is* with thee whithersoever thou goest.

—Joshua 1:9

Capt. Ezekiel J. Levy of the Richmond Blues. (Author's collection.)

CHAPTER 3

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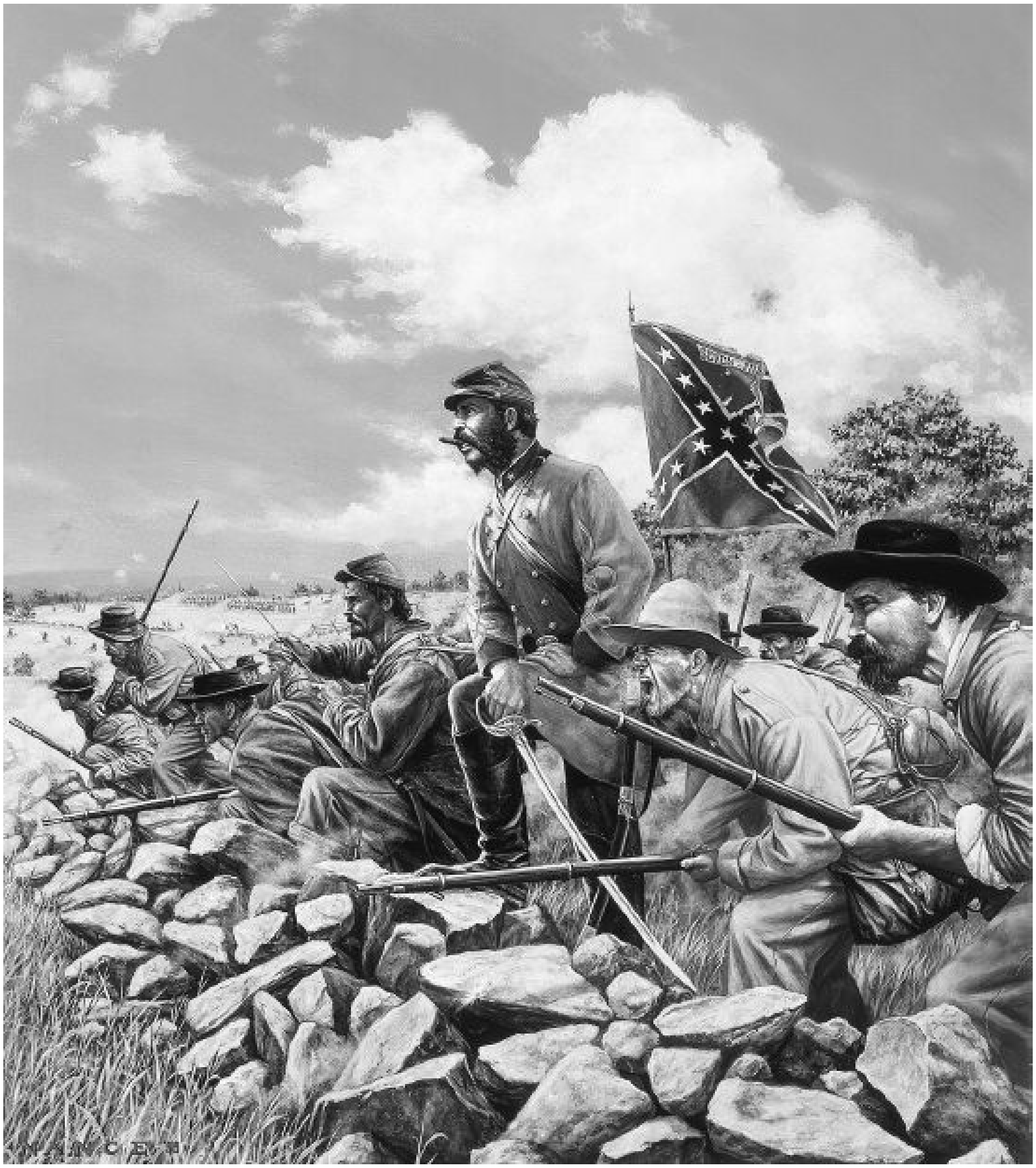
Hebrew Officers and Israelite Gentlemen

Like Judah P. Benjamin and David Yulee, the Jewish officers of the Confederate armed forces and officials of the government were part and parcel of Southern society. They accepted their responsibility to defend their homeland. Lt. Simon Mayer, an officer in the Mississippi brigade, implored his brother Henry to join the army, telling him he could "no longer… remain passive to the scenes that are daily enacted in the grand drama." He urged his brother to join "with light heart & strong arms, backed by a determination to do or die … to come out & meet his would be masters, and subjugators."[1] Some, like Maj. Raphael J. Moses of Columbus, Capt. Edwin Warren Moise of Charleston, Lt. James Madison Seixas of New Orleans, the DeLeons of Columbia, and Col. Samuel M. Hyams of Natchitoches Parish, were descended from old Sephardic families. Others, like Col. Leon Dawson Marks of Shreveport, Samuel Yates Levy of Savannah, and Abraham Charles Myers of Georgetown, South Carolina, were from old Southern families whose ancestors, both Ashkenazic and Sephardic, had settled in the South generations before Fort Sumter. Most had grown to manhood in the South even if their parents were the first of their family to become Southerners. Capt. Ezekiel J. Levy's father, Jacob A. Levy, had moved to Richmond from Holland as a young man, but "Zeke" was raised as a Richmonder.[2] Simon Mayer's father had settled in Natchez. These young Confederate officers, men in their twenties and early thirties, had grown up in the fiercely partisan decades preceding the war. Unlike their parents, the younger generation spent their formative years in a South defensive about slavery and hostile to what their generation perceived as Northern aggression and condescension toward the South.[3]

Some Jewish officers were first generation immigrants. Maj. Adolph Proskauer of Mobile came to America when his father Julius left Prussia after the failed 1848 Revolution. The name Proskauer was, in typical German Jewish fashion, taken from the small town of Proskau near Breslau. Young Proskauer had lived in Philadelphia and Richmond before settling in Mobile and becoming a merchant. By 1861 he was a

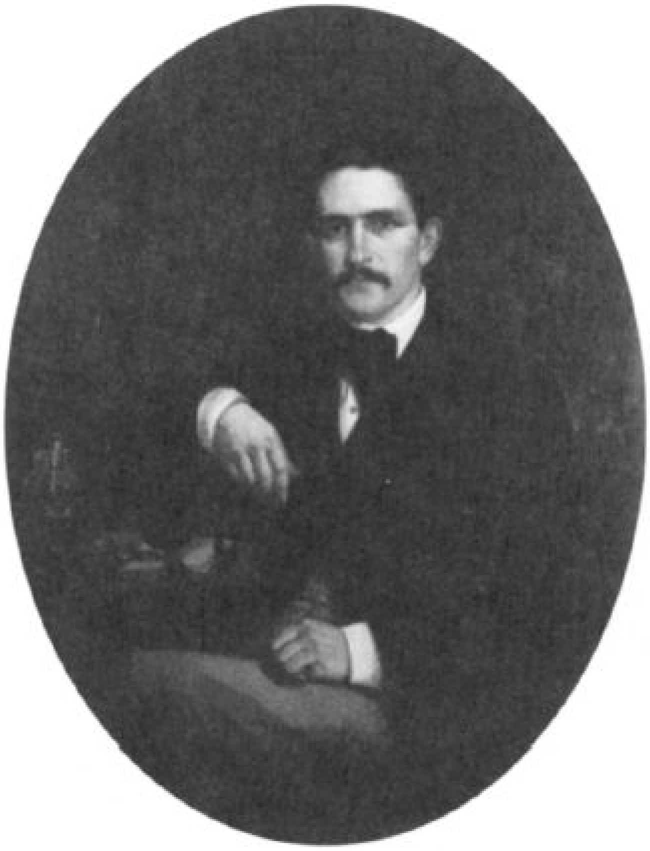
Southern partisan.[4] Maier Triest of Charleston was born in Bavaria, served as a militia captain in Charleston before and for the first year of the war, and enlisted in the South Carolina 24th as sergeant major. Simon Baruch from Posen in Prussia became a surgeon in the 3d South Carolina Battalion. Edwin Kursheedt, an immigrant from Jamaica, came to New Orleans in 1838 and rose to the rank of adjutant in the famed Washington Artillery. An Alsatian immigrant, Leon Fischel of Vicksburg enlisted in the cavalry even before the bombardment of Fort Sumter.[5]



Maj. Adolph Proskauer at Gettysburg. Major Proskauer, an immigrant from Prussia to Mobile, led the 12th Alabama Infantry at Culp's Hill during the Battle of Gettysburg. This 1999 painting re-creates the moment described in the history of the regiment by Capt. Robert Emory

Park, “Our gallant Jew Major smoked his cigars calmly and cooly in the thickest of the fight.” (Painting by Dan Nance of Charlotte, North Carolina. Author’s collection.)

Jewish officers were accepted into the Confederate ranks and were well respected by both their superior officers and their subordinates. Lt. Col. Samuel M. Hyams Sr. was beloved by his men. Proskauer successfully led his regiment at the Battle of Gettysburg. Ezekiel Levy became captain of the elite Richmond Blues, whose first wartime captain was the son of former Gov. Henry A. Wise. Jacob S. Valentine of Charleston was the commandant of Fort Moultrie. And there were dozens of young Jewish lieutenants like Octavus Cohen of Savannah, who fought at Secessionville; Ezekiel Levy, at the Battle of the Crater; and Joshua Lazarus Moses, at Fort Blakely near Mobile. When Lt. Albert Luria was killed at Seven Pines, the men of his company inscribed the bombshell he had thrown out of their earthworks at Sewell’s Point with the words, “The pride of all his comrades, the bravest of the brave.”[6] There are few cases of anti-Semitism directed at Jewish officers.[7]

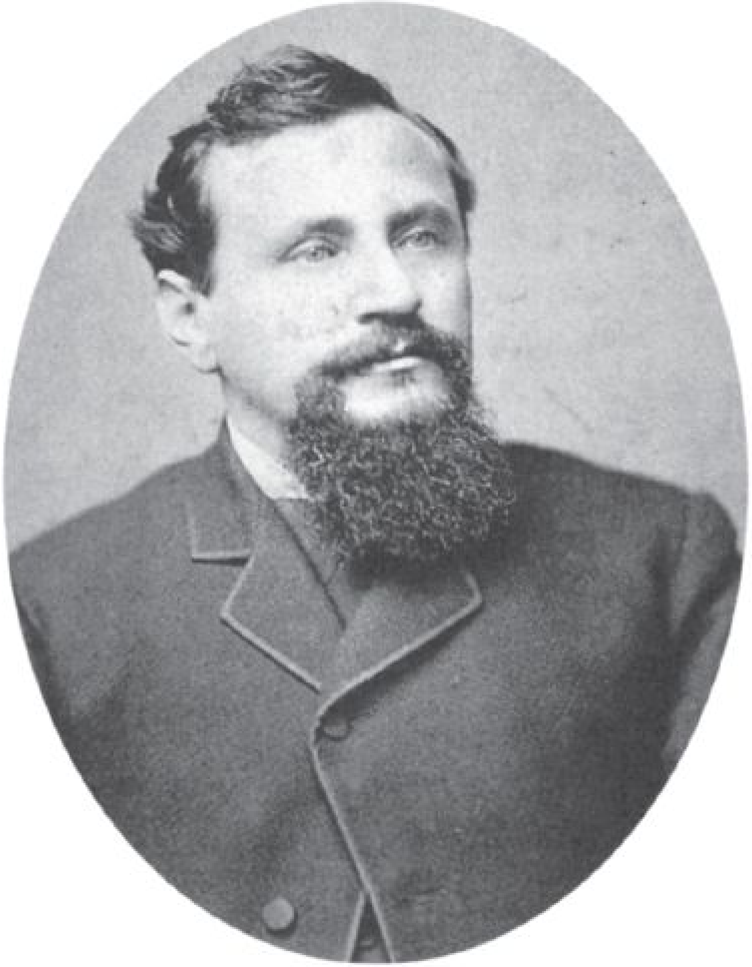


Lt. James Madison Seixas, 5th Company, Washington Artillery. Born in Charleston in 1829, Seixas (pronounced “Sayshus”) moved to New Orleans in 1853. He was a cotton broker and law partner of Brig. Gen. Adley Hogan Gladden, also a native of South Carolina. Their firm was

Gladden and Seixas at 55 Charles Street. Seixas enlisted as a private in the 5th Company (which served in the western theater), was promoted to lieutenant for gallantry on the field, later served as an agent for the War Department in Wilmington, and was promoted to captain. He married Julia Deslonde, sister of Mrs. John Slidell and Mrs. P. G. T. Beauregard. ("Information" sheet by a Gladden descendent, courtesy of Bruce S. Allardice, in the possession of the author. Courtesy of the Louisiana State Museum.)

There were no Jewish Confederate generals and few colonels. This is not surprising given the small number of Jews in the "old army"; the lack of a military tradition among most nineteenth-century Jews; the paucity of Jewish West Point, Virginia Military Institute, and South Carolina Military Academy (Citadel) graduates; and the intensely political nature of the appointment of general officers. Confederate officers were successful, educated, and affluent. Many had important family connections. In the Army of Northern Virginia, for example, the majority of majors, lieutenant colonels, and colonels were lawyers, judges, planters, politicians, doctors, or teachers. One-half of the officers in the Army of Northern Virginia graduated from colleges and universities, 44 percent from Virginia institutions. Many Confederate officers were, like Robert E. Lee and Joseph E. Johnston, veterans of the Mexican War.[8]

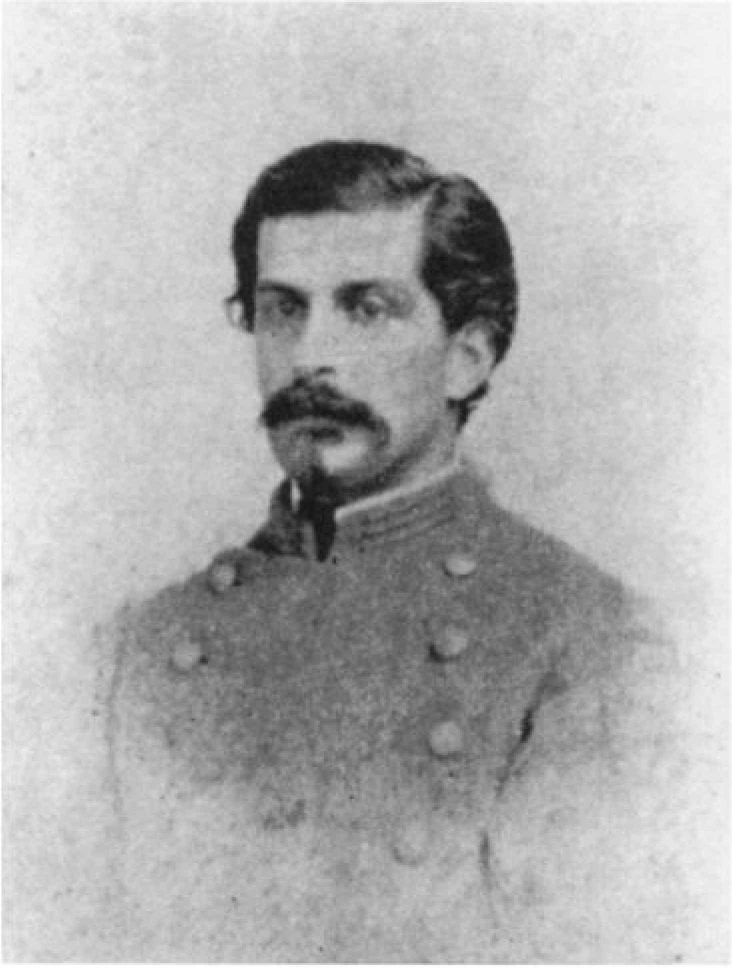
Jewish officers fit this profile. Abraham Charles Myers served as quartermaster general of the Confederacy and was a career soldier. Myers graduated from West Point in 1833 and served in the Seminole Wars in Florida. In the Mexican War, he served under both Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott and was breveted for meritorious conduct at the Battle of Palo Alto and at Resaca de la Palma in May 1846.[9] After the Mexican War, Myers served as a quartermaster at a number of Southern posts. He was chief quartermaster of the Department of Florida, where he married the daughter of Maj. Gen. David Emanuel Twiggs. In the late 1840s, Twiggs was in charge of the defense of Florida, which was plagued by Indian attacks. In 1850, in response to one such attack, he ordered the rebuilding of a fort on the Caloosahatchee River and named it Fort Myers in honor of his prospective son-in-law. The post to be called "Fort Myers, by order of Major General Twiggs," came into existence in February 1850. Thus, the city of Fort Myers, Florida, is named for Abraham Myers.[10]



Simon Levy Jr. of Shreveport. This photograph was taken in 1869. Local tradition holds that Levy served as a captain. (Courtesy of Eric Brock, Shreveport, Louisiana.)

William B. Myers. Gustavus Myers's son, Will Myers, served as a lieutenant, as an engineer officer, and as an adjutant for Major Generals Samuel Jones and William W. Loring. DeLeon described him as "witty and full of quaint satire … a good and reliable soldier" (Crute, *Confederate Staff Officers*). DeLeon has him as an adjutant to General John C. Breckinridge (*Belles, Beaux, and Brains of the '60s*).

Jacob Valentine was also a veteran of the Mexican War, having fought at Churubusco.[11] William Mallory Levy, originally from Isle of Wight County, Virginia, graduated from William and Mary and was a lieutenant with the Virginia Volunteers in the Mexican War.[12] David Camden DeLeon of South Carolina graduated from South Carolina College in 1833 and obtained a medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1836. He, too, fought the Seminole Indians in Florida and served with Gen. Zachary Taylor's army from Matamoros to Vera Cruz.[13]

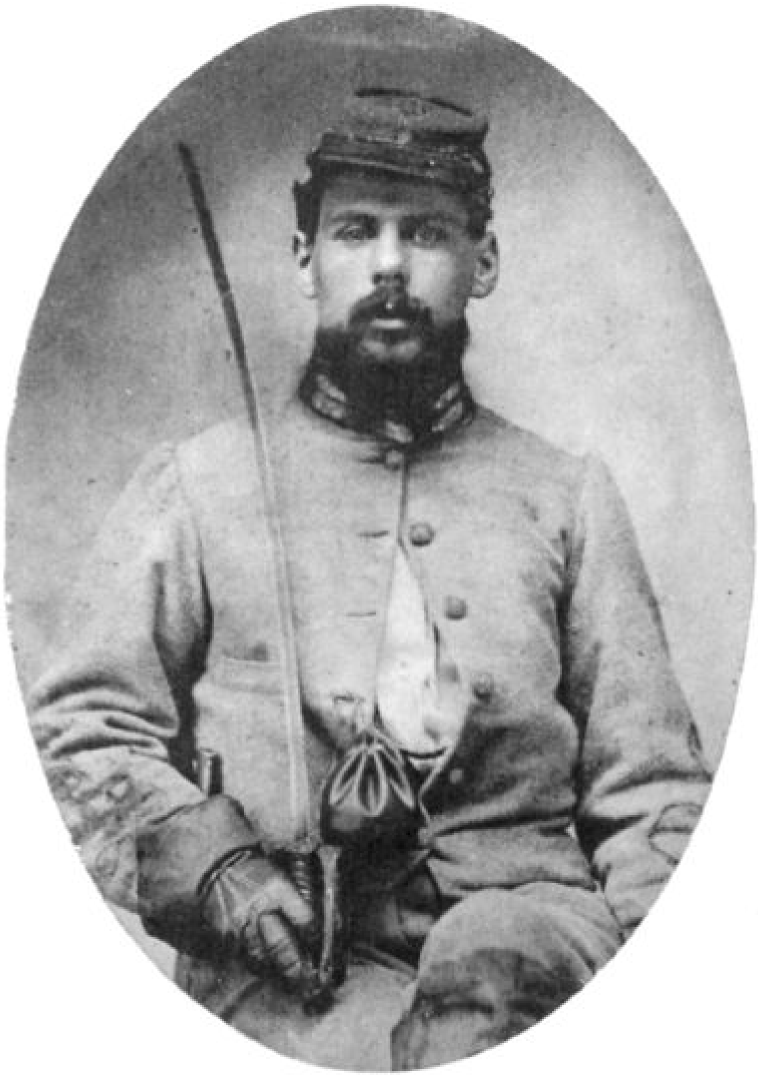


Capt. Isaac L. Lyons. Rachel Lyons's brother and the nephew of Henry Lyons, mayor of Columbia, South Carolina, Lyons commanded Company A (Shepherd Guards), 10th Louisiana. His predecessor as captain of the company was Jacob A. Cohen, who was killed in battle. Lyons settled in New Orleans after the war. (DeLeon, *Belles, Beaux, and Brains of the '60s*.)

As the infantry was the largest branch of the army, it had the largest number of officers. There were dozens of Jewish Confederate infantry lieutenants, and according to Mel Young, sixteen Jewish infantry lieutenants were killed in battle.[14]

Typical of young Jewish officers was Michael Levy of Arkansas. He and his brother, Julius, enlisted as privates. Michael enlisted for one year with Capt. Samuel G. Smith's Company E, the "Dixie Grays" of the 6th Arkansas. Julius likely enlisted at the same time in Company A, the "Capitol Guards" of the same regiment.[15] Julius was killed at the Battle of Shiloh (Pittsburgh Landing) near the border of Tennessee and Mississippi in early April 1862. At least nine other Jewish Confederates were killed at Shiloh.[16] Michael Levy survived and was promoted to fourth corporal, then sergeant. He was detailed to the ordnance department. By July 8, 1862, Levy was promoted to lieutenant and reported to the chief of ordnance at the depot at Okalona, Mississippi. He continued to serve in the Artillery Corps but was detailed as an ordnance officer.[17]

The career of Octavus Cohen demonstrates how a young man from a prominent Jewish family became a lieutenant. At the age of seventeen, this son of a successful and acculturated Savannah family volunteered as an artilleryman, even though underage for military duty. His father used his family connection with Eugenia Phillips, his sister-in-law, in his attempts to secure a cadetship in the Confederate army for his son. (Eugenia, in turn, used her feminine wiles on her friend, Stephen R. Mallory, secretary of the navy.) Brigadier General Lawton wrote a letter of recommendation citing Cohen's service at Fort Pulaski and stating that he would "be gratified to have him appointed … and attached to my command." Octavus Cohen Sr. wrote directly to Judah Benjamin seeking his assistance. When the campaign to secure a cadetship failed, Cohen's family used its political clout to secure a lieutenant's commission for him. Meanwhile, Cohen served in the Signal Corps in Savannah. His family's efforts continued into 1863 with letters from all of his superior officers, including the endorsement of Brig. Gen. Hugh Mercer, commander of the District of Georgia, who wrote, "From his experience in the service both in the line & the staff & his unexceptionable private character, I consider him eminently worthy to wear a sword in the service of the Confederacy."[18]



Lt. Michael Levy enlisted, as did his brother Julius, as a private. Levy served with "the Dixie Grays" of the 6th Arkansas and later became first lieutenant of artillery. This photograph shows him with the two collar stripes of a first lieutenant. His brother, Julius, was killed at Shiloh. (Courtesy of Mrs. Jay [Pearl Anne] Silverstein, Chattanooga, Tennessee.)

In June 1862 Cohen fought at Secessionville while serving as a volunteer aide to Gen. William Duncan Smith, second in command to Brig. Gen. Nathan "Shanks" Evans. Cohen was on Smith's staff, in combat and on picket duty. He brought his body servant, George, along. The Union forces shelled James Island day and night. "We have a pretty hard time riding all day without eating anything & at night sleeping on the hard floor. I must say that soldiering is a hard life sleeping [in] our clothes all night, etc." He added a postscript: "If you hear of anyone writing [his first cousin] Gratz [Cohen] please ask them to tell him that I will be happy to hear from him but have not time to write him. I tell you what that we are in a Yankee nest on this Island."[19]

He served with Smith on James Island from June to October 1862. In July he was able to go to Charleston on a furlough to see his father and his uncle Solomon Cohen, and he enjoyed a cocktail at his Uncle Jack's. Cohen was detailed to the Signal Corps in October 1862 and served in that assignment until June 1863.[20]

On June 5, 1863, Cohen was finally appointed to second lieutenant, Company G, 32d Georgia. This regiment, which was to distinguish itself throughout the war, was sent to Charleston at the urgent request of General Beauregard in the summer of 1863 to defend Charleston.[21]

Lt. Octavus Cohen of Savannah. (Courtesy of Bob Marcus, Springfield, Virginia.)

The Union army under Gen. Quincy Gillmore was preparing a major assault, and men were badly needed on James Island across the Ashley River from Charleston to free up other units to man Battery Wagner at the tip of Morris Island. Cohen arrived on James

Island in June 1863 with his body servant, George, and spent a hot few weeks on picket duty. He was superseded in command of his company by a more experienced and senior Lt. Morris Dawson. Despite all the trouble his father had gone to secure his position, Cohen did not object to being relieved of command of one of the advanced posts in the Confederate line of defense, "as I thought myself too young for the position."[22] He wrote his mother, "We expect to leave for Morris Island in a few hours & have but a little time to write. This is no play soldiering."[23] Morris Island was difficult duty and George could not accompany him.

In July 1863 Morris Island was to become, in Bruce Catton's words, "the deadliest sandpit on earth." The Union army, in a surprise attack on July 10, captured the southern half of Morris Island, but Batteries Wagner and Gregg on the northern end of the island, between Fort Sumter and the Union army, held. "With additional guns, a fresh garrison, and a new commander in Brig. Gen. William B. Taliaferro," Stephen R. Wise wrote, "the Confederates prepared to meet their enemy." That a major assault on Wagner would be made was obvious to its defenders. Eight days later, on July 18, 1863, it began: artillery bombardment, naval assault, and then a massive infantry attack on Wagner itself. On that same day, the 32d Georgia was rushed over to Morris Island. Led by Brig. Gen. Johnson Hagood, they arrived in time to seal off the escape route of Union troops caught in the killing fire of the fort's salient, the defensive ditch dug in front of the fort to trap invaders. The 32d Georgia was one of the units that was rotated in and out of Battery Wagner for the remainder of the siege. Colonel Harrison became the fort's acting commander again in mid-August.[24] Cohen was there with him. In August 1863 Cohen described a fierce bombardment and fight. "I never expected to live that night through in the midst of the enemies severest firing of shells, Grape cannister & shrapnel & musketing."[25]

By 1864 the Lincoln administration was trying to hurry the end of the war by granting amnesty to the rebels who would bring Southern states back into the Union. Florida was a serious possibility, and plans were made to occupy the Jacksonville area. There was intense fighting at Baldwin and a major battle at Olustee (Ocean Pond), where the Confederates turned back the Union advance. Octavus Cohen was in the thick of the fighting as aide-de-camp to Colonel Harrison, who had command of a brigade. Although it was "the finest country" Cohen had ever seen, water was scarce and the men drank ditch water. The fight, he wrote his mother, was "a pretty affair…. We lost… about 800, the enemy lost upwards of 3,000 [actually 1,861] … if our cavalry had been worth any thing, we would have captured the whole force, as they were very much demoralized…. Our Regt fought splendidly." Thus ended the only large campaign fought on Florida soil.[26]

When Colonel Harrison was again assigned the command of a brigade in December 1864, Cohen became acting brigade ordnance officer. He continued in this duty through the end of the war. December 1864 through early 1865 found him stationed at Pocotaligo near Beaufort, handling arms, wagons, and ammunition for the entire brigade. He surrendered with the 32d Georgia on April 26, 1865, and was paroled on May 1, 1865, at Greensboro, North Carolina, with the forces under Gen. Joseph E. Johnston.[27]

E J Levy, Capt.

Capt. Ezekiel ("Zeke") J. Levy was a merchant in Richmond and the secretary of Beth Ahabah when the war began. He was elected fourth sergeant of the Richmond Light Infantry Blues in April 1861. He served most of the war as a lieutenant and attained the rank of captain. He was in command of the Blues, Company A of the 46th Virginia, at the Battle of the Crater at Petersburg. (Courtesy of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.)

At the beginning of the war, prominent men raised and outfitted companies and made themselves captains. Officers were mostly elected by the men during the first year of the war, although this practice was discontinued in the spring of 1862.[28] There were a number of Jewish infantry captains, including Ezekiel J. Levy of Richmond, who earned his captain's rank in combat.

Levy served most of the war as a lieutenant but had succeeded through attrition to captain of the Richmond Light Infantry Blues of the 46th Virginia late in the war. Levy had been a member of the Blues, a prestigious militia company, since 1855. When the company was called into service in April 1861, he was elected fourth sergeant. His younger brother Isaac J. Levy enlisted as a private in his company in March, as did a number of other Jewish soldiers. By June, Levy was first sergeant. The company went to western Virginia under Capt. O. Jennings Wise and soon became Company A of the 46th Virginia Regiment of Brigadier General and former Virginia Gov. Henry A. Wise's Legion. Capt. Wise was killed and more than half the company was captured when Roanoke Island fell in February 1862. The company next served on the Peninsula around Yorktown. Levy was elected second lieutenant in May 1862, and the company saw action during the Battle of Seven Pines and the Seven Days in the summer of 1862. (General Wise said that the Blues "were the damnest hardest set of men to manage he ever had anything to do with, but they were perfect devils in a fight.")[29]

The Levy brothers tried to keep kosher and observe their religious rites during the war. Ezekiel Levy went to great lengths to make a proper Passover Seder while in the Charleston area. This did not affect Levy's standing with the men of his company. By March 1864, he was in command of the company although just a lieutenant. The Blues returned to Virginia from Charleston and arrived in Petersburg in early May. On May 16, as the 46th Virginia went into action north of Petersburg, Lt. Levy was again in command of the Blues. (His captain was temporarily commanding a battalion of several companies of the 46th Virginia.) Afterward, the company was engaged in hard, brutal trench warfare around Petersburg, which did not end until they were surrendered at Appomattox eleven months later.[30]

Levy saw a great deal of combat and led his men courageously during a hard and trying ordeal. The enemy made several charges on the works, which the regiment occupied around Petersburg in the middle of June. During the first charge, Captain Carter was mortally wounded and the first lieutenant put out of action. During the charge the next day, Levy was wounded but remained on the field. He finally went into Petersburg three days later to have his wound dressed, but returned early the next morning. Levy was promoted to first lieutenant in July as a result of Captain Carter's death.[31]

Levy was still in command when the tremendous mine explosion beneath the Confederate works commenced the Battle of the Crater on July 30. Four tons of powder exploded in what has been described as the most awesome spectacle of the war. One soldier reported feeling "a jar like an earthquake." An officer wrote of "a vast cloud of earth borne upward." The Blues were in position about two hundred yards from the explosion. They defended the trenches to the right of the breach that tore a hole in the center of Brig. Gen. Stephen Elliott's brigade. Levy was soon promoted to captain in recognition of his command of the company.[32] His brother, Isaac, who had survived being hit by a spent musket ball two days after the Battle of the Crater, was killed by an exploding shell on August 21.

Samuel Yates Levy, a member of the distinguished Charleston and Savannah Levy family, had an easier time becoming a captain. His sisters were Phoebe Yates Levy Pember and Eugenia Levy Phillips. A tall, dark-complexioned man, Levy was thirty-four when the war began. He joined the City Light Guard of Savannah in August 1861. From that time on he commanded this unit, which became Company D, 1st (Olmstead's) Regiment Georgia Infantry. The company was stationed at various locations in the Savannah area and was at Causten's Bluff Battery from May to November 1862.[33]

Captain Levy described camp life at Causten's Bluff Battery in a letter to his father, written on September 29, 1862, as busy and dangerous: "almost every moment of my time from sunrise to sunset is fully occupied, and the exigencies of the times, forbidding us candles, render it impossible to write at night, or in fact to do anything else, except to sit round the fire, talk and smoke pipes." Levy told his father that he had never worked so hard in his life as he had since he took command of the batteries. The men were constantly plagued by mosquitoes and sand flies. They were sick on account of the unhealthy conditions and the inefficiency of the quartermaster in providing supplies. Some had died. Bread and coffee, which he had not had for months, were luxuries. They lived on rice and all the fresh shrimp they wanted whenever the men decided to go to the trouble of casting nets in the creeks.[34]

Capt. Samuel Yates Levy. The brother of Phoebe Pember and Eugenia Phillips, Levy enlisted in the City Light Guard of Savannah, 1st (Olmstead's) Georgia. He served mostly in the Savannah area as a captain but was captured in June 1864 at Marietta, Georgia. (Courtesy of Bob Marcus, Springfield, Virginia.)

This letter also revealed Levy's pessimism about victory at this early date. He could see for himself the energetic preparation made by the Union navy in building improved gunboats. "As for ourselves," he wrote his father, "I cannot see that we have done anything to increase our means of resistance." His command had done nothing all summer, its leaders "looking to the achievement of the Army of Virginia." Levy told his father that he would not be surprised if his superiors abandoned their lines and fell back to Savannah. Levy felt that all he did was build and then dismantle batteries. He was, however, happy that General Beauregard was now in charge of the defense of Georgia and South Carolina: "we shall now probably have less of the 'Sleepy Hollow' course of proceedings," he wrote. "The Yanks will never relinquish the fat pickings of the South," he concluded. "Charleston and Savannah may therefore expect to pass through the fire."[35]

Despite their lack of food, whiskey, or decent clothing, Levy and the men in his unit were cheerful. They had their relaxing moments: "round the camp fire at night and in the free enjoyment of indisputable clay pipes, there is nothing but fun and laughter. Whiskey had become a myth," he wrote his father, "and ranks in the same category as some of the forgotten tipples of the Babylonians." He closed his letter: "Rain, rain, rain: nothing but rain for the past month: it is so disagreeable in camp that I begin to think it, Lincoln's reign. My paper has run out and so I am yours affectionately, Yates Levy."[36]

Levy was not an experienced soldier. He was, however, highly literate and well educated. He spent most of 1862 and 1863 serving as judge advocate in court-martial proceedings in Savannah. He was recommended for promotion to major, but he apparently was not promoted, although *The Roster of Georgia Troops in Confederate Service* states that he was "Elected Major November 1861."

Levy commanded his company in combat in June 1864 at Marietta, Georgia. At Pine Mountain near Atlanta, Levy's company became separated from his command and, concluding that "discretion was the better part of valor," Levy surrendered his men to the 15th Ohio. He became a prisoner of war and was transferred to the military prison at Louisville, Kentucky, then to Nashville, and finally to Johnson's Island, Ohio.[37]

Levy was clearly a man of peace, an intellectual who hated war. In 1862 he wrote his father reminiscing about the long talks they used to have about "old friendly authors," and wondered, "will those days ever come again, or is Mars to be in the ascendant for the rest of our time?" In November of 1863, after the fall of Vicksburg and defeat at Gettysburg, he had written a long poem entitled "Prayer for Peace." Like many Southerners, he felt that the Union victories were divine punishment for the sins of the South:

We know our sins are manifold, oh Lord

And that thy wrath against us is but right

For we have wandered wildly from thy word

and things committed wrongful in thy sight.[38]

Johnson's Island Prison was located in Sandusky Bay on Lake Erie. One mile from the mainland, the prison consisted of army barracks on forty acres. There were three thousand prisoners held there by April 1865, most of them officers. The prisoners ate rats to supplement their poor diet. Deadly brawls took place over bits of food. Clothing was inadequate to the cold, and some prisoners froze to death. Levy wrote home about the "long and bitterly cold winter." It was, in Maj. Henry Kyd Douglas's words, "just the place to convert visions to the theological belief that Hell has torments of cold instead of heat."[39] Yates Levy was released after taking the oath on June 15, 1865, and returned to Savannah.[40]

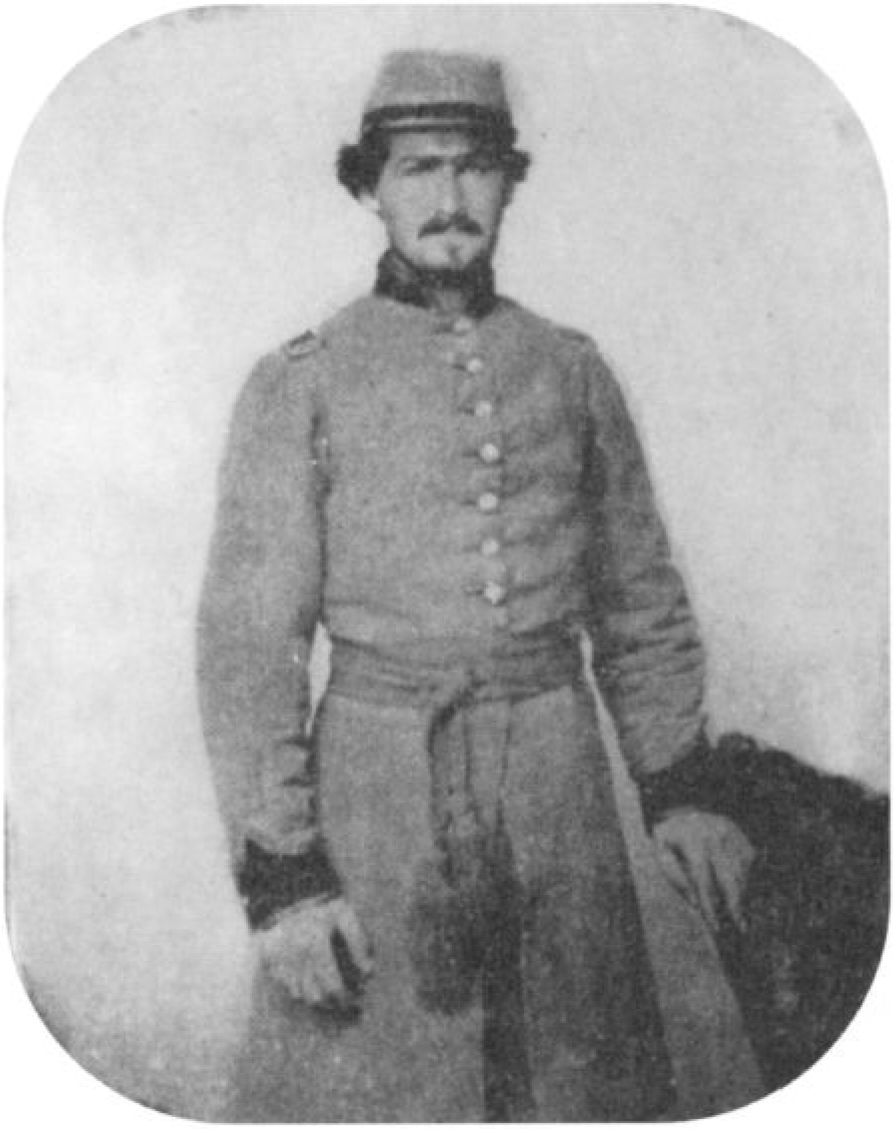
The few Jewish infantry colonels were native-born Southerners. Col. Leon Dawson Marks, for example, was one of the highest-ranking Jewish infantry officers of the line—that is, a commander who saw combat. Born at Bayou Sara, Louisiana, in 1829, he fought in the Mexican War, practiced law in Shreveport, and edited a weekly newspaper, the *Caddo News*. His father was a German Jew. His mother was Christian, a Dawson from the St. Francisville area. In 1859 Marks, who was a practicing Jew, married Amelia Jordan of Shreveport, a cousin of Julia Dent, the wife of Ulysses S. Grant, and a Christian.[41]

Col. Leon Dawson Marks. One of the highest-ranking Jewish Confederate officers of the line, Marks was a lawyer in Shreveport before the war. A colonel, he helped construct the defenses at Vicksburg, where he was mortally wounded. (Courtesy of Eric Brock of Shreveport, Louisiana.)

Marks was a delegate to the Louisiana secession convention and helped organize the "Shreveport Greys," which became Company D, 1st Louisiana Special Battalion (Dreux's Rifles). Once the battalion was formed in Virginia, he served as the battalion adjutant. In April 1862 he returned to Louisiana, where he was appointed colonel of the 27th Louisiana. He served for a period in March 1863 as "commandant of the Post of Vicksburg." On June 28, 1863, during the brutal siege of Vicksburg by the Union army and navy, Marks was mortally wounded by shrapnel from an exploding Union Parrott bomb. He had risked his life in battle on many occasions, but this time he was wounded as he ate his dinner. Vicksburg fell on July 4, and Marks was brought back to Shreveport to be with his family. He died on September 23, 1863, at the age of thirty-four, leaving a widow and a five-year-old son.[42]

Alexander "Alex" Hart, a native of New Orleans and a store clerk, was twenty-two years old when the war broke out.[43] He joined the 2d Company of the Orleans Cadets, Louisiana Militia, on May 4, 1861. Hart was recognized as a leader and was appointed first lieutenant of this company, which became Company E, 5th Louisiana Infantry, in June. He was promoted to captain upon the resignation of Capt. Charles Hobday and was with the 5th Louisiana in the Peninsular Campaign, Seven Days Campaign, Cedar Mountain, and Second Manassas.

The 5th Louisiana went to Richmond as part of Major General Magruder's army. Unlike most Confederate regiments, it was made up of common laborers, "denizens of the New Orleans waterfront," and clerks from the retail district of the Crescent City. Many were immigrants. The Orleans Cadets, Hart's company, for example, was 46 percent foreign-born. By the end of the war, 161 of the 5th Louisiana's 1,074 men would be killed; 66 died of disease. Thirteen officers were killed. One soldier claimed that the regiment was mostly "uneducated Irishmen." Many of the immigrants were from Ireland, but they were also from the German states, England, and France. It was certainly a rough lot and became a part of the famous 1st Louisiana Brigade known as the Louisiana Tigers. One company, the Perret Guards, was said to consist mostly of gamblers. A soldier wrote that "to be admitted one must be able to cut, shuffle, and deal on the point of a bayonet."[44]



Maj. Alexander Hart of New Orleans. One of the highest-ranking Jewish Confederate infantry officers, Major Hart served with the 5th Louisiana. He served at Sharpsburg, Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, Wilderness, Spotsylvania, North Anna, and Third Winchester. (Reproduced from Ginsberg, *Chapters on the Jews of Virginia, 1658–1900*; courtesy of Shirley Ginsberg, Petersburg, Va.)

The Louisiana Tigers fought valiantly at Antietam. As Stephen W. Sears has written, that "strict Presbyterian Stonewall Jackson always regarded the habits and pleasures of the Louisiana 'foreigners' with some suspicion, but there was no question of their worth in battle." On September 17, 1862, they charged across the pasture at Antietam and toward the cornfield where they were shelled by Union batteries. Hart was seriously wounded in this battle, and his wound would plague him for the remainder of the war. He was hit in his left thigh by grape shot and remained on medical furlough in Richmond for five months. Ezekiel and Lichtenstein relate a story about Hart which probably relates to this time: A surgeon said Captain Hart’s leg must be amputated. The lady of the house where he had been taken after the battle begged the surgeon to wait and give her a chance to nurse Hart back to health. “So young and handsome a man should not lose a leg,” she said. She nursed him back to health. After the war, Major Hart visited his friend every year. On one occasion when the lady’s daughter-in-law complained there was no ham on the table, the old lady said “No, there shall be no ham on my table when my ‘Jewish son’ is here.”[45]

While on leave, Hart was appointed major of the regiment. He returned to his unit in time to participate in the Chancellorsville campaign, where the 5th Louisiana was heavily engaged a prelude and sideshow to Lee’s greatest victory. The 5th provided the primary opposition to the Federal crossing of the Rappahannock River at Fredericksburg on April 29 and was with Maj. Gen. Jubal Early’s division at Fredericksburg while the Battle of Chancellorsville raged. Afterward, at the Battle of Salem Church, the 1st Louisiana Brigade was at the center of the Confederate line which charged the Union army and incurred heavy losses. The 1st Louisiana Brigade also marched with Lee to Gettysburg and led the drive through the town of Gettysburg, pushing the Federals out onto Cemetery Hill. They assaulted the Federal position and carried the crest of Cemetery Hill, but were forced to retreat at great loss of life. Hart was wounded again at Gettysburg by a gunshot to his left hand. He spent the rest of the summer of 1863 recuperating. In November he was certified as permanently disabled and assigned to the Department of Henrico under Brig. Gen. John H. Winder.

Hart chafed to get back into active service. He demanded a medical examining board review his fitness two months before the next review was scheduled. He was declared fit for duty and, by April 30, 1864, had rejoined his command. During his absence, much of his brigade and all of his regiment except one captain had been captured at Rappahannock Station in November 1863. Most of the men were exchanged, and Hart was probably with his command during their heavy fighting at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, and North Anna. Hart was briefly admitted to a hospital again but went back into action in July 1864, leading a temporary command of men on their way back to rejoin their units in the Shenandoah Valley. He rejoined his regiment in time to participate in the battle at Kernston, Virginia. Hart requested a promotion to colonel as the senior surviving officer of the regiment, but it was never acted upon.

In August he crossed the Potomac and marched through Sharpsburg. “Moved at sunrise,” he wrote in his diary on August 6. “Passed the old battle field. Saw the place I had been wounded at 17th Sept., 1862.” He must have been out of sorts on August 12, as he wrote in his diary:

I am a man,

so weary with disast[er], with fortune

That I could set my life on any chance,

To mend it or be rid on’t.

He continued: “When once sordid interest seizes on the heart, it freezes up the source of every warm and liberal feeling.”[46] Hart’s diary is full of references to hard fighting. “Formed line of battle at Leetown,” he wrote on August 25. “Engaged the Yankee cavalry. Had a rousing fight.” He acted as field officer of the day on the 26th and as a pallbearer for Colonel Monaghan, commander of the 6th Louisiana, killed in action the day before, with other high-ranking officers. “Wet and miserable,” he wrote on September 5. “No shelter from rain.” Then came the third Battle of Winchester against Maj. Gen. Philip Sheridan on September 19, 1864. The Louisiana brigade fought bravely, at one point holding the Federal attackers at bay virtually alone. All of the mounted officers of the brigade were wounded. Hart’s horse was killed, and he was captured.[47]

Hart, now a prisoner of war, was sent to Fort McHenry, Maryland; and ultimately to Savannah, Georgia, where he and many others were exchanged in November 1864. The joyous Confederates were taken to the Pulaski House, Savannah’s premier hotel, where they were treated to a sumptuous dinner. “Crowds waiting to receive us all cheer’d lustily,” he noted. The ladies, he wrote, “did everything in their power to make us comfortable.” He stayed with the Alexander Abrams family in Savannah for two days.[48]

On November 15, 1864, Major Hart was paroled, and he set off for Richmond. He stopped in Columbia, South Carolina, where he visited friends, including Joe Mark. He stayed in Charlottesville, Virginia, with the Heilbrun family. “Received splendidly,” he wrote in his diary. He arrived in Richmond on November 20, where his fiancée, Leonora, “cried some.” Part of the time in Richmond he was confined to the Louisiana hospital. Part of the time he was “having a good time generally.” He likely was waiting to be officially discharged. On December 8 he applied for retirement. In January 1865, Major Hart was ordered to report to his command but was found unfit for field duty. He was allowed to retire to the Invalid Corps in March 1865.[49] He took his time leaving Richmond and made it out on one of the last trains as Richmond was being evacuated in April. He was finally paroled in Atlanta, Georgia, in early May.

Another native-born, high-ranking Jewish Confederate officer and leader of his community was William Mallory Levy. He commenced his military service as a captain of the LeCompte Guard from Natchitoches Parish, a company of the 2d Louisiana in May 1861. The regiment was dispatched to the front in Virginia. On May 21, 1861, the regiment reported to Col. John Bankhead Magruder, who had just been appointed to command the forces on the Peninsula, near Richmond. A week after the Battle of Bethel Church in June, the 2d Louisiana was sent in to occupy the area. On June 18, Magruder sent Captain Levy under a flag of truce to Fort Monroe, and he returned with the intelligence that an expedition of some magnitude was under way, prompting Magruder to move back to Yorktown. In July Levy was back in his old college town, Williamsburg, where his regiment was active in securing the defenses. Undoubtedly, Levy took this opportunity to visit friends and family in and around Richmond. When Col. Lewis G. DeRussy resigned to take a position on the staff of Maj. Gen. Leonidas Polk, Levy was elected colonel of the regiment.[50]

By the spring of 1862, the 2d Louisiana was in the 2d Brigade, 2d Division, Army of the Peninsula, commanded by Brig. Gen. Howell Cobb. General McClellan's campaign to capture the Peninsula began in April. Colonel Levy led his men at the battle at Dam Number 1 (Lee's Mill) at the center of Magruder's defensive line across the Peninsula. He wrote his wife that he was "hearty, healthy and lively. My regiment participated in the skirmish which took place at this position on the 16th [of April] and I am unhurt … We defeated them in beautiful style … killing a large number of them." Major General Magruder, in his report, cited Colonel Levy's "judgment, courage, and high soldierly qualities of conduct and arrangements, which I desire specially to commend." Levy reported to his wife that "our troops behaved with great gallantry and have been highly complimented." On the morning of April 19, Colonel Levy carried a message under a flag of truce proposing a cessation of hostilities so that the Union troops could collect their dead lying in front of the Confederate works.

Despite his success, Levy failed to win reelection as colonel and was replaced by Isaiah T. Norwood, who was killed two months later at Malvern Hill. Levy tried to secure another command. "I beg you to be cheerful and hopeful," he wrote his wife from the Peninsula. "The cause is a righteous one and God is on our side and will watch over us."[51] He wrote to General Magruder in July 1862 that his "sense of duty as well as inclination will keep me in the army as long as the war or my life may last even in the capacity of a private in the ranks."[52]

Like many an officer who failed to secure a promotion, Levy went to Richmond in search of an appointment. Louisiana Gov. Thomas O. Moore wrote Secretary of War Randolph that Levy "failed, as did nearly every good officer, in a re-election, because he discharged his duties with great fidelity and judgment, and I am desirous that he shall renew his service & if possible in this state."[53] Magruder asked Randolph to appoint Levy a brigadier general, and Howell Cobb said in a bit of an overstatement that the loss of Levy's services would be "*a public calamity*."[54] In July Levy offered to take command of a brigade near Monroe, Louisiana, to be under command of General Magruder in his newly appointed capacity as commander of the Trans-Mississippi Department. His knowledge of the Trans-Mississippi country and its people and his status with the citizens of the area suited him for the position.[55]

Magruder's departure for the new assignment was held up until the conclusion of the Seven Days Battle, which had all of Richmond on high alert. But Levy was unlucky. Magruder was replaced by Maj. Gen. Theophilus Holmes in July, and Magruder was detained in Richmond until October, answering charges arising out of his conduct during the Seven Days Battle. When new orders came, Magruder was reassigned to Texas.

Levy now had no chance for a command of his own. In July he obtained an appointment as a major in the adjutant general's department. He was confirmed by the Confederate Congress in October. He joined Maj. Gen. Richard Taylor's staff as assistant adjutant general when Taylor became commander of the Western District of Louisiana. Levy briefly commanded the post at Fort DeRussy, Louisiana, on the Red River, but was soon at Taylor's side in the field, a position he retained until the war ended. Taylor was an important Confederate military commander. A son of President Zachary Taylor and a former brother-in-law of Jefferson Davis, an influential planter, and Louisiana state senator, Taylor became an outstanding field commander and was promoted to brigadier general, then major general, then lieutenant general. He won many a battle and achieved his greatest success in the Red River campaign in Louisiana.[56] Levy was Taylor's closest aide.

From December 1863 to June 1864, Levy served as General Taylor's commissioner of exchange, negotiating the exchange of prisoners of war with his counterparts under Major Generals William B. Franklin and Nathaniel P. Banks. He helped raise a cavalry unit among the Louisiana Creoles. He also apparently continued to raise or broker cotton throughout the war. Taylor relied heavily on Levy's judgment. In an April 1864 report covering the Red River Campaign, Taylor lamented that he "was deprived of the very valuable services of Major William M. Levy," who was, Taylor wrote, "[d]istinguished time and again for gallantry on the field as well as for patient labor in office work."[57]

Taylor asked to be relieved of his command of the Trans-Mississippi Department in June 1864. He was promoted to lieutenant general, and in September he assumed command of the Department of Alabama, Mississippi, and East Louisiana. He brought Levy with him. Because there was a senior staff already in place, Taylor had the unpleasant duty of choosing which senior officers he would retain and which he would relieve or reassign. "Majors Surget and Levy," he wrote Gen. Samuel Cooper, "have long been with me, and am particularly desirous to retain them. They are fine officers." Levy was retained and in October 1864 was promoted to lieutenant colonel and senior assistant inspector general of the department. With the exception of a few weeks, Levy remained at General Taylor's side. Levy officially surrendered May 4, 1865, and was paroled May 10 at Meridian, Mississippi.[58]

Maj. Adolph Proskauer of Mobile, a Prussian immigrant, rose from the rank of corporal to major of the 12th Alabama. He served at Sharpsburg (Antietam), where he was wounded. He led the 12th "amid a perfect rain of bullets, shot and shell" at Gettysburg. (Courtesy of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.)

Adolph Proskauer of Mobile was among the few Jewish immigrants who rose to be a higher-ranked Confederate officer. Proskauer had been educated at the gymnasium in Breslau until he came to America at age sixteen. In May 1861, he enlisted in Capt. Augustus Stikes' company, the Independent Rifles, for twelve months.[59] He was appointed first corporal. The company went to Richmond and in July was combined with other companies to form the 12th Alabama Infantry. It became Company C. Like the 5th Louisiana, the 12th Alabama was a cosmopolitan regiment that included a large portion of Germans, French, Irish, and Spanish, sailors and dockworkers from Mobile, and mountain boys from north Alabama.[60] They were noted as foragers, recalled one of its officers, Capt. Robert Emory Park, "and the vast majority of them suffered very little from hunger" despite limited rations.

By December, Proskauer had been promoted to sergeant. In April 1862 he was commissioned as a first lieutenant. He served in that rank for only twenty-six days before being promoted to captain in May, replacing Stikes, who became a major of the regiment. As captain, Proskauer was remembered as handsome and the “best dressed man in the regiment.”

Proskauer participated in many of the fiercest battles of the war. As lieutenant of Company C, he fought in the Siege of Yorktown (April–May 1862), including the Battle of Williamsburg. As captain, he helped lead the 12th Alabama at the Battle of Seven Pines, where the 12th made a “gallant charge … into the very jaws of death.” The regiment suffered heavy casualties: sixty officers and men were killed outright, including their commander. This was the regiment’s first experience in real battle. The men were worn out and were glad to “stretch themselves upon the wet ground and sleep soundly,” one officer recalled, “though the air was filled with the agonizing cries and groans of the wounded and dying men and animals by whom they were surrounded.” The 12th was at Gaines Mill in June and at Malvern Hill on July 1 during the Seven Days Battle before Richmond.[61]

Proskauer and his regiment marched north in Lee’s Maryland campaign as part of Rodes’s brigade. Proskauer was in combat at the Battle of South Mountain and Sharpsburg (Antietam), where he was wounded. On September 17, 1862, the single bloodiest day in the Civil War, Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia faced George B. McClellan’s Army of the Potomac. There were 4,710 men killed, 18,440 wounded.[62] Proskauer was among the wounded, having been shot in the abdomen during intense fighting along the Sunken Road, later called the “Bloody Lane.” He recuperated from September until January 1863 and returned to his company at Orange Court House, Virginia.

While the 12th was encamped near Fredericksburg in 1863, Proskauer, now the senior captain in the regiment, formally applied to become major. Major Stikes had resigned his commission and returned to Mobile. Col. Samuel B. Pickens did not favor his appointment, preferring a junior captain who was apparently well qualified for the position. Colonel Pickens had an examining board appointed. Made up of distinguished senior officers, two generals and a colonel, the board, Pickens hoped, would find Proskauer unsuited for the rank and deny his application. “It was stated in camp,” Captain Park recalled in his *Sketch*, “that Colonel Pickens hinted to this Committee of Examiners that he hoped they would be so rigid that Captain Proskauer could not pass the examination.” Let Captain Park continue the story as he set it down in 1906, some forty-three years later:

> During the day of the examination there was an unusual interest felt by the officers of the camp, and especially by the Colonel. Late in the afternoon, after an all-day examination had been concluded, one of the officers rode rapidly up to Col. Pickens’ headquarters and in reply to an anxious inquiry, was told that the

> Committee had done all they could to defeat Capt. Proskauer, but that after an examination [in] squad drill, in company drill, in regimental drill, in brigade drill, in drill by echelon, and in the army movements as suggested in Jomini's tactics, Captain Proskauer did not fail to answer promptly and accurately every question. The general added, "he knows more about tactics than any of the Examining Committee, and we were forced to recommend his position."[63]

Bertram Korn read into Park's account that Colonel Pickens "was so prejudiced against Jews" that he attempted to block Proskauer's promotion.[64] Yet Park does not say that, nor does his recollection prove this charge. Indeed, Park's personal admiration of Proskauer, his pointed criticism of Colonel Pickens, the interest of the other officers in Proskauer's success, Park's relish in telling the story, and the crucial fact that the board found Proskauer unusually qualified (and he was therefore promoted to major) all attest to the lack of anti-Semitism in the Confederate army.

Proskauer was a popular officer with his men. He was at the Battle of Chancellorsville in May of 1863, when the 12th fought as a part of Stonewall Jackson's famous flanking attack on Major General Hooker's Union army. On the morning of May 3 (still captain) Proskauer led the regiment as Colonel Pickens assumed command of a portion of the brigade after the commander was wounded. Proskauer was wounded in the battle and was transferred to General Hospital No. 4 in Richmond. He was promoted to major by Colonel Pickens while he was in the hospital. His promotion was ultimately confirmed by the Confederate Congress, but not until early 1864.

The 12th Alabama had broken camp on June 4, 1863, on their way to Maryland and Pennsylvania with the Army of Northern Virginia. Major Proskauer caught up with his command on the road and was fit for duty at the Battle of Gettysburg on July 1, 1863. A part of Rodes's division, the 12th suffered heavy casualties at Oak Ridge, northeast of Gettysburg. The poor leadership of both Maj. Gen. Robert Rodes and Col. Edward A. O'Neal, commanding the Alabama Brigade, cost many of Proskauer's men their lives. "Unwarned, unled as a brigade, we went to our death," one soldier recalled. There were 696 of O'Neal's 1,688 men killed or wounded along the Mummasburg Road early in the battle. Union artillery fire killed many others. Colonel Pickens sent Captain Park to the field hospital on Proskauer's horse. Years later, on learning of the major's death, Park wrote Mrs. Proskauer: "I can see him now, in mental view, as he nobly carried himself at Gettysburg, standing coolly and calmly, with cigar in his mouth, at the head of the Twelfth Alabama, amid a perfect rain of bullets, shot and shell. He was the personification of intrepid gallantry, of imperturbable courage." All of Company C's officers were wounded and half of its men.[65] As the Union troops withdrew to Cemetery Hill south of Gettysburg, the 12th Alabama moved into town the next day.

On July 3 the 12th proceeded into Gettysburg, where it participated in the unsuccessful assault on Culp's Hill, the tip of the Union "fishhook" line at Gettysburg. Culp's Hill looked down on Cemetery Hill and Cemetery Ridge, areas of immense tactical importance. If the Confederates could capture Culp's Hill, they could take Cemetery Hill and defeat the enemy. Lee hoped the attck on Culp's Hill would pull men away from General Meade's center, where he planned to send Col. George E. Pickett on that fateful day.[66]

But at 4:30 a.m., as the sun rose, the artillery of the Union XII Corps opened fire on the Confederates. They, too, appreciated the value of Culp's Hill. The fighting raged for seven hours, as the musket fire of thousands of soldiers literally destroyed a forest of oak trees. "The wonder is," the Union commander wrote, "that the rebels persisted so long in an attempt that in the first half hour must have seemed useless." Stopped at almost every advance, the Confederate army, including Major Proskauer and the 12th Alabama, tried again and again against impossible odds to take Culp's Hill. Finally they withdrew. "For decades thereafter," Champ Clark wrote in *Gettysburg: The Confederate High Tide*, "on Culp's Hill a ghostly forest would stand, its trees shorn of their limbs and stripped of their bark by flying metal—testimony to the savagery of a contest that would nevertheless be overshadowed by events still to come."[67]

Pickett's charge failed, and on July 4, 1863, Lee retreated from Pennsylvania. Major Proskauer and the 12th Alabama, "suffering, wet and anxious," on a dark, dreary, rainy night retreated south. They camped near Orange Courthouse during the remainder of the summer of 1863. Fighting continued in Virginia, and in October Major Proskauer led a force of half the regiment on a mission to destroy railroad tracks near Warrenton Junction.[68]

In November, the 12th saw action at Kelly's Ford on the Rappahannock and during the Mine Run Campaign. Proskauer was in command of the regiment at this time, as Colonel Pickens had been injured and the lieutenant colonel was absent from camp. In late December, Proskauer led the regiment to Paine's Mill to help saw planks for the Orange Road. The army was in winter quarters, and Proskauer was granted a furlough around April 21, 1864.[69]

The war, however, was far from over. The 12th Alabama, now a part of Battle's Alabama brigade, was heavily engaged on the Orange Turnpike early in the afternoon of May 5, when the Battle of the Wilderness began. Temporarily overwhelmed, the 12th rallied and drove back the Union invaders. The regiment saw action again on May 8 at Spotsylvania Court House, where Major Proskauer received his third wound of the war. The surgeon's report described the bullet "entering in front and near lobe of left ear, passing through parotid gland—ranging obliquely downwards … and making its exit on posterium of right side of neck.” The war was over for Adolph Proskauer. He was retired to the Invalid Corps in January 1865 and was assigned to the Alabama State Reserve Forces. In February he requested a leave of absence to go to Europe to recuperate. The request was approved and forwarded to Richmond, but the capital was evacuated before the Confederate government could act on his request.[70]

* * *

Jewish officers also fought in Confederate artillery units. Officers commanded gunners and crews who transported, maintained, and fired increasingly complex and deadly cannons or fieldpieces. Artillery units needed ammunition, equipment, horses, and tools. A unit might be as large as a battalion, such as the 2d Alabama Artillery Battalion or the Washington Artillery Battalion consisting of five companies, or it could be an independent battery (a company-size unit).[71] A large number of Jews from Macon, Georgia, for example, served in the Macon German Artillery. Wolf estimated that one-third of the men were “of Hebrew faith” and wrote that Nathan Binswanger served as second lieutenant.

Edwin I. Kursheedt (pronounced “Kur-shet”) of New Orleans was an outstanding officer of the famed Washington Artillery.[72] Born in Jamaica in 1838, Kursheedt came to New Orleans with his family as a child. Raised in an observant Jewish household, he attended its schools and became a merchant. When South Carolina seceded, Edwin was twenty-three years old; joined the Washington Artillery Company in December 1860. This company took possession of the U.S. Arsenal at Baton Rouge and then returned in triumph to New Orleans. Three more companies were added, and the Washington Artillery Battalion volunteered for the war in May 1861. Kursheedt was mustered into Confederate service as a private in Capt. Harry M. Isaacson’s 1st Company, which undoubtedly contained a number of New Orleans Jews. Isaacson was Jewish, and Clara Solomon referred to the Washington Artillery as “Our Battalion.”[73]

Born in Jamaica, Lt. Edwin I. Kursheedt came to New Orleans with his family. He joined the Washington Artillery as a private and served at First Manassas (Bull Run), the Peninsular Campaign, Sharpsburg, Gettysburg, and Petersburg. He was the adjutant of Lt. Col. Benjamin F. Eshleman. (Courtesy of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.)

The battalion left New Orleans by train for the Virginia front, arrived in Richmond a week later, and was sent to Manassas, where Kursheedt was assigned to the first section of the 1st Company manning a three-inch, eight-pound rifled cannon. This section had the honor of firing the Washington Artillery's first shot against the enemy. Private Kursheedt was in the midst of the Battle of First Manassas (Bull Run) in late July 1861. Early on, his section was placed on Henry House Hill, which soon became the center of the battle. "The Washington Artillery of New Orleans," Clara Solomon wrote with pride in her diary, “did great execution.”[74] The unit remained with the Army of Northern Virginia and its predecessors throughout the remainder of the war.

Kursheedt was promoted to lance corporal by September 1861. He saw action in September at Great Falls, Maryland, and at Yorktown in the Peninsula Campaign and fought with his company through all of the various engagements, including the Seven Days Battle.[75]

New Orleans fell on April 25, 1862. On April 27 Kursheedt, at his camp near Williamsburg, wrote Sarah (“Sallie”) Levy complaining about marching “in a drenching rain—‘for the rain it raineth every day.’” He could not believe New Orleans had been captured. “We are in receipt of the telegraphic news ‘Fall of New Orleans &c’ but do not credit it,’” he wrote. He felt good about his army’s position at Yorktown: “Our position is very strong—our left rests on Yorktown—the centre at Lee’s Mills, & right on Mulberry Island.” He felt his unit might be ordered to Fredericksburg, “as it is believed Massa Geo. B. McClellan [the Union commander] is trying to force a passage to Richmond via that point.” Not only was Kursheedt’s military position strong, but he had plenty to eat. “We are luxuriating in quantities of shad & fresh beef, vegetables, bakers bread & c. So we feast one day and starve the next.” He also looked forward to a visit to Williamsburg. “I intend going into town to see ‘one of the chosen’ whose name was given to me by Eugene Levy, whom I was very pleased to meet here, so au revoir.”[76]

Kursheedt’s unit was under frequent bombardment during the Peninsula campaign. We “are not afar off from our Yankee friends,” he wrote Sarah Levy. He and his men were “enjoying the constant music of their heavy guns.” He and 250 men were crammed in a schooner that brought them from Richmond to the front: “[W]e felt like a lot of chickens cooped up, but were willing to ‘die game.’” Miss Levy had sent him a package of food, which enabled him “to live very high up to yesterday, but had to come down to rations this morning viz, Bacon & crackers—I enjoyed the latter, but have not made up my mind to partake of the former.” Kursheedt was still trying to keep kosher and avoid eating pork.[77]

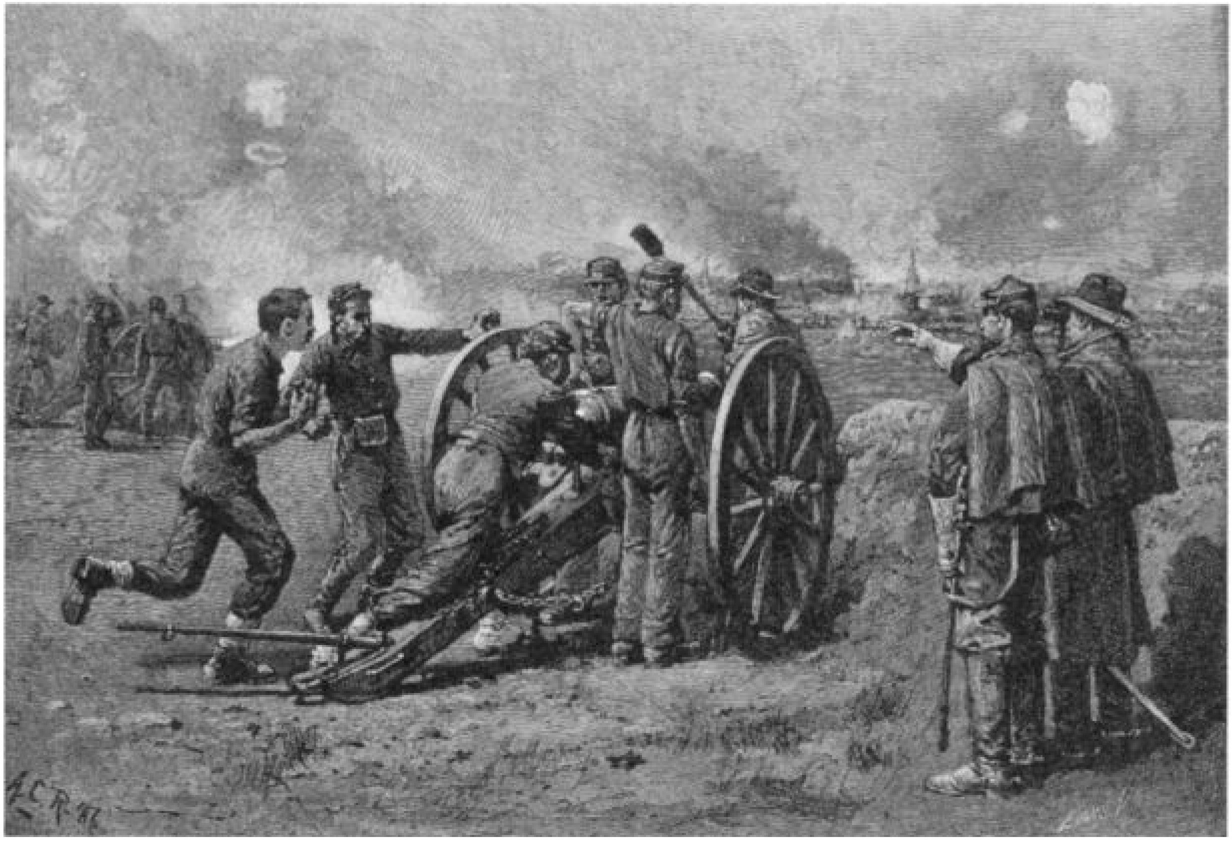
By June Kursheedt began referring to Sarah Levy as “My Dear Miss Sarah” and wrote her frequently about his activities. On June 25 he told her it had been his intention to come to visit her, but his orders prevented it. “I will be busy this evening issuing orders &c to the various Batteries under the Colonel so will not be able to see you.” He had been acting as an adjutant since at least June 9, 1862.[78]

The 1st Company concluded the Seven Days Campaign by successfully attacking General McClellan’s transport ships on the James River on July 6 and 7, doing considerable damage. After a month's rest, the Army of Northern Virginia began to move north from Richmond. Kursheedt's company was in an artillery battle at Beverley's Ford and Rappahannock Station on August 23, 1862. On August 25 Kursheedt wrote Sarah a long letter detailing his participation in the various engagements: "Last Saturday the 3rd Company and our Battery together with others, engaged the enemy at Rappahannock Station & after a hard fight of 4 hours drove the enemy from his position occupying his camp in the evening. The loss of our two companies was very heavy." He also reported that "The little *Battle Flag* is pretty well cut up by the shells of the enemy and we are all very proud of it." It was the "hottest place we have ever been," but Kursheedt felt that the Confederacy was now winning the war. "The tables have been turned & we are now pressing the enemy to the wall." He knew the army was heading toward Manassas and believed he was about to be involved in a "quite heavy" engagement.[79]

Like many soldiers writing loved ones, Kursheedt was concerned that this might be his last letter. "By the Protection of a kind Providence," he told Sarah, "I am again spared after having had some very narrow escapes. I write today for the purpose of informing you of my safety." He also wrote to tell other Jewish families that "Eugene Levy & brother are both well—we fought side by side in both engagements." And never forgetting one of the strong bonds between him and Sarah, he wrote: "There is no telling when we shall see Richmond as we might march into the Enemy's Country, but I shall certainly try to come down for the Holy days" (Jewish High Holidays, Rosh Hashanah—New Year—and Yom Kippur—Day of Atonement—usually take place in September and early October of each year).[80]

Kursheedt marched north with the Washington Artillery with Lee into Maryland in September 1862. As the troops marched toward Boonsboro, the rear ammunition chest of a caisson exploded. Contrary to the orders of his officers, a private had sat atop a caisson loaded with gunpowder and proceeded to smoke his pipe. The powder exploded and the soldier was hurled twenty feet into the air, fell on the road, was burned from head to foot, and lost all of his clothing. Miraculously, he was not seriously injured. The soldier was barely removed from the scene when the live shells in the chest began to explode. Officers and men ran as far as they could. "Then," in the words of one eyewitness, "Corporals Kursheedt and Ruggles, of the First Company, stepped to the front, and, going deliberately up to the smoking chest, emptied their canteens of water upon the burning cotton used for packing; then taking the shells, some already ignited, threw them into the ditch of water alongside the road, where some exploded, making an awful scatteration of mud and water, but fortunately hurting no one. The danger over, the march was resumed. For this gallant act these corporals quite modestly received the warm approbation of their comrades, and no more was thought of it. But the ‘Victoria’ and the ‘Cross of the Legion of Honor’ have been pinned to a soldier’s breast for acts of lesser heroism.”[81]

The Washington Artillery was now at Sharpsburg, Maryland, near Antietam Creek. Posted on a hill east of the town, the 1st Company was equipped with two three-inch rifles and two ten-pound Parrott cannons. They fired upon Federal troops as they attacked across Rohrbach’s Bridge on the southern end of the battlefield while themselves under constant artillery fire. Attacked four times by Union infantry, the company fought back with the assistance of the Confederate infantry. Kursheedt may have been wounded at Sharpsburg.



The Washington Artillery on Marye’s Hill firing on the Union columns forming for the assault. A number of New Orleans Jews served in the Washington Artillery, including Edwin Kursheedt, its adjutant (*Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*).

The Army of Northern Virginia next redeployed to Fredericksburg. Three of the Washington Artillery’s four companies, including Kursheedt’s 1st Company, were positioned on Marye’s Heights overlooking the town. The artillery was “spreading havoc among the enemy’s ranks,” and the Washington Artillery was encouraged by Major Sorrel, General Longstreet’s assistant adjutant general, to hold its position despite the ferocity of the Union assault. The battalion's historian recalled the battle this way: "We are fighting under the very eyes of Lee and Longstreet. 'Now, boys, do your level best!' A solid rifle cannon-ball tears its way through the redoubt, scattering dirt and dust in our faces. Kursheedt picks it up, and says, laughingly, 'Boys, let's send this back to them again.' An instant later it is in the gun, and despatched on its mission back to the enemy." Not too long after this show of bravado Kursheedt was wounded. By April 1863 Kursheedt, now only twenty-five years old, was promoted to battalion sergeant major.[82]

The Washington Artillery marched to Pennsylvania with the Army of Northern Virginia and fought at Gettysburg under a new commander, Maj. Benjamin F. Eshleman,[83] who used Kursheedt as his adjutant. After Gettysburg, the Washington Artillery returned to Virginia and Kursheedt officially became the adjutant with the rank of first lieutenant. The battalion went into winter quarters at Petersburg rather than accompany Longstreet to Georgia. Kursheedt was granted a much-deserved leave of absence in the fall. The unit was called back into action in May 1864, when Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler began his Bermuda Hundred Campaign. Men of the battalion were rushed north to meet the invaders. On May 14, Kursheedt was with Lieutenant Colonel Eshleman and Major Owen on an inspection of their lines south of Drewry's Bluff when they came under heavy fire from enemy sharpshooters. The party halted behind some log cabins. "To go forward or retreat was equally hazardous," Owen later wrote, "so we held a council of war, and determined to run the gauntlet across an open field." The men rode in a bunch so that there would be a small target, and gathering their horses "well in hand, gave them the spur and started…. Instantly the sharp-shooters began firing, and the bullets flew by us like the buzzing of a swarm of bees. Our good steeds seemed conscious of our peril, and went like the wind. Some close shots were made, but no hits. Finally we heard a 'thud' of a bullet, and Eshleman's horse rose up on his hind legs, and Kursheedt and I thought he was a goner, but he came down again, and away we went. We reached the ridge, and were hid from view, right thankful we had run the gauntlet so successfully and with whole skins."[84]

In June the battalion marched north to confront Grant's Army on the Chickahominy River, east of Richmond. By June 18 the men returned to Petersburg, where they were to remain until forced out in April 1865. The battalion was part of the determined Confederate force resisting the brutal siege of Petersburg for almost a year, from June 1864 until April 1865. The Army of the Potomac besieged the small but important railroad town twenty miles south of Richmond for ten months. It was trench warfare at its worst and became a death struggle for the Confederate army, which faced starvation, desertion, and sickness.

In December 1864 Kursheedt wrote to Miss Sallie: “I have not been able to see the Chanucka lights this year. Last year I was with my aunt and officiated in reading the service as I always did at home, for in addition to lighting the lamps in Synagogue we always did so at home. That was our Christmas, as children and we always rec’d presents & enjoyed ourselves—but those times have passed and I only expect to see them again when I shall have a family of my own to hand down these ceremonies to. Don’t you say so too my Pet? … After I shall have been with you in February not many weeks will elapse ere Pesach [Passover].”[85]

When the Army of Northern Virginia retreated toward Appomattox Courthouse, all of the artillery battalions but two were sent off to attempt to reach North Carolina. These units were attacked by Union Calvary on April 8, and some escaped and rejoined Lee’s Infantry. The Washington Artillery destroyed their gun carriages, buried their guns in the woods, and escaped into the mountains to the west. Kursheedt was later paroled in Lynchburg, Virginia, in April 1865.

* * *

There were a few Jewish officers in the Confederate cavalry. Exceptional riding skill, which few Jewish Southerners possessed, was a prerequisite for a cavalry officer. An urban and mercantile people, Jewish Southerners were rarely qualified to command these units. But there were a few who served in the cavalry, Edwin Warren Moise and members of the Hyams family among them.

The most illustrious of the Moise family, Edwin Warren Moise grew up in Charleston, where his family belonged to Beth Elohim. His father was a lawyer and a leader in the Reform movement, and young Edwin was brought up as an observing Jew. At fourteen, he left school to help support his family, first as a clerk and then in his own business. He married Esther Lyon of Petersburg, Virginia, in 1854 and soon accepted a position with Raphael J. Moses of Columbus, Georgia, to operate his flour mill, keep his books, and study law.[86]

Moise was opposed to secession, but he volunteered and raised a company of “Partisan Rangers,” or cavalry, in May 1862. According to Harold Moise, of the company’s 120 men, Captain Moise mounted 50 at his own expense, “costing him $10,000—all of his little fortune. This company was officially named the Moise Rangers.” It is the only company named for a Jewish officer, with the possible exceptions of Joseph Benjamin’s company and Capt. Samuel Yates Levy’s company, neither of which is listed in Marcus Wright’s 1876 official list.[87]

The Moise Rangers enrolled in the Confederate service on July 1, 1862. Moise was appointed captain, not elected, because it was a Confederate army unit, not a state volunteer unit. The unit went to North Carolina and joined Col. William C. Claiborne's 7th Confederate Cavalry. Moise's Rangers now became Company A of the 7th Regiment.[88]

The regiment was sent to Ivor, Isle of Wight County, Virginia, near the Blackwater River. The 7th served its entire career either in the southeastern corner of Virginia between Petersburg and Suffolk or in North Carolina. Moise's company engaged in a foraging expedition in January 1863 at Kelly's Store, then was stationed near Petersburg.

In February 1864 Captain Moise and his company had the unusual experience of capturing and destroying a Federal gunboat on Chuckatuck Creek near Smithfield, Virginia. The Union forces sent a joint army-navy expedition to capture some "rebel troops (said to be about 40) and tobacco." When one Union party ran into a much superior force of Confederates, they retreated to Smithfield to the gunboat *Smith Briggs*. As the Union soldiers attempted to board, Moise's men came charging down a hill, "opened a murderous fire," and captured the gunboat. They next turned the *Smith Briggs'* gun on the other Federal launches, driving them from the scene. Moise removed the boat's equipment before setting it ablaze.

Moise's company served in the defenses around Petersburg during the Bermuda Hundred Campaign of May 1864. The 7th Cavalry was part of Dearing's brigade. On May 31 Dearing's men attacked the Federal position at Spring Hill but were opposed by Union infantry, artillery, and gunboats on the Appomattox River. Moise's horse was killed. (The next day, he requested reimbursement of $2,500 for his horse, which had been conscripted into Confederate service but for which he had not yet been paid.) The 7th Cavalry continued to harry the Union army. In June it was sent to the Jerusalem Plank Road south of Petersburg to protect the Weldon Railroad. In July it was back on the James River. (On August 14, Moise received his $2,500. He now was able to buy 2 ¼ yards of officer's cloth for a new uniform and two weeks later a new pair of shoes.)

Shortly after Lee selected Maj. Gen. Wade Hampton to succeed the late J. E. B. Stuart as commander of his cavalry corps, Hampton organized what came to be known as the "Great Beefsteak Raid." Dearing's brigade and Moise's men had a key role in guarding the right flank of the main party raiding the Union army's corrals, which contained thousands of cattle. The Confederate raiders brought in 2,468 cattle, covered one hundred miles, fought the enemy twice, and captured 304 prisoners and a large quantity of supplies with a loss of only ten killed and forty-seven wounded. The Confederate soldiers were also delighted to take cigars, liquor, butter, cheese, sardines, pickles, boots, blankets, and firearms. “Who that was there can ever forget the wild grandeur of the scene?” one member of the raiding party recalled five years later. The sunset, the shot and shell, the waving of battle flags, “the galloping of staff officers and couriers over the field, the defiant shouts of our men calling to the Yankees to ‘come and get some beef for supper,’ all made up a scene strangely mingling the sublime and the ridiculous.”[89] This raid cemented a close relationship between Hampton and Moise, which continued for thirty-seven years after the war.

In November 1864 Moise’s company became part of the 10th Georgia Cavalry. In January 1865, Hampton led his troopers south to attempt to counter General Sherman’s invasion of the Palmetto State. Moise saw action at the Battle of Monroe’s Crossroads (humorously known as the “Battle of Kilpatrick’s Pants” because Maj. Gen. Judson Kilpatrick was chased out of his camp in his bedclothes). Moise was also at the last major battle of the Civil War, Bentonville. He was with his command on the retreat to Smithville. He and his men were assigned the unenviable task of burning the bridge over the Neuse River to delay the Federal advance. This he accomplished under a hail of bullets from the Federals, who were in pursuit of the retreating Confederates. Captain Moise was paroled at Greensboro on April 26 as a soldier in Gen. Joseph E. Johnston’s army.

* * *

The urban mercantile experience which denied most Southern Jews the background to serve in the cavalry made them highly qualified as quartermasters, adjutants, and commissaries. Quartermasters supply clothing and equipment. Adjutants are administrative officers who write orders and keep a commanding officer’s paperwork organized. Commissaries supply food and other equipment. These jobs, while less glamorous than others, are vital to an army’s success in battle. “An army,” Napoleon is said to have remarked, “travels on its stomach.” There were numerous Jewish officers in these departments throughout the Confederate army.

One of the highest-ranking Jewish Confederates was the quartermaster general of the Confederacy, Col. Abraham Charles Myers.[90] Myers and much of the general staff was formally appointed in March 1861. As quartermaster general, Myers was charged with supplying the army with clothing, supplies, and transportation. His was one of the chief supply bureaus of the Confederate army, along with the Commissary Department headed by Lucius B. Northrop, the commissary general; the Bureau of Ordnance headed by Josiah Gorgas, chief of ordnance; the adjutant and inspector general’s department headed by Gen. Samuel Cooper; and the Medical Department first headed by David Camden DeLeon, surgeon general.[91]

Col. Abraham Myers' job, like that of his cohorts, would prove to be impossible. As Richard D. Goff wrote in *Confederate Supply*, "The financial base and the transportation network of the Slave States were feeble. Their industrial output was comparatively minuscule." And, while the Upper South had some semblance of heavy industry, the "Cotton States had little to offer a sustained military effort."[92]

But Abraham Myers had faced formidable odds in Mexico and undoubtedly believed that the war would be short and that the South could prevail. Myers began with uniforms, tents, and equipment. He advertised for bids. He negotiated with contractors. He was president of the military board, which designed the first Confederate uniform. (It was not gray, but consisted of a blue flannel shirt, gray flannel pants, a red flannel undershirt, cotton drawers, wool socks, boots, and a cap.) Myers ordered from suppliers he knew in New Orleans and later branched out to mills in Georgia and Virginia. He created supply depots all over the South, from San Antonio to Mobile to Charleston to Richmond. He contracted with steamboat and railroad companies to haul men and material. But the men in the supply corps lacked expertise, and problems arose at the local level, where quartermasters and commissaries, although theoretically responsible to their bureau chiefs, tended to side with field commanders.[93]

Col. Abraham Charles Myers was the great-grandson of the first rabbi of Beth Elohim. After graduating from West Point, he became a career army officer and served in the Mexican War. Fort Myers, Florida, then literally a fort, was named in his honor by his father-in-law, Gen. David Emanuel Twiggs. Colonel Myers served as quartermaster general of the Confederate army. (Photograph [carte de visite] by Rees, Richmond, Virginia. Courtesy of Bob Marcus, Springfield, Virginia.)

The capital of the Confederacy moved from Montgomery to Richmond as soon after the firing on Fort Sumter as it could. Jefferson Davis arrived in late May. Abraham and Marion Twiggs Myers moved to Richmond. Mrs. Myers immediately became immersed in the Richmond social scene and was a popular member of wartime society.[94]

Myers set up his offices on the southwest corner of 9th and Main Streets, near Capitol Square. His offices were on the second floor of the quartermaster's building. He eventually administered the largest Confederate supply bureau, with eighty-eight clerks versus sixty-one in the inspector general's office, twenty-one in the surgeon general's, and thirty-six in the commissary department. The Quatermaster Department included quartermasters in each state, paymasters and quartermasters in the field, manufacturing plants, special units such as the Tax-in-Kind Office, purchasing agents abroad, and depot and post quartermasters. Colonel Myers reported to the secretary of war.[95]

Despite deficiencies in supply, the Battle of Manassas in July 1861 was a Confederate victory. Both armies were inexperienced and, as President Lincoln put it in response to his commander, "You are green, it is true, but they are green, also; you are all green alike."[96] Nevertheless, this first battle pointed up the critical importance of supply. Many Southerners believed that if the Southern army had been better supplied it could have marched to Washington and won the war.

Public concern, then anger, then outrage at the Commissary and Quartermaster Departments would be a constant theme in the Confederacy as the war went on.[97] It was understandable, if unjustified, that the officers in charge of food, clothing, and supplies would be blamed for the ills of the army. Northrop was the Confederate Congress's main scapegoat; his nomination to full colonel and confirmation as commissary general provoked heated debate. Myers's nomination to full colonel and confirmation as quartermaster general was immediately approved. (By then, Judah Benjamin was making his exit as secretary of war.) T. C. DeLeon believed that Myers's "bureau was managed with an efficiency and vigor that could scarcely have been looked for in so new an organization."[98] Early in the war, Myers enjoyed a good reputation as a competent and honest department head. An 1862 investigating committee found the quartermaster general's conduct "most favorable and satisfactory" with regard to "prudence, economy, integrity and efficiency," according to a letter to the *Charleston Courier*.[99]

It soon became clear that the war would not be a short one and even clearer that supplying an army of up to 400,000 men would prove to be a formidable task. "You are somewhat in error," Myers wrote to Brig. Gen. J. B. Magruder on August 21, 1861, "as to the resources of the C.S.… You do not know how difficult it is to get any, the most common, thing heretofore abundant." As early as 1861 Myers had to give up on supplying Texas, telling his quartermasters he could not send supplies from the East. Prices rose as the blockade tightened and Northern sources of supply dwindled. States' rights played a part in the Confederacy's problems. North Carolina, for example, supplied its own troops in return for an agreement that the quartermaster would not purchase clothing from its factories. Myers reorganized his supply system, consolidating his efforts in fewer regional depots. To some degree he had been lucky. Blockade-running met with success early in the war. People and states gave generously of clothing. But the Southern economy could not keep pace with the army's huge appetite for supplies, and it fell to Myers and his men to gather every kind of supply from shoes and clothes to horses and fodder in a shrinking economy.[100]

The Union victories of 1862 were a disaster for the Confederacy and especially for the quartermaster general. The loss of key border states, New Orleans and other coastal areas, and the Mississippi Valley constricted the area from which supplies, manufactured goods, and raw materials could be obtained. Blockade-running was severely curtailed, interfering with the importation of European goods. New Orleans had manufactured shoes and clothing. By August 1862 Lee complained that his army lacked "much of the materials of war,… [was] feeble in transportation, the animals being much reduced, and the men … poorly provided with clothes, and in thousands of instances … destitute of shoes." This was an indictment of the quartermaster operation, and, indeed, Lee's invasion of Maryland in 1862 was partly necessitated by supply considerations. Part of Lee's problems after Second Manassas was the simple lack of shoes.[101]

The government now realized that Myers had been correct in his recommendation to send purchasing agents abroad. He received permission to send Maj. J. B. Ferguson, a former merchant, to Europe. He also used the war department's powers to detail men to work in textile factories by allowing them an exemption from military service. Shops were set up to sew uniforms, relying, in many instances, on soldiers' wives and other women desperate to work.[102]

Myers's reorganized department divided the country into eleven purchasing districts, each headed by a principal purchasing agent who controlled purchasing and prices. "On the whole," Goff concludes, "Myers had, by mid-1863, built up a going and growing concern." Congress enacted a new supply law to solve the subsistence problem. Called "the tithe," the law provided for a tax-in-kind rather than money. Thus, a percentage of the South's crops and livestock raised for slaughter would be paid to the Confederate government. Myers's department was charged with enforcement. A chief quartermaster in each state and district quartermasters in each congressional district, together with post quartermasters at regional depots, were appointed to collect the supplies.[103]

Of all Myers's headaches, the railroad was perhaps his greatest.[104] Deeply conservative by upbringing, temperament, and training, Myers did not seek and at times actively resisted government control of the rails. When the president of one railroad company suggested that the government build its own system, Myers opposed the idea.[105] In the first years of the war, the railroads were hardly regulated at all. As the war progressed, however, Myers realized that the failure of transportation was hampering the war effort and that his conservative approach had failed. While he continued to oppose seizure of the railroads or control by field commanders, by October 1862 Myers recommended the appointment of "an able, methodical, and energetic person" to regulate the railroads. Congress demurred, but the secretary of war, James A. Seddon, acted. Without consulting Myers, the secretary appointed William M. Wadley superintendent of railroads with the rank of lieutenant colonel and assigned him to the office of the adjutant and inspector general. Myers complained that this decision would "occasion difficulty and embarrassment to this department," but he received no reply. His relationship with the secretary of war and the president was souring. The railroad industry and the Confederate Congress got involved. Secret sessions were held. Finally, Congress enacted a bill giving the government broad power to control the rails. It lodged that power in the quartermaster general's department. Congress had more faith in Myers than in the secretary of war. The new law gave Myers authority to supervise the Confederacy's railroads, promulgate regulations, dictate freight schedules, and take equipment, rolling stock, and rails as necessary. Myers initially opposed impressment, the practice of appropriating or condemning property and paying a price established by the government, but was forced to resort to it. Yet in a circular to his subordinates, he restricted impressment to instances where "absolutely demanded by the public necessities."[106]

Another Confederate dilemma was the sale of cotton. The early Confederate position, that cotton was king, had failed. Myers's approach was to rely on purchasing agents abroad and to pay for the goods at Southern ports with cotton. Judah Benjamin, then secretary of war, disagreed, preferring to rely on contracts with private parties. Eventually, the government decided to sell cotton in order to buy military supplies, Myers having been among the first to realize that cotton was not king. He supported a change in Confederate policy which forbade trading for supplies through enemy lines. The law had been violated, of necessity and because of greed, from the beginning. By late 1862, it was obvious to those charged with obtaining supplies that there was no choice.[107]

As the war dragged on, the Quartermaster Department came in for severe criticism. The *Savannah Daily News* noted the suspicion in the public mind "that peculation and plunder, and misuse of authority for private purpose, have often been put before public duty and public service." The *Richmond Enquirer* complained that "Quartermasters sometimes get rich—they ought never to get rich.… Unfaithful, incompetent, or dishonest quartermasters or commissaries could plunge the country into ruin." Despite the criticism, the leading historian of Confederate supply, Richard Goff, concluded that the Quartermaster Department under Myers “appears to have been as well organized and as efficient as circumstances would allow.”[108]

James McPherson concludes in *Battle Cry of Freedom* that Q.M. Gen. Abraham Myers could never supply the army with enough tents, uniforms, blankets, shoes, or horses and wagons. “Consequently, Johnny Reb often had to sleep in the open under a captured blanket, to wear a tattered homespun butternut uniform, and to march and fight barefoot unless he could liberate shoes from a dead or captured Yankee.” In an evaluation which gives new meaning to the phrase “damned by faint praise,” Richard Goff concludes: “By Confederate standards his bureau was well run, and his contemporaries praised him. On all major policy innovations Myers had been at or near the forefront, except for railroad regulation, where he shared the conservative outlook of the President.”[109]

Myers’s friends in Congress sought to promote him to brigadier general, and in March 1863 the Congress passed a law providing that the rank and pay of the quartermaster general “shall be those of Brigadier General in the provisional army.” Seventy-six members of Congress sent the president a letter recommending that Colonel Myers be promoted to general. “We think he has shown himself able, honest, and diligent in the discharge of his responsible and laborious duties,” the letter read, “and take pleasure in bearing our testimony to his services and his merits.”[110] Ironically, the law would be used by Jefferson Davis to dismiss Myers from office altogether. On August 7, 1863, Jefferson Davis fired Abraham Myers and replaced him with his old friend Alexander R. Lawton. The only reason Davis gave was that it was in the interest of efficiency.[111] And there does seem to be some basis for the charge. Both the secretary of war and General Lee, among others, had expressed dissatisfaction with Myers’s operation of the department. After Chancellorsville in May 1863, Lee’s army was never again adequately supplied with horses.[112] Capt. Robert G. H. Kean complained in his diary that “Our troops in Lee’s army are barefooted—failure to provide shoes and blankets during all this year conclusive of mismanagement of Q.M.D.”[113] Lee had experienced severe problems at Gettysburg due to a lack of supplies of shoes, clothing, overcoats, and blankets.[114]

Some said that Myers and Davis had feuded in the old army years before.[115] But the true reason, according to Richmond gossip, was that Marian Myers, who considered herself the social superior of Mrs. Davis, had called the president’s wife “an old squaw,” Mrs. Davis being of a somewhat dark complexion.[116] Assistant Secretary of War A. T. Bledsoe passed along the insult in early 1862. The remark was repeated and became well known.[117] Mrs. Myers had apparently made offensive remarks about Mrs. Davis, but the precise role of the quartermaster general’s wife in the controversy is uncertain.[118] “The Congress of 1863,” Mary Chesnut wrote, “gave up its time to fighting the battle of Colonel Myers—Mrs. Myers." Congress was indeed angry. Myers's old friend William Porcher Miles stood by him.[119] Not only had the tactless (some said arrogant) president failed to promote Myers, he now utilized a law enacted to help him to fire Myers. Davis's argument was that the congressional act, which Davis knew was designed to promote Myers, was an unconstitutional encroachment on the president's authority to award promotions and, therefore, Congress must have meant that a brigadier general should replace the current occupant of the office. Davis sought a replacement from June to August and found a brigadier general, Lawton, who had been appointed to that rank in April 1861. Congress was incensed. It devoted the winter of 1863 to debating the issue and, in a colorful description by Mrs. Chesnut, "to a hand-to-hand fight with Mr. Davis on account of Mr. Quartermaster General Myers. Here again, who pulled the wires? Not Colonel Myers, surely? Who cared a fig for him? The friends of Mrs. Myers, led by Mr. [William Porcher] Miles, and the enemies of Mr. Davis formed a brigade of great strength."[120]

Richmond society, government officials, and the newspapers joined the Senate in feeling that Myers had been treated unfairly. Mary Chesnut likened the feud to Andrew Jackson's famous defense of Peggy Eaton, the wife of his secretary of war, who was accused of impropriety. "And now, she wrote, "Richmond plays old Hickory with its beautiful Mrs. M."[121] Captain Kean wrote in his diary: "The event which has put the gossips agog in the last two days is the taking off of the Quartermaster General's head." Josiah Gorgas confided to his diary: "[Myers] has fulfilled his duties very well…. [The President] has, I fear, little appreciation of services rendered, unless the party enjoys his good opinion."[122] Society belle Sallie B. Putnam, author of *Richmond during the War*, recalled Myers as "one of the most prudent, sagacious and efficient officers under the government." The controversy was "bitterly acrimonious, and gave rise to some unpleasant *on dits* of a personal character," which, being a lady, Mrs. Putnam deigned not to repeat.[123]

There is no evidence that anti-Semitism played any role in Myers's firing, despite the glee expressed by John Beauchamp Jones, a clerk in the War Department whose memoir, *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary*, was published in 1866. Jones called Myers the "Jew Quarter-Master General" and claimed he replied, "let them suffer," when told of soldiers' pleas for blankets.[124] But Sallie Putnam, who had no love for the Jews, thought Myers was mistreated and, most importantly, Jefferson Davis not only had no prejudice against Jews, but, to the contrary, maintained warm relationships with many Southern Jews.

Myers was crushed by his termination. In January 1864 he was ill in bed.[125] The Senate in a 15–6 vote resolved “1st. That in the opinion of the Senate, A. C. Myers is now Quartermaster General of the Confederate States army, and is by law authorized and required to discharge the duties thereof. 2nd. That A. R. Lawton is not authorized by law to discharge the duties of said office.”[126] But the Confederate Congress was not about to create a constitutional crisis over the issue, and when Davis sent Lawton’s name to the Senate for confirmation in early February, the Senate complied.[127] Myers could have served under Lawton but refused. It is unclear what Myers’s position was. By June 1864 the attorney general gave an opinion that Myers was no longer in the army, a position Myers himself took at first.[128] Later, he said he was a colonel and a commissioned officer and remained on the army list.

Myers remained bitter for the rest of his life. He had no income, and he and his family went to live in Georgia, where they survived with the help of friends.[129] He tried to secure a field command and wrote to Gen. Braxton Bragg on a number of occasions to ascertain his place in the army. Bragg apparently did nothing and would not see Myers. In August, Myers wrote Bragg that his situation “was painful in the extreme … it is very humiliating to be obliged to live as I do, very much upon the charity of friends and almost in want.”[130]

Abraham Myers was an actor in a drama on the national stage. But there were quartermasters in every regiment in the army. A typical quartermaster in the trenches was Maier Triest of Charleston. Triest immigrated from Bavaria in 1850. He was thirty years old when the war started, and he served as captain of Triest’s Company (Beat 2), 16th South Carolina Militia, from November 9 to December 20, 1861. Like Triest, most young, able-bodied Charlestonians had served in militia units prior to the war. In January 1862 Triest and hundreds of other South Carolinians enlisted in a regiment being raised by Col. Clement H. Steven, who had formerly commanded Triest’s militia regiment and likely knew Triest. The regiment was originally organized by Stevens and Lt. Col. Ellison Capers for twelve months of Confederate service. Six companies were raised for one year when state law changed in March 1862 to require service for the duration of the war. All the men agreed to so serve, and four additional companies were added. The 24th South Carolina then went into Confederate service in April.[131]

Maier Triest, another Bavarian immigrant, was active in Charleston Jewish affairs and served in the militia prior to the war. He served as regimental quartermaster sergeant in the 24th South Carolina. He returned to Charleston when the war ended, and his descendants are members of Beth Elohim today. (Courtesy of Caroline L. Triest and Larry W. Freudenberg, Charleston.)

Colonel Stevens, during the formative period, chose Triest to be sergeant major of the regiment, whereupon Triest reenlisted at that rank on January 20, 1862. In January 1863 he was promoted to regimental quartermaster sergeant, a position he held throughout the war. Rabbi Elzas, who knew Triest's family, wrote that Triest was promoted twice to acting assistant adjutant general, once by General Stevens, who died before the commission was returned, and again by General Capers just before the close of the war.[132]

The 24th saw action throughout the war at Secessionville, South Carolina; Jackson, Mississippi (Vicksburg campaign); Atlanta; Franklin; Nashville; and the Carolinas.

Triest was with the 24th in the weeks before the final capitulation of Vicksburg, when Grant was getting between Vicksburg, the Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi River, and the Confederate forces at Jackson, a city and rail hub to the east of Vicksburg.[133] The South Carolinians were determined to prevent Jackson from falling to Grant's army and engaged in fierce, hand-to-hand combat with the 10th Missouri. At Wright's Farm, a ball hit Col. Ellison Capers's horse, and a number of men of the 24th were killed. Capers wrote afterward that Triest had given him "a most welcomed drink of whiskey." Capers said it was the only time he ever took a drink during the war.[134]

As regimental quartermaster sergeant, it was Triest's job to see to it that the entire regiment was supplied. During the Jackson campaign, for example, he traveled to Canton and Meridian, Mississippi, to obtain shoes and clothing which had been left behind in storage at the beginning of the campaign. He traveled throughout July and August 1863, retrieving and transporting boxes of clothing, cooking utensils, and supplies. In early October 1863, while at Chickamauga, Braxton Bragg sent Triest to Columbia and Charleston to act as agent for the collection of winter clothes, blankets, and other supplies from the South Carolina Relief Association. He returned on October 28, having used his own funds for drayage (movement by wagon) and cooperage (crating) at stops along the way. (The funds were refunded to him.) Triest surrendered with the consolidated and redesignated 16th/24th South Carolina Regiment with Gen. Joseph E. Johnston's army on April 26, 1865. He was paroled on May 1. According to Elzas, Triest was wounded at Atlanta.[135]

* * *

The job of the commissary is to provide food and related supplies to the army. In Raphael J. Moses, the Confederate army found its most colorful and dedicated commissary. Moses was a native of Charleston and a resident of Columbus, Georgia, where he lived on a plantation, The Esquiline, named, in true Southern fashion, for one of the Seven Hills of Rome. He was, according to Douglas Southall Freeman, Robert E. Lee's biographer, "the best commissary of like rank in the Confederate service. Moses's stories were endless; his narrative flawless. The darkest, dullest night at headquarters he could enliven." He was a "most intelligent, efficient officer," according to G. Moxley Sorrel, the chief of Longstreet's staff. At the end of his life, Moses prided himself on his service to the cause; prized his memories of Lee, Longstreet, and other luminaries at Gettysburg; and in 1893 his calling card still read, "Major Raphael J. Moses, C.S.A."[136]

Moses and three of his sons—Raphael J. Moses Jr., Albert Moses Luria, and Israel Moses Nunez—fought in the Confederate armed forces.[137] Moses himself was fifty years old, but, while in Virginia on business in April 1861, he volunteered. Moses's old friend Robert Y. Toombs had become a powerful senator. He was seriously considered for the presidency of the Confederacy and was named its first secretary of state.[138] Toombs opposed the firing on Fort Sumter, predicting that it was like striking a hornet's nest and "legions now quiet will swarm out and sting us to death."[139] Toombs found his office unimportant and resigned, becoming a brigadier general, and Moses sought a field position in his brigade. Toombs offered Moses the position of commissary, but Moses declined, preferring a combat role. Howell Cobb, another prominent Georgian, who had resigned from Buchanan's cabinet and was now serving as president of the Provisional Confederate Congress, convinced Moses that he ought to accept, as it was a difficult job to fill with a competent man and, Moses recalled, "he was sure that I could do more good in that position than any other." Toombs and Cobb knew their man. Moses committed four years of his life and his formidable talent to supplying Toombs's brigade, then as commissary officer of Gen. David R. Jones's Division, Army of Northern Virginia, and then in November 1862 as chief commissary officer of Gen. James Longstreet's corps.[140]

Raphael J. Moses was in Virginia in 1862 serving as Toombs's commissary during the Peninsular Campaign, when Gen. Joseph E. Johnston's and then Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia faced Gen. George B. McClellan's Army of the Potomac on the Peninsula between the James and the York Rivers. Commissaries were charged with the responsibility of feeding the soldiers, but they often were caught in a battle. During this campaign, a Texas commissary's head was blown off. Moses related the story that there were those in the army who said that it served him right. After all, "what the devil right had a Commissary to be in the battle; he should have been with his wagons looking after the commissary stores. On this hint I did not speak, but said to myself if this is the way they talk about Commissaries with their heads shot off, I'll so conduct myself hereafter as to avoid similar comments."[141]

At one point during the campaign, Moses ran Toombs's headquarters. For two or three days, Lee found this headquarters to be the most convenient place for him to locate, and so he sent his cot and personal things down by a wagon. His staff followed. Moses found Lee to be as calm "as a summer cloud." He gave his orders "with precision and courtesy." Moses recalled a dinner at which an officer arrived, saluted, and said, "I am ordered by General Longstreet to inform you that General McClellan has retired." Lee bowed to the officer and then said to Moses, "Well, Major, you can see what trouble that young man has given me!" That was all Lee said. After dinner, Lee moved back to his own headquarters.[142]

Moses's position brought him into contact with many of the major officers of the Confederate army. John Bell Hood, who commanded one of Longstreet's divisions at

Gettysburg and was later promoted to temporary full general, was, according to Moses, "one of the best Brigadiers and poorest commanders in the army." Moses remembered "Jeb" Stuart as "a splendid Cavalry Officer, but, oh, how frivolous. He carried a banjo player with him wherever he went, and his favorite pastime when not dancing with the girls was to have his banjo player thrum and sing, 'Come, jine the Cavalry.'… He was as vain and frivolous as he was brave and dashing." Moses saw Robert E. Lee almost daily during his service in Virginia because Lee's headquarters was frequently near Longstreet's. Moses described Lee as "a plain, splendid looking, courteous gentleman, with such wonderful self control… in victory and defeat the same, unruffled exterior, kind to his men and kind to animals." He was present on one occasion when Lee contrived to convince the enemy that reinforcements had arrived when they had not. Lee ordered the men to cut brush and have the horses drag it along the road to cause an immense dust to arise and make it appear that fresh troops had arrived. The ruse worked.[143]

The Army of Northern Virginia was reorganized in 1862 into two corps: the 1st Corps commanded by Longstreet, and the 2d Corps by Jackson. When the staff assignments were completed, Moses was promoted to chief commissary of subsistence in Longstreet's corps, which now consisted of five divisions totaling 41,000 soldiers.[144] Moses became a member of Longstreet's inner circle of his top officers. "He soon became a favorite with the younger members of Longstreet's staff because of his wit and seemingly endless string of stories and anecdotes," concludes Longstreet's biographer, Jeffrey Wert.[145] Moses was with Longstreet at Second Manassas when Lee routed a much bigger Union army under Gen. John Pope and forced it to retreat back to Washington.[146] Moses had been on foraging excursions during these campaigns procuring food and supplies for Lee's army. On one excursion, Moses spied some cattle and sent a detail to drive them along with his unit's herd. After a half mile or so, an old woman came up to him in great distress and said that one of the cattle was her "pet heifer" and wanted to know whether Moses intended to kill it. She seemed almost brokenhearted at the apparent fate of her pet, and Moses's sympathies got the better of him. He said, "Certainly not, take her back." Years later, he reminisced: "I shall never forget the joy that illuminated the old woman's face … as she went back with her pet heifer…. This is a small matter … but… it is one of my good deeds that comes back to memory and cheers me in my waning years."[147]

Some of Moses's excursions lasted weeks and were both dangerous and fatiguing. He arrived in camp the morning before the Battle of Sharpsburg (Antietam) after a two-week foray, and the next night he and his men were forced to retreat and leave the supplies they had so laboriously procured. Moses let the soldiers take what they could in their knapsacks and even on their bayonets. The "adornment of a flitch of bacon being in no case objected to," he recalled, "and except for what was thus saved and the cattle which we could drive, my two weeks labor was lost. So much for the uncertainties of a boarding house keeper in the midst of War, and as I had, including teamsters and other noncombatants, a family of nearly 54,000 to provide for, this depletion of the larder was a very serious matter."[148]

In November 1862 Moses was chief commissary of the right wing, Longstreet's corps of the Army of Northern Virginia, and the next month participated in the first battle of Fredericksburg. One of his small contributions was to locate a friendly home where Mrs. Longstreet could stay.[149] Longstreet's official report after that battle thanked his staff, including Moses, for "the valuable services in their respective departments."[150] Moses next served as acting commissary officer of Gen. Lafayette McLaw's division. He was relieved of that assignment on February 25, 1863, and was ordered to report to General Longstreet at Petersburg, Virginia.

Longstreet's area of operation was now the coastal areas of the Carolinas and Southeast Virginia, areas occupied by Union forces. Moses was chosen to forage and raid in enemy-occupied territory because his skill as a commissary officer was well known. "Longstreet," Freeman writes in *Lee's Lieutenants*, "had a justly high opinion of Moses and he promptly forwarded to the commanding General the report prepared by the commissary."[151] Lee agreed with Longstreet that it was "of the first importance to draw from the invaded districts every pound of provision and forage we can. It will lighten the draught from other sections and give relief to our citizens." Lee and Longstreet, based on Moses's report of available supplies, determined to capture Suffolk, Virginia, in an effort to pin down the Union forces so that Moses could forage for badly needed supplies behind enemy lines. The troops at Fredericksburg were in need of supplies, and there was no place to obtain them except on the coast of North Carolina, where there were quantities of fish and bacon. Moses and Longstreet agreed that the capture of Suffolk would prevent the Federal troops from interfering with Moses's mission and "gobbling up" all the supplies. Suffolk was taken. Moses and his men and trains went to the coast of North Carolina and procured a large quantity of supplies, which were then sent to Fredericksburg.[152]

While Longstreet's corps was away, the rest of the army fought the second battle of Fredericksburg and the Battle at Chancellorsville. The next great Confederate offensive of the war was the Gettysburg campaign, and for it Longstreet's corps had rejoined the rest of the Army of Northern Virginia. This meant that Raphael Moses was charged with keeping the 1st Corps supplied with food from Virginia to Pennsylvania. The 1st Corps was ordered to proceed along the east side of the Blue Ridge mountains and to cross into Maryland. Moving on to Pennsylvania, Longstreet's corps was in Chambersburg on

June 27. Moses had orders to seize property from stores but not private homes and to pay for goods in Confederate money.[153] The storekeepers hid their most valuable goods or closed shop. Moses's job was made more difficult by the fact that General Ewell's corps had just come through a week before. Moses was excited, however, when he discovered a large supply of felt hats hidden away in a cellar, which he "annexed," as he put it, at once.[154] Moses had been ordered to secure three days' rations for the whole army, either voluntarily or by seizing or "impressing" supplies. The town officials had disappeared as had keys to the stores. When Moses's men began using axes to open the stores, however, the keys and townspeople reappeared. Moses and his men worked long hours attempting to find provisions. He returned to the camp very late one evening, having endured much abuse and insults from the local women, who called him "a thievish little rebel scoundrel" and other names. This did not annoy him so much as the hiding of goods in private homes, which he was not allowed to search by General Lee's orders. Next, he had to endure the chaffing of his fellow officers, who, with good humor, made him continually repeat the different names he had been called. He said that at first the women refused his Confederate "trash" [money] with great scorn, but they ended being very anxious to receive the exact amount due.[155]

The Battle of Gettysburg was fought over three days, from July 1 to July 3, 1863. Moses was privy to all of the top-level discussions, even those involving civilian spies. In his memoirs, for example, Moses remembered two spies, Harrison and Schrieber, who gave Lee the exact position of the Union army, but Lee distrusted the men and refused to rely on their reports, which turned out to be correct.[156]

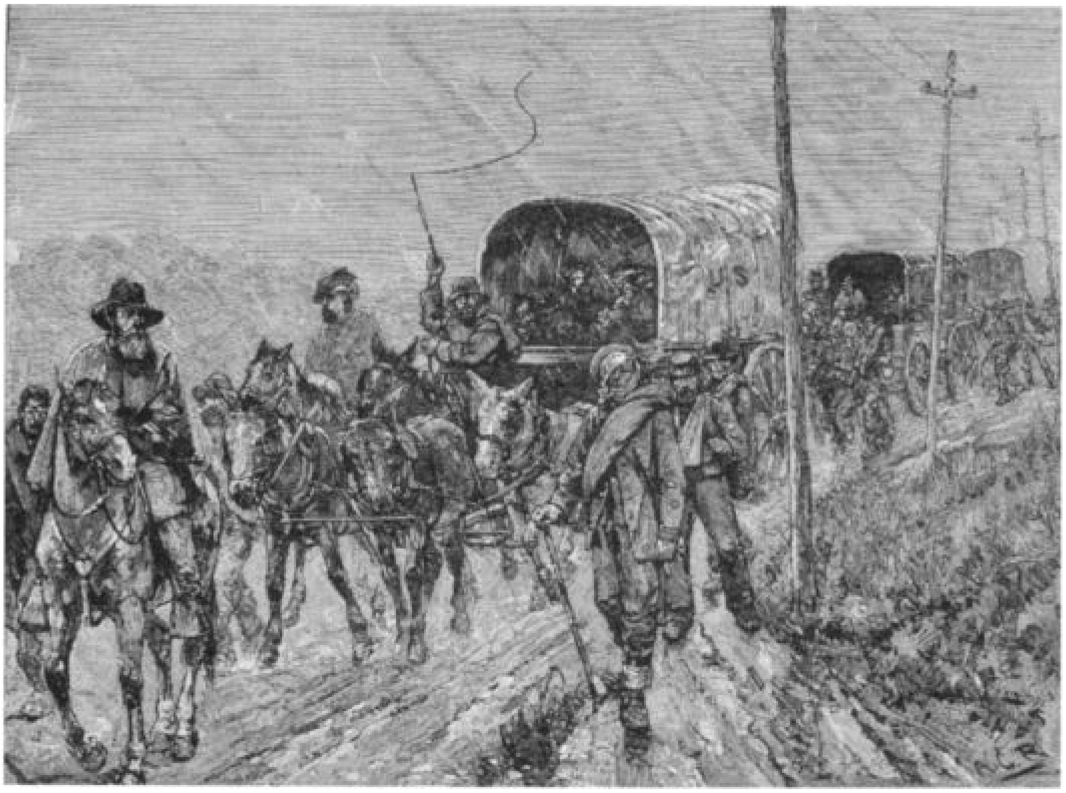
"Moses, like his ancestor in the wilderness," Jacob Marcus wrote, "had to feed an army." By all accounts he succeeded admirably. Moses was well liked and respected by Lee's staff at Gettysburg. "He was much older than most of us," General Sorrel recalled in his memoirs, "but 'bon comrade,' and had an exhaustless fund of incident and anecdote, which he told inimitably."[157] Moses got along famously with Maj. John W. Fairfax, the aristocratic Virginian who owned James Monroe's plantation and volunteered to serve on Longstreet's staff.[158] Courageous and brave, pious and a bon vivant, Fairfax was something of a character. He always had a sack with two pockets, one for his bottle of whiskey and the other for his Bible. One Sunday when Fairfax was drunk, Moses entered his tent and wrote on one sheet of paper, "This in a moment brings me to an end," and on another sheet, "While this informs me I shall never die." He fixed the first to the bottle of whiskey and put the second between the pages of the Bible. When Fairfax awoke, he read the notes and exclaimed, "Moses, by the Lord!"[159]

One event which Moses understandably omits from his memoir (which was written for his family and not for publication) was the theft of his trunk containing more than

$10,000 in government funds from his tent during the early morning hours of July 4. His military records contain his affidavit explaining the theft, which Moses felt was not his fault, as iron safes had not been provided by the government. He was not disciplined on account of the incident, and his superiors obviously accepted his explanation without question.[160]

Another of the colorful characters at Gettysburg was Col. Arthur J. L. Fremantle of the British army's Coldstream Guards, who was present as a military observer. Fremantle was a guest in Moses's tent.[161] The colonel later published a memoir of his experience and wrote of Major Moses: "He is the most jovial, amusing, and clever son of Israel I ever had the good fortune to meet."[162]

Moses was not far from Lee during much of the Battle of Gettysburg. "I had a splendid view of the grand and disastrous battle. The thunder of the artillery was terrifically grand, the charge of Pickett's division right up a long hill in the face of Federal cannon was not exceeded in valor by the charge of the six hundred [the Charge of the Light Brigade]." But the Confederate army suffered its worst defeat of the war. Colonel Freemantle related his return to Moses's tent, where he found "that worthy commissary in very low spirits."[163] And then came the retreat amidst a terrible rain storm. "I laid down in a fence corner and near by on the bare earth in an India rubber [sheet] lay General Lee biding the pelting storm."[164]



The retreat from Gettysburg. (*Battles and Leaders of the Civil War.*)

After the retreat from Gettysburg, Longstreet’s corps was sent to Tennessee to reinforce the Army of Tennessee, commanded by Gen. Braxton Bragg. Major Moses, as Longstreet’s chief commissary, continued his responsibilities for the subsistence of this corps. A portion of Longstreet’s corps arrived in time to participate in the Confederate victory at Chickamauga. Afterward, the Corps participated in major campaigns around Chattanooga and Knoxville, Tennessee. Moses’s job in this war-ravaged state was difficult. His reports relay the near impossibility of securing tens of thousands of pounds of flour and meat, the competition between commissary officers of different divisions, and the refusal of civilians to cooperate. In Sweet Water, Tennessee, for example, a railroad engineer refused to move the train, and Moses took forcible possession of the railroad and ran the engine with an officer detailed from one of the Tennessee regiments. Despite his best efforts, the troops, on occasion, went two to three days and sometimes longer without flour rations.[165]

The Tennessee campaigns went badly for the Confederates. General Bragg suffered defeats at Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, and Longstreet failed to push the enemy out of Knoxville. Longstreet took up winter quarters in the mountainous region of northeast Tennessee, where the terrain was rugged and much of the population pro-Union. Nevertheless, Moses kept the army supplied for six months after Longstreet thought he would be forced to retreat for lack of supplies. Moses’s experience in business enabled him to obtain much-needed wheat from reluctant farmers. He obtained the wheat thrashers’ records identifying those who brought in wheat to be thrashed. When the farmers hid the wheat, Moses and his men went after the sheep that wandered about the hill country. The sheep were not fit to eat, but the farmers wanted to shear the wool for winter clothing. Thus, when Moses seized the flocks (and gave receipts as commissary), he could bargain two pounds of sheep for one pound of bacon. This, he recalled, “unlocked the secret places in which the bacon was hid, and sheep proving good currency, I got nearly all the bacon necessary for rationing the Corps.” He was forced at times to feed the troops sheep meat, which proved to be very unpopular.[166] Longstreet’s biographer credits Moses’s “wizardry of swapping confiscated sheep for bacon, of running mills day and night, and of commandeering trains” with having “fed the men in those difficult weeks in East Tennessee.”[167]

* * *

A number of Jewish Confederate doctors, surgeons, and assistant surgeons served in the Confederate army. Indeed, the first surgeon general of the Confederate army was David Camden DeLeon of Columbia. Like many Confederate officers, DeLeon left the regular army to serve the Confederacy. A major in the medical corps of the “old” army, he was appointed surgeon in the Confederate army and chief of the medical staff of Gen. Braxton Bragg's army in Pensacola. In May, he was appointed surgeon general of the Confederacy, but, according to H. H. Cunningham, "his occupancy of the Surgeon General's office, consisting of only one room at that time, was of brief duration."[168] He was relieved on July 12, 1861. It is not clear whether DeLeon was replaced by Samuel Preston Moore because Moore outranked DeLeon in the "old Army," or whether DeLeon was not competent to head the Confederacy's medical department, or whether he had a drinking problem. After all, DeLeon's former military career was a distinguished one.

David Camden DeLeon's Confederate career appears to have been a disaster. The records of the Medical Corps were destroyed in the burning of Richmond, and so the details are lost. In his brief tenure as surgeon general, he sat on a board which designed the Confederate uniform with fellow South Carolinian Abraham Myers.[169] He certainly enjoyed the social life of early wartime Richmond, visiting with the Chesnuts, for example. He gave Mrs. Chesnut a miniature silver gondola he had bought in Venice. He told her he gave it to her as opposed to a Miss Sanders on account of Mrs. Chesnut's "Superior pulchritude."[170]

His career was steadily downhill after being replaced as surgeon general. He was assigned to Gen. Benjamin Huger's forces at Norfolk, where he served briefly as medical director. On June 3, 1862, he became medical director of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia and served in the Seven Days Battle. He was again relieved of duty within a month of his appointment. He resigned his commission in July 1862.[171]

DeLeon may have rejoined the Confederate army in Texas or he may have gone to Europe as an aide to his brother Edwin DeLeon. Charles Cullop writes in *Confederate Propaganda in Europe* that Dr. David Camden DeLeon was in Europe on Medical Department business in January 1863 and carried dispatches for his brother Edwin.[172] When the war ended, DeLeon left Texas for Mexico with other Confederate officers. He lived in Mexico for a year, returned to New Mexico, took up the practice of medicine, and lived quietly gardening and engaging in "his favorite amusement … to break the wild mustangs." He never returned to South Carolina. He never visited his family.[173]

DeLeon was afflicted with some kind of disgrace, drinking problem, or mental illness. Mary Chesnut noted in March of 1862 that Dr. DeLeon had been drinking and that he repeated "every thing, over & over" and "bored us to death."[174] In June she evidently felt DeLeon had acted improperly: "Edward Boykin told me he heard that old beast of a Camden DeLeon brag of his having given me that silver Gondola. I wish he had it back."[175] In July 1861 she wrote: "Camden DeLeon is sure to lose his place as surgeon general. Dr. Gibbs wants it. Dr. Nott is looked upon by many as a fit person for it. DeLeon is always drunk."[176] In an 1860 letter to his brother Edwin, Camden described an "unaccountable mental depression foreign to my naturally sanguine temperament. I attribute it to the effect of the Climate [he was touring the Middle East and Europe] and think that my namesake Old King David who was a bad man as well as myself and occasionally was guilty of much indiscretion must have suffered in a similar way."[177]

More successful and distinguished medical service was rendered by Simon Baruch, a Prussian immigrant from Camden, South Carolina. Baruch was born in Schwersenz, Posen, Prussia, in 1840. Like many a Prussian Jew, he came to America to avoid conscription in the Prussian army. He lived in South Carolina with Mannes Baum, a native of his hometown who operated a small general store in Camden with his brother Marcus. Baruch was a bookkeeper for Baum, but soon went to Charleston to study medicine. He acculturated quickly into South Carolina society. By December 1860, at the age of twenty, this Prussian immigrant was marching in a parade in Charleston to celebrate signing the secession ordinance. When the war began, Baruch continued in his studies at the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond. He could not resist joining the Confederate army and enlisted in April 1862. His mentor, Mannes Baum, gave Baruch a uniform and sword.[178]

Dr. Joseph Bensadon (pronounced Ben *say'* dun), a Sephardic Jew from Charleston, was educated at the College of Charleston, served in the Mexican War, and moved to New Orleans in 1847. He was a successful physician, counting Judah Touro among his patients. When Touro established the Touro Infirmary, Dr. Bensadon was its first director. He served as a surgeon in the Confederate army. (Courtesy of the Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans.)

Baruch did not need a sword. What he needed were medical instruments, as he was appointed an assistant surgeon "without even having lanced a boil," as he used to tell his children.[179] As an assistant surgeon, Baruch had a rank equivalent to a captain. He was promoted to surgeon in November 1864. (A surgeon was equivalent to a major.)

Baruch joined the 3d South Carolina Battalion in April 1862.[180] His first combat experience was during the preliminary fighting before Second Manassas, when he marched through bursting shells at Thoroughfare Gap to set up his medical tent. His brigade reached the battlefield in time to receive "a volley of minie balls, the first I had ever heard zipping," even though Pope's Union army was in full retreat. It was here that Baruch saw his first wounded man. "While engaged in removing the first dressing a solid shot fell on the other side [of a protecting fence], scattering earth over us."[181] After the battle at Groveton (Second Manassas), Baruch's medical unit camped on the field and "awoke amid the ghastliest scenes of real war. Long lines of ambulances that had come from Washington under flag of truce [*sic*] were passing with the union wounded to Washington while we stood with bared heads in token of respect for our brave enemy." Details of men from both armies buried their dead. Baruch went to the nearest battlefield hospital, which was in a small house. An operating table was set up by laying a door upon a barrel and a box. Men were waiting to be operated upon. When the surgeon saw Baruch, his face pale, and recognized his uniform as that of an assistant surgeon, he "banteringly offered me the knife, saying, 'Doctor, perhaps you would like to operate.' I accepted the challenge. This was my first surgical operation of any kind. The surgeon was kind enough to commend my work."[182]

The next day, Baruch marched north with his corps, forded the Potomac, and entered upon the first Maryland invasion. Just before the Battle of Antietam, Baruch was involved in the Battle of South Mountain. When he reached the battlefield, the Confederates were in full retreat. Baruch was ordered to stay with the wounded men at Boonsboro, Maryland, while the Union army pursued the retreating Confederates. Baruch was captured and spent six weeks in Boonsboro before being sent to Fort McHenry at Baltimore. Captured officers were treated well in 1862, and Baruch had the run of the town until he was exchanged. (Doctors were exchanged quickly so that the sick and wounded soldiers would have medical treatment.) Indeed, Baruch was entertained at a dance which lasted until two in the morning.[183] According to his son Bernard Baruch's memoir, Simon Baruch and his fellow Confederate officers rode in a carriage to a photographer's studio the next morning and posed for their pictures. ("A copy of this photograph," Bernard Baruch recalled, "which Father's female admirers paid for, hung in our Camden home when I was a boy.")[184] The next day, Simon Baruch was on his way back to Virginia.

Baruch was with the 3d South Carolina Battalion, Kershaw's brigade at Gettysburg. He arose before dawn and marched until noon. He was at the famous Peach Orchard, where he saw "for the first time the charge of the entire division while infantry and artillery were mowing them down with shot and shell that flew around and above my first aid station.” Sent to the Black Horse Tavern, where the division hospital was established, Baruch spent two days and two nights in constant operations and vigils, treating ambulance after ambulance of seriously wounded men.[185] The Union advance on July 5 after Lee’s army began withdrawing placed the hospital in grave danger. Soon shells shrieked overhead and burst all around. The surgeons ran up a yellow flag to signal that they were in a hospital. The doctors treated the wounded while a hail of artillery fire exploded nearby.[186]

When Lee retreated, Baruch was again ordered to remain with his patients. Once again, he was not at the front. The front lines had moved behind him. Dr. Pearce, the surgeon in charge, ordered Baruch to carry a message of surrender to the approaching Yankees because, he said, “You understand these Yankees.”[187] Baruch hastily donned his gray coat and green sash. “As I approached the line,” he recalled, “with the nearest cavalryman’s pistol dangerously pointed at me, I held up my hand and said, ‘I surrender. Where is your captain?’ The man yelled in a distinct Irish brogue, ‘Say, Cap, here is a Reb wants to see you.’”[188] The captain asked if there were many Rebels around to which Baruch replied “only the wounded.”

Baruch spent six weeks treating his men at Gettysburg. The Union medical officers shared their supplies, but many men died, six from lockjaw. Baruch was given a wagon for his supplies, and an officer gave him the *New York Herald* and told him he could now “learn what has become of General Lee. Read it until one of our wagons arrives.” Some among the local people also came with supplies to help the wounded Confederate soldiers. A physician from Baltimore presented Baruch with “a fine case of instruments” with his name engraved on it.[189]

Once again, Baruch was taken to Fort McHenry in Baltimore as a prisoner of war. Being marched through the hot streets of Baltimore was a trying experience. “What a contrast,” Baruch recalled, “between this tramp through dirty streets and my previous year’s drive through the fashionable streets of Baltimore in a victoria!”[190] His stay this time was not so happy, but was not oppressive. The officers were put in a barracks, and they ate hardtack and coffee for supper; pork and corned beef for dinner. They were allowed to roam the grounds, play ball, exercise, swim, and even receive visitors. It was here that Dr. Baruch wrote a medical paper later published as “Two Penetrating Bayonet Wounds of the Chest.” Eventually Baruch and the other doctors were exchanged for Union medical personnel in October 1863. (“The case of instruments which I had sent to my home in Camden, S.C., was captured eighteen months later by General Sherman.”)[191]

In December 1863 Baruch reported for duty at Newnan, Georgia. The 3d South Carolina Battalion was then with Longstreet in Tennessee. In August 1864, he was ordered to report to the medical director of Longstreet's corps. He was assigned to the 13th Mississippi stationed in Richmond and was promoted to surgeon. He was with Maj. Gen. Joseph B. Kershaw's division as it went to reinforce Lt. Gen. Jubal A. Early's army in the Shenandoah Valley. Baruch recounted a humorous episode at the close of the Battle of Cedar Creek in October 1864. When inspired by the sight of General Early waving a flag and imploring his men to stop the rout, he "foolishly undertook with a colleague to check the flight of a group of soldiers." Galloping toward the front, Baruch yelled, "Rally, men, for God's sake rally." When a shell exploded over his head and his horse bolted and ran away, the men yelled after him, "Why in hell don't you rally?"[192]

Baruch later suffered from some kind of medical disability and spent a part of the remainder of the war in hospitals as a patient. He was relieved from duty with the 13th Mississippi on a certificate of disability and ordered to Raleigh, North Carolina, where he was again in service in Confederate hospitals. He was in charge of a smallpox hospital in Goldsboro. He treated the wounded after the Battle of Kinston, North Carolina, and treated Union prisoners as well. "They were raw Germans," Baruch recalled, "unable to speak English, and were delighted when I addressed them in their own language." He organized a hospital at Thomasville and there treated men who had been wounded at Averasboro. He commandeered wagons, gathered pine straw for bedding, persuaded college girls to help as nurses, went house to house seeking food, and cleaned up abandoned factories to use as hospitals. He came down with typhoid fever and was unconscious for two weeks. When he awoke, the war was over for him and he had been paroled.[193]

Simon Baruch, Bernard Baruch's father, was a Prussian immigrant to Camden, South Carolina. He served as a surgeon in the Confederate army (with the equivalent rank of major) and was left behind to care for the wounded at Boonsboro, Maryland, and at Gettysburg. He was active in the Confederate Veterans after the war. (Courtesy of South Carolina Historical Society.)

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The Confederate government was concerned about disloyalty and treason, and special commissioners were appointed with military and judicial authority to investigate and prosecute treason, espionage, harboring deserters, or trading with the enemy. These commissioners were part prosecutor, part judge, part police. Many were distinguished lawyers, including a former attorney general of the Confederacy.[194] There was at least one Jewish military commissioner in the Confederate army, and he had quite an interesting career. Henry J. Leovy was a talented Jewish lawyer from New Orleans.[195] He codified the laws of the City of New Orleans, which were published from 1856 to 1872. After the war he served as city attorney of New Orleans. In addition, Leovy was the principal owner of the *Delta* newspaper, which he operated until it was seized by Gen. B. F. Butler in 1862, when New Orleans was occupied by the Union army.

Leovy left New Orleans before its capture and joined the Confederate forces. Brig. Gen. Hamilton Prioleau Bee, Gen. Bernard E. Bee's brother, was in contact with Leovy in the fall of 1863. Bee was in Brownsville, Texas, trading cotton for ammunition and war material, and Leovy was somehow involved in the operation. "If you hear that I am killed by a Mexican," Bee wrote, "I want you to kill a dozen or so before you leave the frontier—not the poor devils, but the officials."[196] Leovy was apparently a kind of "troubleshooter," or special assignment agent, for the Confederate government. He went to Richmond undoubtedly at the behest of his old friend Judah P. Benjamin, who likely assigned Leovy the arduous and dangerous task of investigating and routing out spies, deserters, and disloyal citizens.

The area to which Leovy was assigned, Southwestern Virginia, was sorely divided on the issues of secession, slavery, and loyalty to the Confederacy. Many remained loyal to the Union. Many who had supported the Confederacy early in the war had been alienated by the government's inefficiency and now called for a return to the Union. Judah Benjamin, as secretary of state, concerned himself with espionage issues and trusted Leovy to handle this potentially explosive situation. Indeed, the government at Richmond had convinced itself, according to Kenneth W. Noe, that "southwest Virginia, so important strategically as a source of war material and as a transportation corridor, was overrun with 'Red Strings,' members of the unionist Heroes of America." These Appalachian counties, peopled with Scotch Irish and Germans, often clashed with their fellow Virginians to the east over a variety of issues, including slavery, internal improvements, and taxes.[197]

As the war progressed, economic conditions worsened. The currency became worthless, the black market drove prices up, and military impressment depleted stores. The Confederate "tax in kind" and the draft added fuel to the fire. By late 1863 the majority of people in this area were "tired of the war and thoroughly dissatisfied with Richmond's conduct of it," according to Noe.[198] It was into this hornet's nest that the Confederate War Department sent Major Leovy.

Leovy went to Southwestern Virginia in the summer of 1864. He interrogated suspects and those in custody. He brought in detectives, who spent time pretending to be prisoners in jail with some of those arrested, gained their confidence, and learned all about the secret organizations.[199]

The secretary of war gave a detailed report to President Davis on November 8, 1864, describing the secret association dedicated to protecting and hiding deserters and escaped prisoners, and attempting to organize a new state of Southwest Virginia. Seddon's report credited Leovy's "zeal and vigilance" in successfully concluding the investigation and passed on Leovy's recommendation to the president.[200] In December

1864 Leovy was appointed president of the military court for the Department of Southwestern Virginia.[201] He was officially appointed colonel of cavalry and judge.[202]

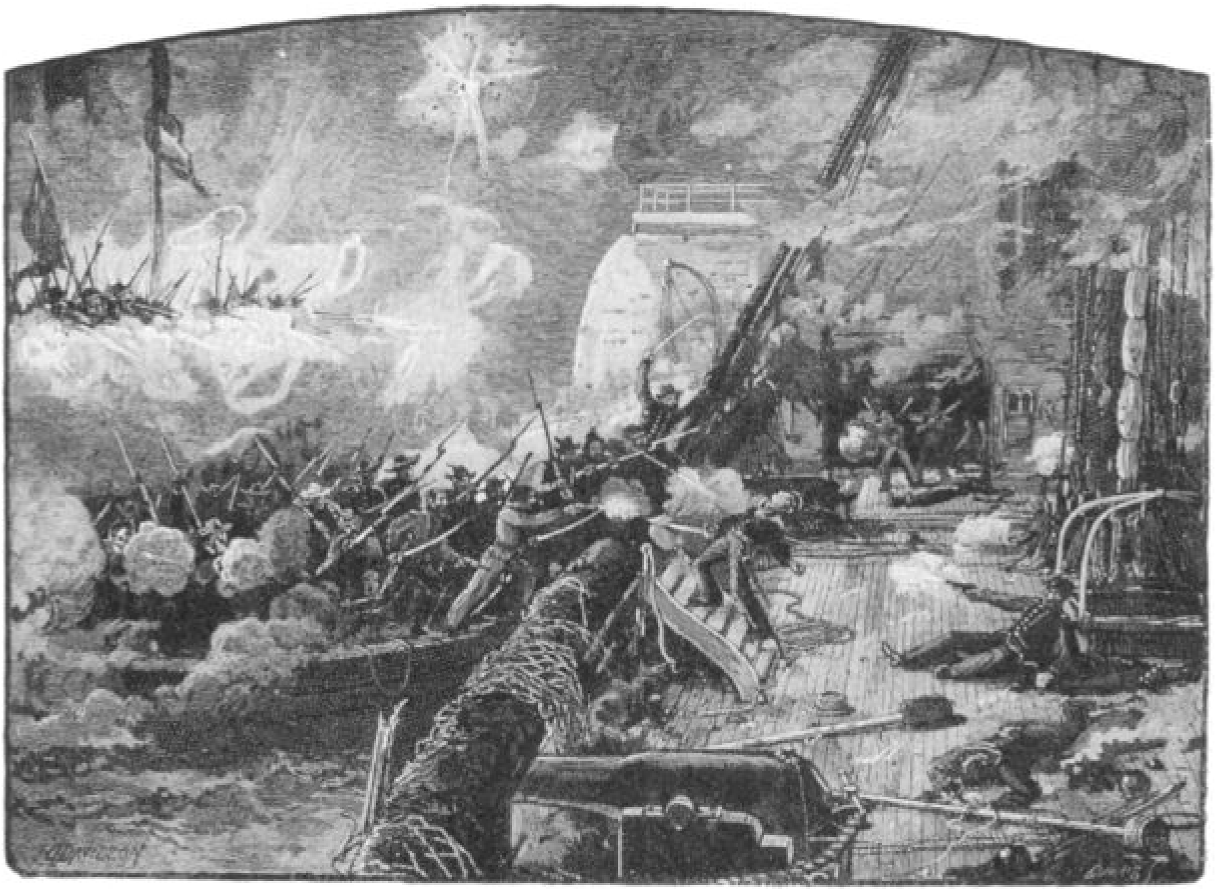
* * *

There were also Jewish Confederate officers in the Confederate navy, which defended coastal cities and raided the Union merchant fleet. Perry DeLeon was twenty years old when his native South Carolina seceded. One week later, he was among the first officers to resign from the U.S. Army. From May 1861 until October 1862, he served as a volunteer in the Wise and Hampton Legions and fought at Gaines' Mill and Malvern Hill. In October 1862 he was assigned to duty by the Confederate secretary of the navy as an assistant paymaster. He served in the navy from October until the war ended, serving on the CSS *Harriet Lane*, the *Savannah (Oconee)*, the *Stono*, and the *Albemarle*.[203] DeLeon volunteered for a commando expedition to free Confederate prisoners on Johnson's Island on Lake Erie in the fall of 1863. A group of fifteen Confederate naval officers and sailors left North Carolina, ran the blockade, and traveled to Montreal, where they made plans to capture a Union ship on the Canadian side of the lake and use it to free two thousand prisoners of war. The plan was foiled when the Canadian authorities were alerted to the plot, and the men were forced to return home empty handed.[204]

DeLeon served at the battles of Plymouth, North Carolina, and Albemarle Sound on the ironclad *Albemarle*. The CSS *Albemarle* was built in 1864 on the Roanoke River to defend the North Carolina coast. It was 152 feet long and carried two 6.4-inch Brooke guns. Commissioned on April 17, 1864, the *Albemarle* attacked Union gunboats at Plymouth, North Carolina, two days later. "In Albemarle Sound," DeLeon recalled, "we fought nine boats of the enemy carrying 69 guns, with our little boat carrying two guns. This in April, 1864." He recalled years later, "Our boat did splendid work." In October 1864, however, the *Albemarle's* luck ran out. Lt. William B. Cushing with seven Union volunteers, "blew us up with a torpedo at the wharf of Plymouth. We captured his boat and crew but not him. We retreated to Halifax and were building another boat when the war ended. I was paroled at Norfolk in May, 1865." The *Albemarle* sank.[205] Although his rank was denominated "assistant paymaster," DeLeon was a combat naval officer with the relative rank of a captain in the army.

DeLeon was proud of his family's service to the Confederacy. His brief memoir begins: "In our war with the North, every male descendant of Jacob DeLeon between the ages of 15 and 60 served the Confederacy, save one," an uncle with nine children and other family members to support. Of the eleven grandsons and great-grandsons of Jacob DeLeon, two served the Confederacy in civilian capacities: Edwin DeLeon as a diplomat and Thomas Cooper DeLeon as a clerk; eight served in the army and navy. Of the eight, Perry DeLeon wrote simply, “four gave their lives for the Confederacy.”[206]

A career naval officer, Capt. Levi Charles Harby of Galveston, Texas, joined the Confederate cause when his native South Carolina seceded. Born in 1793, Harby was sixty-eight years old when he resigned his commission in the Revenue Service (the early Coast Guard) of the United States and gave up command of the revenue cutter *Henry Dodge* in Galveston. Having served as a midshipman in the War of 1812 and in the War for Texas Independence, Harby was an experienced officer and a committed patriot. Indeed, the entire Harby family entered the fray, as Captain Harby’s two sons, Henry J. Harby and J. D. Harby, also enlisted—Henry in the 26th Texas Cavalry and J. D. in the Texas Light Artillery. Given his age, Harby was asked to train artillerymen and served his adopted state in the Texas Maritime Service. He was likely commissioned as a lieutenant but, because of his former rank in the Revenue Service, was frequently addressed as “captain.” Later he apparently was actually promoted to captain.[207]



The Battle of Galveston, New Year’s Day, 1863. Seventy-year-old Capt. Levi Charles Harby of Galveston commanded two guns on the small Confederate packet *Neptune*, which successfully attacked the 619-ton Union warship *Harriet Lane*. (*Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*.)

Harby was among the Texans who recaptured Galveston from the occupying Union army and navy on New Year's Day 1863. A combined Confederate land and sea force under Gen. John Bankhead ("Prince John") Magruder launched a surprise attack that day. It was so dangerous that men were asked to volunteer. Col. Thomas Green addressed the men at Harrisburg and asked them to step forward: "Soldiers, you are called upon to volunteer in a dangerous expedition," he said. "I have never deceived you; I will not deceive you now. I regard this as the most dangerous enterprise that men ever engaged in." The whole line stepped forward. These Texas soldiers and cavalrymen, none of them sailors, became "horse marines" and agreed to serve as artillerymen, sharpshooters, and boarding parties on "high-pressure cotton steamers," protected from Union shot and shell only by cotton bales. The Confederates referred to the two small ships, the *Neptune* and the *Bayou City*, as "cottonclads."[208]

Captain Harby, now seventy years old, was asked to command the two twenty-four-pound howitzer guns on the *Neptune*, one of the two ships designated to ram and capture the *Harriet Lane*, a large side-wheel steamer used as a blockading cruiser carrying five guns, while Magruder's troops attacked Kuhn's Wharf on Galveston Bay. Harby was in command of a small company of infantry acting as artillerymen.[209]

Between 4:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. on January 1, 1863, Magruder's forces commenced their attack. The *Harriet Lane* and other blockading Union warships opened an intense bombardment of the Confederate attackers near Kuhn's Wharf. The Confederate ships "puffing and snorting from their high pressure steam," aimed for the Federal fleet.[210] Harby was in one of the most dangerous positions, commanding the guns on a small mail packet which was ordered to attack a 619-ton Union warship. When one of the nervous sharpshooters asked his colonel whether the cotton bales would protect them, his reply was: "None whatever, not even against grape shot; our only chance is to get along side before they hit us."[211] This is about what actually happened. The plan was for the two "cottonclads" to attack the *Harriet Lane* from opposite sides. The *Neptune* was badly damaged in its collision with the *Harriet Lane;* many men were killed on board; Federal gunners blew a hole in the *Neptune*'s hull, and it began to sink.[212] Fortunately, it sank in eight feet of water, so Harby and his artillerymen and the sharpshooters continued firing. "We had two 24-pounders on board," Joseph Faust recalled, "that roared with extraordinary loud report."[213] This diverted the *Harriet Lane* so that the *Bayou City* could successfully ram the Union ship; and its crew boarded the *Lane*, killed its officers, and captured the vessel with its crew of 109. Magruder recaptured Galveston in one of the most daring battles of the war. Jefferson Davis congratulated Magruder on his "brilliant exploit."[214]

Harby had done his part in the great victory. Magruder thanked all of the successful officers in his official report: "Captain Harby, and the officers and crew of the ship, likewise deserve, as they have received, my thanks for their participation in this brilliant battle."[215] He also reported to the governor of Texas, where he again thanked "The gallant Texans, under their devoted leaders," including Captain Harby."[216] Harby had lost eight out of fifteen men; his lieutenant was killed at his side. He was the last to leave the *Neptune*.[217]

When the war ended, Captain Harby was in command of the harbor of Galveston. He died in 1870 in Galveston, having never sought a pardon from the United States for his role in the war.

The youngest son of Maj. Raphael J. Moses, Raphael J. Moses Jr. also served in the Confederate navy. Born in Florida in 1844, young Moses was called "Lea" or "Lee."[218] He matriculated at Annapolis in September 1860, when he was not yet sixteen. A popular and lively student, young Raphael resigned when Georgia seceded from the Union. In July he joined the Confederate States navy as a midshipman and was soon in combat. Assigned to the CSS *Savannah*, young Moses fired several "excellent shots … [while] commanding the after-gun," according to Capt. Josiah Tattnall's report. He was promoted to the rank of master, in line of promotion, in the Confederate navy. He also served on the CSS *Arctic* out of Wilmington, North Carolina. When yellow fever struck the ship, Moses was left as the senior officer. He had the good fortune to spot a ship on Frying Pan Shoals just below the mouth of the Cape Fear River. The vessel was deserted by her crew except one survivor. Moses's crew saved the survivor and brought the ship to port. "To my surprise," Moses wrote in a letter years later, "I shortly afterwards received form [*sic*] the prize court $3000.00 in gold and my share of the prize money."[219]

In the fall of 1862 Moses was sent to the CSS *Georgia* and was involved in several engagements off the coast of Europe. The *Georgia* was an iron-hulled merchant crew ship, originally named *Japan*, which was purchased by Confederate agents in Scotland in 1863. One officer called it "a poor miserable little tin kettle." Nevertheless, it captured nine merchantmen prizes while cruising the Atlantic Ocean and, like the *Alabama*, created panic in Northern shipowners.[220]

In March 1863 the Confederate government sent Moses to England to help take charge of two turreted ironclads known as the Laird Rams, being built for the Confederacy. The British government, however, seized the ships. Young Moses then went to Paris for a year and was ordered to the CSS *Alabama*, but that legendary vessel was sunk by the USS *Kearsage* off Cherbourg before he arrived. In September 1864 he returned to the

South by running the blockade. Sent to a naval artillery battery known as the Semmes Batteries fifteen miles below Richmond on the James River, he commanded a battery of six eight-inch cannons and had almost daily artillery duels with the Union army. Moses was also assigned the dangerous duty of laying mines (called "torpedoes" during the Civil War) at night in the river. "We had to go with muffled oars in a row boat," he recalled, "pick out a night particularly dark, then tow these torpedoes to the points we wished and anchor them with just sufficient rope to keep the torpedo concealed and as it was concealed from the enemy, it was equally concealed from us on our return trip."[221]

Young Moses was an exacting commander and drove the men in his command hard. For Christmas in 1864, he decided to treat his men to a good Christmas dinner, and, seeing some corn across the river in enemy territory, he decided to raid the cornfield and sell the corn in Richmond to raise the funds. After three boatloads, however, he was captured. He was sent first to the Old Capitol Prison in Washington and then to Fort Delaware, where he passed time usefully, studying law. This he did partly for future use and partly to divert himself and fellow prisoners from the horrors of their surroundings, doing such things as holding mock court with trials by jury.[222]

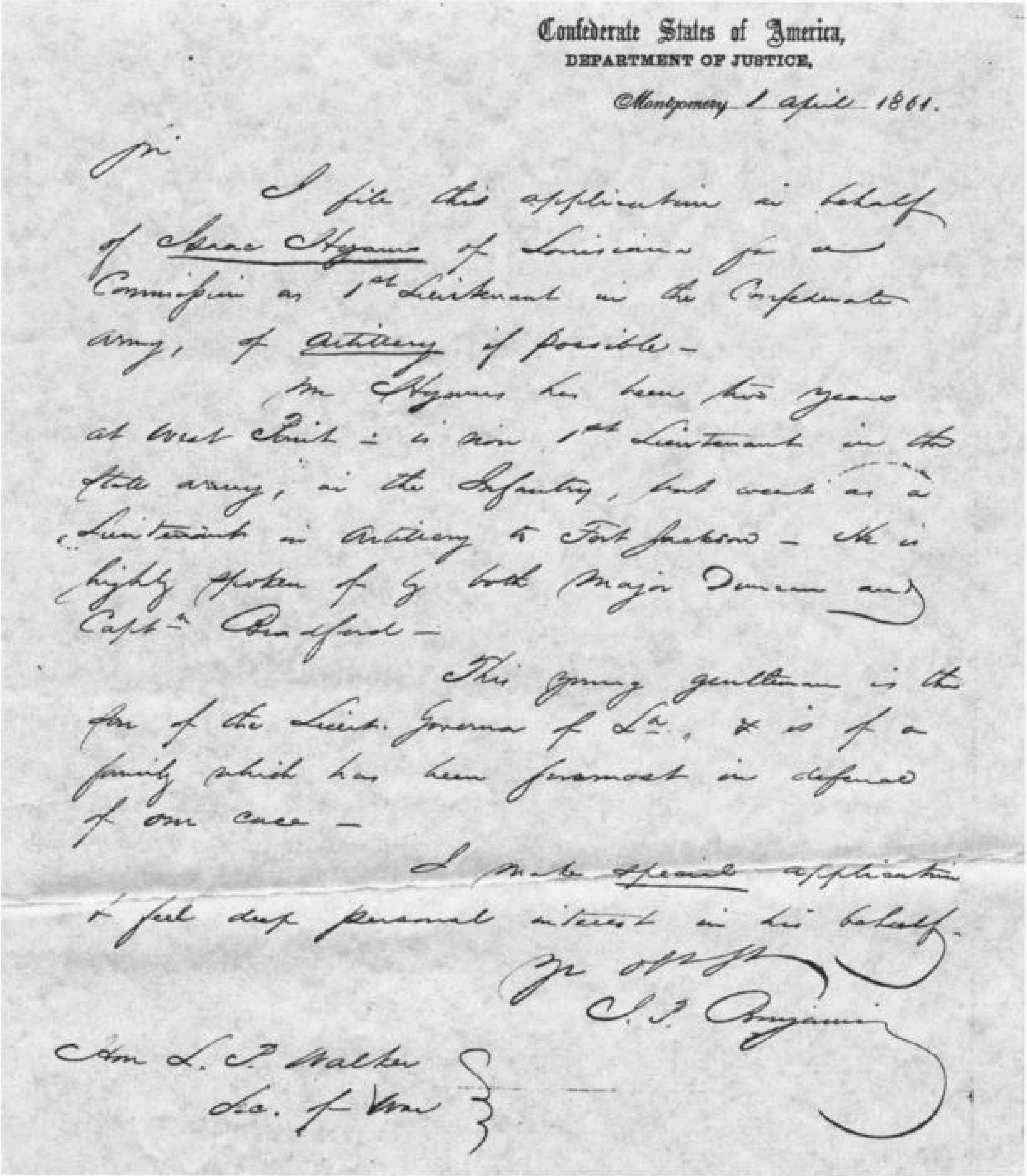
Two other Jewish Confederates played important roles in the Confederate navy. David Lopez, a builder and contractor in Charleston, was put in charge of much of South Carolina's arms production and repair. The builder of Institute Hall in Charleston, where South Carolina's Ordinance of Secession was signed, Lopez was responsible for building one or more of the innovative torpedo boats that attacked the Union ships blockading Charleston. One, the CSS *David*, was involved in a number of attempts to break the Union blockade of Charleston harbor by ramming Union warships. Harry Simonhoff claims that the *David* was named for Lopez, but it was likely named David because its foes were Union Goliaths.[223]

Col. Henry J. Leovy, the military judge and special commissioner, was also involved in naval affairs. Leovy, a lawyer, was Horace L. Hunley's friend. Hunley was a fellow New Orleans lawyer and inventor of the CSS *H. L. Hunley*, the first submarine in history to successfully attack a ship during wartime. Leovy helped Hunley build his submarine. He acted as a surety on the bond necessary to procure the letter of marque authorizing the vessel to attack enemy ships.[224] When Hunley died in one of the submarine's test dives, it was Leovy who acted as executor of his estate. (Hunley's will, incidentally, requested Leovy to dispose of his sugar and tobacco stores and "use the money for speculation or running the blockade till the end of the war."[225])

* * *

Many Southern Jewish families gave more than one officer to the Southern cause. The Hyams and Jonas clans of Louisiana contributed numerous high-ranking officers to the Confederacy. Henry M. Hyams, an observant Jew, served as lieutenant governor of the state throughout the war.[226] Hyams's sons, his brother Samuel Myers Hyams, and his nephews all saw service in the Confederate army, most as officers. At least three of Henry Hyams's sons served in the armed forces: Isaac Smith Hyams, Kosciusko Ravenkamp Hyams, and Henry M. Hyams Jr.

Henry Hyams had always wanted Isaac to be a soldier. Born in 1837, Isaac entered West Point in 1854, but left the academy in 1856. When the war began, Isaac was twenty-four years old. He joined Company A, 1st Regiment in the Louisiana State Army in January 1861 and was commissioned second lieutenant. When he mustered into Confederate service in March, he was first lieutenant of Company B. Father and son enlisted the aid of their cousin, Judah Benjamin, then attorney general, to write the Confederate secretary of war to obtain a commission for young Hyams in the Confederate States regular army, preferably in the artillery corps. While in Montgomery, Benjamin wrote a request to Leroy Pope Walker, the secretary of war, on April 1, 1861: “Mr. Hyams has been two years at West Point & is now 1st Lieutenant in the State army, in the Infantry…. This young gentleman is the son of the Lieut. Governor of La. & is of a family which has been foremost in defense of our case—I make *special* application & feel deep personal interest in his behalf.” Benjamin’s recommendation had its effect. Young Hyams was appointed a second lieutenant of infantry in the regular Confederate army in April 1861. He was “temporarily” assigned to Company B of the Confederate States Marine Corps from New Orleans, which was pitted against the Union forces holding Fort Pickens. The men were being drilled in the use of heavy guns, and Hyams was likely an instructor. He saw combat and was commended by Capt. Alfred C. Van Benthuysen for his “cool and gallant conduct” in an artillery duel in November. It was Isaac Hyams’s first experience under fire.[227] Hyams served with this company of the CSMC for ten months.



Confederate States of America,
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,
Montgomery 1 April 1861.

Sir

I file this application in behalf of Isaac Hyams of Louisiana for a Commission as 1st Lieutenant in the Confederate army, of Artillery if possible—

Mr Hyams has been two years at West Point & is now 1st Lieutenant in the State army, in the Infantry, but went as a Lieutenant in Artillery to Fort Jackson — He is highly spoken of by both (Major Duncan and Captn Bradford—

This young gentleman is the son of the Lieut. Governor of La., & is of a family which has been foremost in defence of our cause—

I make special application & feel deep personal interest in his behalf.

Yr obt servt
J. P. Benjamin

Hon L. P. Walker
Sec. of War

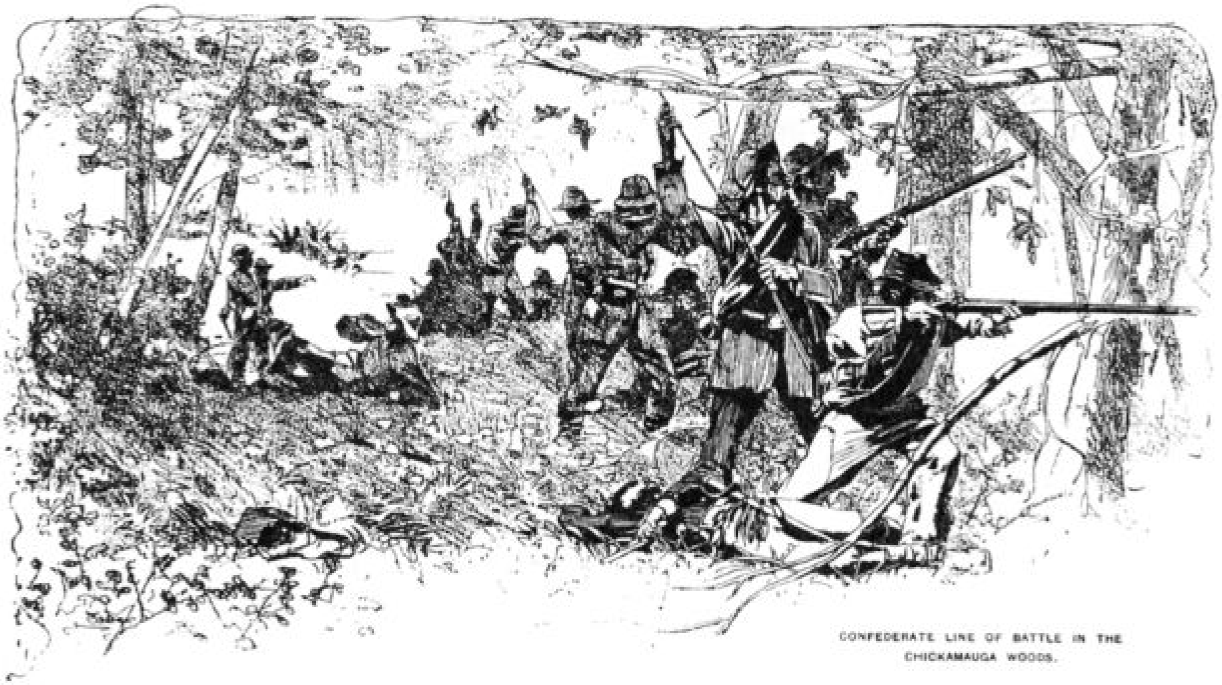
Judah Benjamin's letter to Leroy Pope Walker. The Hyamses eagerly sought commissions as officers. In this letter, written less than two weeks before the bombardment at Fort Sumter, Judah P. Benjamin, then just appointed attorney general, asked the newly appointed secretary of war, Leroy Pope Walker, to give Isaac Hyams a lieutenant's commission "in the Regular C.S. Army in the artillery if possible." Isaac's father, Henry, was Benjamin's first cousin. "I make *special* application & feel deep personal interest in his behalf," Benjamin concluded. (Courtesy of National Archives, Isaac Hyams compiled service record.)

In 1862 Hyams reported to Maj. Gen. Edmund Kirby Smith for duty as a drillmaster. He was next assigned to the 39th North Carolina and was acting adjutant of the regiment at the Battle of Murfreesboro, Tennessee (Stones River), in December 1862 and January 1863.

Hyams's bravery at the battle led to his selection by the men of his regiment as one of twelve men to be included in the "Roll of Honor" and was recommended for promotion in January 1863. After the only two field officers were borne disabled from the field, his commander wrote, "much of the burden of conducting the regiment devolved upon [Hyams]." He discharged this responsibility "with an activity and *efficiency* worthy of all praise, and with a gallantry which has been a universal theme of the comment of the command."[228]

In September Hyams participated in the Battle of Chickamauga, where he survived the 39th North Carolina's heavy engagement on the first day but was wounded in the leg on the second day. That day the 39th led the critical assault by McNair's brigade on two batteries of Federal guns. This feat was decisive in breaking the Federal center. Hyams was evacuated to a hospital in Atlanta. Judah Benjamin kept a watchful eye on his young cousin. On December 15 Benjamin, now secretary of state, wrote to James A. Seddon, secretary of war, reminding him of a promise he had made to promote Hyams, enclosing the letter of recommendation from his colonel. Benjamin was quite direct: "Will you be good enough to enclose to me the commission you promised?" That same day, Seddon instructed the adjutant general to appoint Hyams captain in the Provisional Army, while he still retained his second lieutenant rank in the regular army.[229]

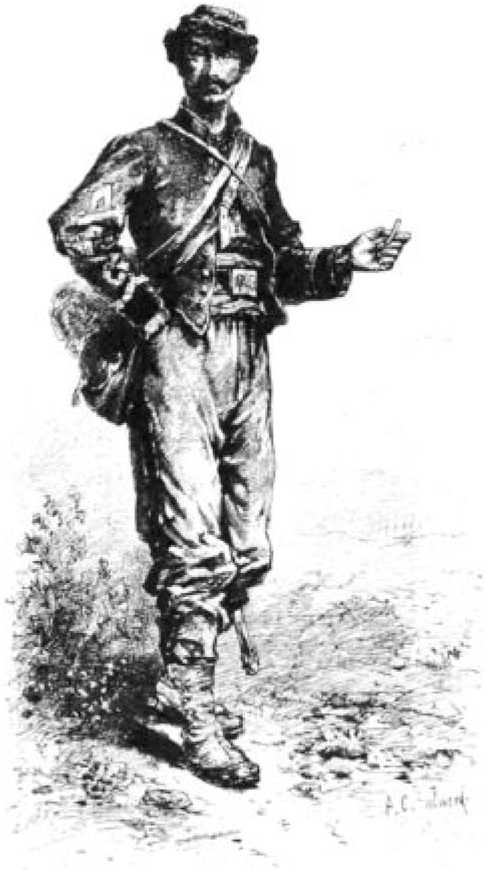
By February 1864 Hyams had recovered enough for reassignment, and by the end of the month, he was serving as captain of Company B, Garrison Guard Battalion, at Marietta, Georgia. In May he was ordered, as a second lieutenant, Regular Army, to report to Gen. Edmund Kirby Smith in the Trans-Mississippi Department. In March 1865 he was serving as a drill officer in Maj. Gen. John Austin Wharton's (Dismounted) Cavalry Corps in Texas. He was paroled at Millican, Texas, on July 5, 1865, as a captain.


CONFEDERATE LINE OF BATTLE IN THE CHICKAMAUGA WOODS.

The Battle of Chickamauga. One of the most vicious battles of the war, Chickamauga pitted two major armies in September of 1863, both seeking control of Chattanooga. Killed were 2d Lt. Walter Mordecai of Company B, 22d Alabama, and 2d Lt. Isaiah Jacobs of Company D, 2d South Carolina; Lt. Isaac S. Hyams was wounded. Numerous Jewish Confederates were there, including Maj. Alroy Jonas, who served with Gen. John Bell Hood. (*Battles and Leaders of the Civil War.*)

Henry M. Hyams's brother Samuel Myers Hyams, who was also born in Charleston, moved to New Orleans in 1830. He later settled in Natchitoches (pronounced *Nak*-uh-tish), where he was the U.S. deputy surveyor and then clerk of the district court. In the Mexican War, Hyams raised a company in the 5th Louisiana Volunteers and served as captain, although the unit mustered out before going to Mexico. He was elected sheriff and served six years before becoming U.S. marshal of the Western District of Louisiana and register of the Land Office. He was also a successful planter. His plantation, Lac des Mures, was located on the Red River above Grand Ecore and Natchitoches.[230]

When the war began, Samuel Hyams was forty-eight years old and the head of a large family. He was nominated for secretary of the Louisiana secession convention, but was not elected. He raised a company of men, the Pelican Rangers, and became its captain. The Pelican Rangers was the largest company in the state. It traveled 479 miles to the enlistment rendezvous in New Orleans, where it was divided into two companies, the Pelican Rangers No. 1 and No. 2. Samuel Hyams retained command of No. 1. The two companies became a part of the 3d Louisiana, which mustered into service on May 17, 1861.[231]



A Louisiana "Pelican." (*Battles and Leaders of the Civil War.*)

Hyams became lieutenant colonel of the 3d Louisiana under Col. Louis Hebert when it was mustered into service in the Confederate army in May 1861. He led the regiment to Arkansas that same month. Despite the crippling effects of chronic rheumatism and a kick from a horse, Lt. Col. Hyams successfully led half of his regiment at the Battle of Oak Hills (Wilson's Creek). His command captured five of six guns in a Federal battery and, according to Tunnard's account, was "with the regiment on the march, in their ambuscades, and through the battle, coolly and calmly directing the men."[232]

Hyams was a popular officer, affable, gregarious, and hospitable to a fault. Hyams loved a horse race and participated enthusiastically in the regiment's races. His son, Samuel M. Hyams Jr., raced his horse in these races. On one occasion, a mysterious-looking wagon happened into camp with a keg of whiskey, which was promptly seized by the officers as contraband. "The Lieutenant Colonel did not, then and there, spill the whiskey," Tunnard recalled. "Not he. He had too keen an appreciation of what was good for a soldier on a cold day." Instead, the men were called to Hyams's quarters and everyone given a drink of the “forbidden nectar.” The popular lieutenant colonel was vociferously cheered for his thoughtfulness toward his men.[233]

But his good humor was not equaled by good health, and Hyams was forced to retire in early 1862. He returned to Natchitoches, where he served as provost marshal, enforcing martial law. He did not, however, forget the men of his old command. When the regiment, traveling by boat, came by his plantation in August of 1864 to land a passenger, Hyams appealed to the men to sustain his authority while he prepared a feast in preparation for the whole regiment. Of course, he was upheld in these proceedings. Tunnard recalled: “The Captain was indiscriminately stuffed with a bushel of peaches, washed down with some excellent ‘firewater’ from a Confederate distillery; then followed a cart-load of melons, grapes *ad infinitum*, milk, fine gumbo, barbecued pork, beef, mutton, etc.—the men being likewise provided for. They bowed most *gracefully* to the *exacting* demands of the Colonel, and a scene of hilarity, joy and freedom from restraint ensued such as was seldom witnessed during the late warlike times.”[234]

Samuel Hyams had two sons in the 3d Louisiana, one in the Mississippi Cavalry and one in the Missouri Cavalry. Samuel Myers Hyams Jr. rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel before the war ended.[235] Samuel Jr. was born and raised in Louisiana and joined the Pelican Rangers No. 2 (Company D), 3d Louisiana on May 17, 1861, as the junior second lieutenant. He served as adjutant in the summer of 1861 and was cited by Col. Louis Hebert for his actions at Wilson’s Creek (Oak Hills), where “he left his horse and fought bravely on foot.”

Hyams was also at the Battle of Elkhorn Tavern in March 1862, where he was commended by Col. Elkanah Greer, the acting division commander. By June 1862 he was aide-de-camp to now Brig. Gen. Hebert. He was again commended for gallantry in leading troops in battle at Courtland, Alabama, in July 1862, and was promoted to captain in 1863. In 1864 he was promoted to lieutenant colonel and was to assume command of the 2d Missouri Cavalry. His appointment, however, did not suit the men of the 2d, as they felt their major was entitled to the promotion. Hyams agreed to be bound by a vote of the men, which went against him, and gracefully accepted their decision. Hyams was then assigned to the command of the 1st Mississippi Partisan Rangers at Tupelo, Mississippi (later redesignated as the 7th Mississippi Cavalry). He participated in the defense of Mobile in the fall of 1864.[236] In February 1865, Hyams reported to Brig. Gen. James Ronald Chalmers, commander of Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest’s 1st Division. In early March 1865, on his way to Jackson, Mississippi, where he was sent to “hurry up” and assist Gen. William Wirt Adams in organizing his brigade, Hyams delivered a message and other orders from General Forrest to Lt. Gen. Richard Taylor. Hyams likely accompanied Forrest’s command into Alabama, where it surrendered in May 1865.

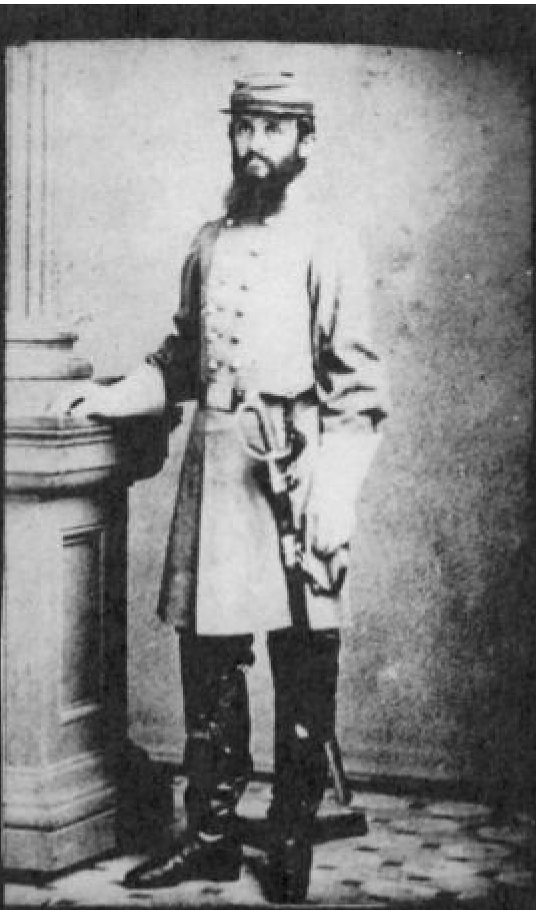
The Jonas family originated in England. Abraham Jonas, the patriarch, emigrated to the United States from England in the early 1800s.[237] He served in the legislatures of Kentucky and Illinois, a grand master of Masons and an early supporter of Abraham Lincoln. He was postmaster in Quincy, Illinois, under three presidents, including Lincoln. Abraham Jonas and his second wife, Louisa Block of Virginia, had ten children.[238] The older children were born and raised in Williamstown, Kentucky, in the 1830s and 1840s and grew up with Southern sympathies. The younger children were born and raised in Quincy, Illinois, and grew up with Northern sympathies. There were at least five Jonases in uniform during the Civil War: the four eldest, Charles Henry, Benjamin Franklin, Julian J., and Sidney Alroy, wore gray, and the youngest, Edward, wore blue. Three of the five became officers. A sixth son, George, probably served briefly in the militia in Louisiana. Alroy served as a major on the staffs of Generals W. H. C. Whiting, John Bell Hood, and Stephen D. Lee. Julian fought with the Louisiana Crescent (24th) Regiment at Shiloh. He then enlisted in the Louisiana Orleans Light Horse Cavalry Company, where he became quartermaster sergeant. Benjamin Franklin, known as Frank, served with Captain Fenner's artillery battery and later with Hood. Charles was a captain and quartermaster. Edward served as a captain and aide-de-camp in the Union army. After the war, Alroy became a well-known editor and political ally of Sen. L. Q. C. Lamar; Edward, a cotton factor and commission merchant; and Benjamin Franklin Jonas, a political force in postwar Louisiana, helping to lead the Redeemer movement and becoming the first practicing Jew to serve in the U.S. Senate.

In 1838 the Jonases had moved to Quincy, Illinois, undoubtedly the first Jews in the town. Abraham Jonas was a storekeeper and studied law in the office of Orville Hickman Browning, a close friend of Lincoln and later senator from Illinois. In 1842 Jonas ran for the legislature on the Whig ticket and was elected. He was defeated for the state senate in 1844 but remained active in the Whig Party and later the Republican Party. He became a close friend and ardent supporter of Lincoln. He arranged for Lincoln to visit Quincy in 1854 to speak on behalf of the Whig candidate for Congress. When Lincoln was later accused of having attended a Know-Nothing meeting on this occasion, he wrote to Jonas to vouch for his whereabouts that night, which Jonas did. Lincoln and Jonas were both presidential electors for Fremont in 1856. When Lincoln came to Quincy as a lawyer, he did much of his legal work in the law office of Jonas & Asbury. In 1860 Jonas was a delegate to the Republican convention in Chicago, where he worked tirelessly for the nomination of his friend.[239]

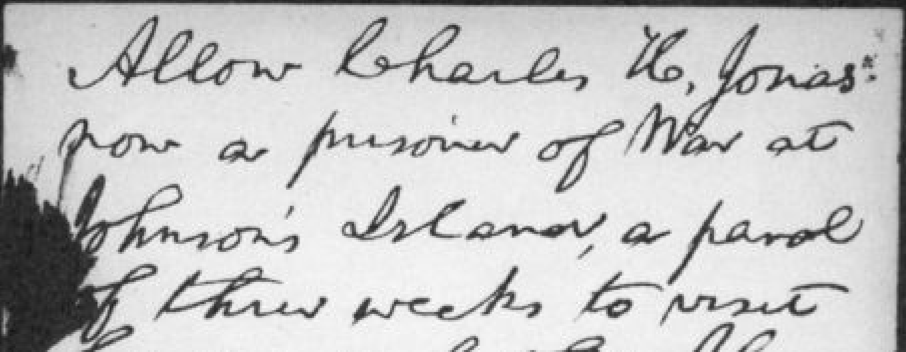
The Jonas boys knew Lincoln too. In fact, before the war, Frank Jonas, then a young lawyer in New Orleans, was involved in a legal matter with Lincoln. A June 4, 1857, letter in the Lincoln papers from Frank Jonas to Lincoln discusses the arrest of a free black whom Jonas successfully represented. Lincoln must have known the client because he sent Jonas the fee. "I should never have ventured to trouble you," Jonas wrote Lincoln, "had not the boy mentioned your name, as that of one, who would take an interest in his behalf—and had I not recognized in you an old friend of my father—." The letter closes with Jonas's assurance to Lincoln—ironic in hindsight—that "any service I can render you in this part of the world will give me pleasure—."[240]

Even after the war had begun, the Jonases kept in touch with President Lincoln. "Mr. Lincoln always asked after us [the Jonas sons] when he saw anyone from New Orleans during the war," Frank Jonas recalled. In December 1860, Abraham Jonas wrote Lincoln to warn him of an assassination plot: "You perhaps are aware, that I have a very large family connection in the South, and that in New Orleans I have six children and a host of other near relatives. I receive many letters from them, their language has to be very guarded." But, he warned his old friend, he had a letter from "one who is prudent, sound and careful," and this correspondent believed there was a plot organized in New Orleans to kill the president upon his arrival in Washington.[241]

The eldest son of Abraham Jonas, Charles H. Jonas, served in the 12th Arkansas Infantry. He was captain and assistant quartermaster and was captured on July 9, 1863, at Port Hudson, Louisiana, imprisoned first in New Orleans, then sent to Fort Columbus in New York harbor, and finally to Johnson's Island, Ohio. It was while he was a prisoner of war in Ohio that news came of his dying father's wish to see him. At Sen. Orville Browning's urging, Lincoln issued a personal order in May 1864 allowing "Charles H. Jonas now a prisoner of War at Johnson's Island, a parol[e] of three weeks to visit his dying father, Abraham Jonas, at Quincy, Illinois, June 2, 1864."[242] Jonas, in turn, gave his parole: "I, C. *H. Jonas*, Cpt 12th Ark. Regt—a prisoner of war—do hereby give my parole of honor—to proceed to *Quincy, Illinois* to visit my father—and that I will do no act or thing prejudicial to the Government of the United States—while absent & further that I will *visit* no other place—But will return to this Post on the *Twenty Seventh* day of the present month." Abraham died the day his son Charles arrived "in time to be recognized and welcomed by him," as Charles later recalled. Lincoln appointed Mrs. Jonas postmaster to serve out her husband's term. Captain Jonas honored his parole. He remained a prisoner of war until exchanged on March 14, 1865, at Point Lookout, Maryland.[243]



Charles H. Jonas,



Allow Charles H. Jonas:
now a prisoner of War at
Johnson's Island, a parol
of three weeks to visit
his dying father, Abraham Jonas, at Quincy, Illinois. June 2, 1864 A. Lincoln

Charles H. Jonas was the son of Abraham Jonas and a brother of Frank, Julian, and Alroy Jonas. He served in the 12th Arkansas as a captain. He was captured at Port Hudson, Louisiana, and was a prisoner at Johnson's Island, Ohio. When his father was dying, Sen. Orville Browning of Illinois

arranged for President Lincoln to issue a parole to allow Jonas to leave the prison to visit his father in Quincy, Illinois. The note above is in Lincoln’s handwriting. (Courtesy of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.)

The second son of Abraham Jonas, Benjamin Franklin (“Frank”) Jonas, was born in Williamstown, Kentucky, on July 19, 1834, moved to Illinois with his family, and was educated in the public schools.[244] In 1853, at the age of nineteen, he moved to New Orleans, where his uncle George Jonas was a prominent banker. He was admitted to the bar and was offered a partnership by Henry M. Hyams, then a leading attorney and soon to be lieutenant governor. This connection also gave young Jonas a connection to Judah Benjamin, as Hyams was the senator’s cousin. (Later, after the war, Jonas and Benjamin’s nephew Ernest Benjamin Kruttschnitt became law partners.) Jonas was a successful lawyer and an accomplished orator, a skill which served him well throughout his career. He was active in the Jewish community, having served as one of the founders of the Jewish Orphan’s Home in New Orleans. As one of the outstanding young lawyers in the city, Jonas was asked to give the dedication speech of the home.[245]

Jonas may not have been all that enthusiastic about the war. He enlisted as a private for three years on September 9, 1862, at Baton Rouge in Capt. Charles E. Fenner’s Light Artillery Battery. He served under Gen. Joseph E. Johnston in the Mississippi campaign, participating in the four days’ battle around Jackson. In 1863 Fenner’s Battery joined Hood’s corps in the Army of Tennessee, and Jonas became sergeant major and acting adjutant in the artillery regiment commanded by Col. Robert F. Beckham. Jonas’s colonel requested that Jonas be promoted to first lieutenant and adjutant. He served in the terrible Atlanta campaign from May 5 to September 1, 1864, and in Hood’s campaign in Tennessee. His service record describes him as “a good and faithful soldier.” He apparently served at corps headquarters at the same time as his younger brother Alroy until Fenner’s Battery was detached and sent to Alabama. He surrendered with Hoxton’s Regiment, Smith’s brigade at Citronelle, Alabama, on May 4, 1865, almost a month after Appomattox. He was paroled at Meridian, Mississippi, on May 10. His official rank may never have risen from private, but he was considered a sergeant major and adjutant in the field by his commander.[246]

The third son of Abraham Jonas to fight for the Confederacy was Julian J. Jonas, who enlisted March 5, 1862, at New Orleans in Capt. M. A. Tarleton’s company (Twiggs Guards), Crescent Regiment, for ninety days.[247] He fought with the regiment at the Battle of Shiloh, where it played an important role at the famous Hornet’s Nest. Julian was promoted to fifth sergeant in June, just before his ninety days expired. On July 1, after being out of the service less than a month, he enlisted in the Orleans Light Horse

Company in Tupelo, Mississippi, where the army had retired after Shiloh. He was quickly promoted to quartermaster sergeant, a month and a half after enlisting. His company was the cavalry escorts for Lieutenant Generals Leonidas Polk's and Alexander D. Stewart's corps headquarters.

It is possible, although uncertain, that Julian and his brother Edward, a Union soldier with the 50th Illinois, fought against each other at the "Hornet's Nest," so called because the bullets flew like angry hornets.[248] The Crescent Regiment made its assault at Shiloh on that portion of the line held by Brig. Gen. William H. L. Wallace, to whose division the 50th Illinois was assigned, and the division of Brig. Gen. Benjamin M. Prentiss. Edward had been detailed as an orderly to Prentiss, so he may very well have stared across the battlefield at Julian. Prentiss had lived for a while in Quincy, Illinois, in the early 1840s, so he was probably acquainted with Edward's father.

The fourth son, Sidney Alroy Jonas, left Aberdeen, Mississippi, when the war broke out.[249] He quit his job as a civil engineer working for the New Orleans, Jackson & Great Northern Railroad, enlisted in the Van Dorn Reserves, and left for Virginia. That unit afterward became Company I of the famous 11th Mississippi Volunteers.[250] When the regiment was organized at Corinth, Mississippi, Jonas's captain, W. H. Moore, was elected colonel, and Moore appointed Jonas adjutant. This appointment apparently was not legal, as military law required the detail of a lieutenant to that post. According to Jonas, his good friend Colonel Moore then "made me in the language of the opera 'Lord High Everything else.'"

Jonas served as unofficial adjutant until Harpers Ferry, where Maj. William H. C. Whiting, chief engineer of the Army of the Shenandoah, was ordered by Gen. Joseph E. Johnston to destroy the fortifications incident to evacuation. Whiting called on Colonel Moore for a civil engineer, and Moore sent Jonas. "I think I rendered good service in the work of demolition," Jonas recalled. From Harpers Ferry, Jonas's unit reinforced Gen. P. G. T. Beauregard in the Battle of First Manassas (Bull Run). "In that great battle," Jonas wrote, "Gen. Barnard E. Bee, our brigade commander who christened Jackson 'Stonewall,' was killed, and Major Whiting was promoted to succeed him and had me commissioned a Major on his staff." Jonas served as commissary of the 3d Brigade, 2d Corps, Army of the Potomac. He was appointed major and commissary of subsistence.

Gen. John Bell Hood succeeded to Whiting's command and was promoted to major general in October 1862. Jonas was transferred along with the general staff. He served on Hood's staff and served as commissary at Gettysburg. In his memoir, *Advance and Retreat*, Hood listed Jonas as among those who "rendered gallant and efficient service" in this great battle.[251] Jonas remained with Hood and went with the division from

Virginia to Georgia in September 1863 for the Battle of Chickamauga. He remained in the Army of Tennessee and participated in all of its many movements and battles. By March 1864, Jonas was serving as a major and chief commissary of Hood's newly formed 2d Corps, Army of Tennessee. Hood recommended Jonas for lieutenant colonel, but apparently the appointment was never approved, as he was always referred to as "Major" or "Mage" after the war. When General Hood was promoted to temporary general and commander of the Army of Tennessee, Lt. Gen. Stephen D. Lee became commander of the 2d Corps, and Jonas was transferred to his staff. Jonas served at corps headquarters as chief commissary under Lee from the summer of 1864 until Lee surrendered with Gen. Joseph E. Johnston's forces in North Carolina in April 1865.

A fifth son of Abraham Jonas, George, may also have served the Confederacy. There are two George Jonases listed in the roll of the Confederate Guards Regiment, Louisiana Militia. One is undoubtedly George B. Jonas, the president of the Canal Bank in New Orleans and Abraham's brother, who served in Company K. The other is probably George Jonas, another son of Abraham Jonas, who served in the militia in Company B.[252]

The youngest son of Abraham Jonas fought for the Union. Edward Jonas was raised in Illinois and enlisted as a private at the age of seventeen in Company C of the Adams County Regiment, the 50th Illinois, "the blind half-hundred." He was detailed as an orderly and was captured at Shiloh (Pittsburgh Landing) while serving on the staff of Brigadier General Prentiss, who was also captured.[253] He was imprisoned at Madison, Georgia, until sent to Virginia for exchange on October 12, 1862. He rejoined the staff of General Prentiss, was promoted to lieutenant, and served as aide-de-camp during the Confederate attack on Helena, Arkansas, in July 1863. Jonas later served with Maj. Gen. Stephen A. Hurlbut and on the staff of Maj. Gen. Grenville M. Dodge. He was promoted to captain and aide-de-camp, U.S. Volunteers, in February 1865. He received a brevet promotion to major on October 13, 1865, and lieutenant colonel on June 22, 1867, for "gallant and meritorious services during the war," both to rank from March 13, 1865.[254]

The Jonas family was not the only Jewish family with officers serving in opposing armies. "I never fully realized the fratricidal character of the conflict," Charleston-born Septima Levy Collis wrote, "until I lost my idolized brother Dave [2d Lt. David Cardoza Levy Jr., 13th Louisiana Infantry killed at Murfreesboro] of the Southern Army one day, and was nursing my Northern husband [Col. Charles H. T. Collis, 114th Pennsylvania] back to life the next."[255] A captured Confederate general could not understand how Mrs. Collis, a Southern woman, could espouse the Northern cause just because she had married a Northerner. "I told him," she later recalled, "that I had only followed the example of many other Southerners—I had gone with my state, mine being the state of matrimony."[256]

The beautiful Rebecca Gratz of Philadelphia, founder of the Hebrew Sunday School Society and said to have been the inspiration for "Rebecca" in Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*, suffered a severe blow in the death of her nephew Cary Gratz. Cary was the youngest of four sons of Benjamin Gratz, Rebecca's brother and an heir to the Gratz mercantile fortune. He was one of the most distinguished citizens of Lexington, Kentucky.[257] When Benjamin's wife died, he married Anne Boswell, who had a son, Joseph ("Jo") Shelby, by her first husband. Benjamin's first wife had been Anne Boswell's aunt, so Cary and Jo were cousins as well as stepbrothers. Only one year apart, Jo and Cary were raised together as brothers. Like many Kentuckians, they moved to neighboring Missouri, and when the war came, Cary enlisted in the Union Missouri Infantry and Jo enlisted in the Missouri State Guards, Confederate Cavalry.[258] Both became captains. Jo was Joseph Orville Shelby, later a major general in the Confederate army and arguably the best cavalry general of the South.[259]

On August 10, 1861, Capt. Cary Gratz led his men under the command of Brig. Gen. Nathaniel Lyon toward Wilson's Creek, where the Federals hoped to surprise the Confederates. Capt. Jo Shelby was at Wilson's Creek with the Missouri State Guards. The Battle of Wilson Creek was an important early battle. It has been described as the Bull Run of the West, where the Southern troops prevailed but failed to pursue their victory. Soon, there "was not half a mile's distance between Capt. Cary Gratz and Capt. Jo Shelby when Lyon struck at Wilson's Creek," Daniel O'Flaherty wrote in *General Jo Shelby, The Undefeated Rebel*. "It is possible that Shelby saw the face of his stepbrother and cousin amid the smoke that rolled across the field that morning, without recognizing it. Whether he did or not will never be known; but undoubtedly he saw it afterward on the battlefield, stilled in death."[260]

The extended Levy family of Richmond was sorely divided by the war. Two sons of Jacob A. Levy served in the Confederate army: Capt. Ezekiel J. Levy and Pvt. Isaac J. Levy of the Richmond Light Infantry Blues. Jacob Levy's brother Isaac had left Richmond, and his two sons grew up in the North and served in the Union army, as did Mrs. Levy's nephew, Col. Jacob E. Hyneman. After the evacuation of Richmond, Jacob Hyneman looked up his relatives in Richmond and found a deep-seated anger.

Prominent Jewish Confederates served in many capacities in the government in addition to the armed services. Edwin Warren Moise served as a Confederate district judge in Louisiana.[261] After his retirement from the army, Samuel Hyams served as provost marshal in Rapides, Aroyelles, and Natchitoches. As such, he was the chief law enforcement officer in the area and charged with enforcing martial law.[262] Jacob DeCordova was collector of taxes of District 60 in Texas for the Confederacy.[263]

Edwin DeLeon, a journalist and diplomat before the war, was asked by Jefferson Davis and Judah Benjamin to wage a Confederate propaganda campaign in France and Great Britain during the war. His efforts to win over public opinion to the Confederate cause proved futile, and he embarrassed the Confederate government in reports captured by the enemy. (DeLeon, *Belles, Beaux, and Brains of the '60s*.)

One interesting Confederate official was Edwin DeLeon, a member of the prominent Columbia, South Carolina, family.[264] DeLeon was living in France in 1861. Anxious to be of service to the Confederacy, DeLeon returned from Europe in the winter of 1861.[265] He traveled to New Orleans by way of Savannah on a "blockade-breaker" out of Havana and then made his way to Richmond, where he presented himself to his old friend Jefferson Davis "in sorry plight, my clothes covered with mud, and stained with travel. I was received with great cordiality and congratulation." He met with Davis for two hours, explaining the Confederacy's poor image with European governments and popular opinion. There was a crying need for an organized Confederate propaganda effort, DeLeon told the president.[266]

It took Davis some time to make a decision on Edwin DeLeon's proposal for an organized Confederate propaganda effort. When Judah Benjamin became secretary of state in March 1862, he realized the importance of such an effort. But Benjamin wanted his old friend John Slidell, then in Paris as commissioner to the French government, to head up the effort. Benjamin and Davis realized that an official diplomat would be limited in blatantly political efforts. Thus, DeLeon was chosen to lead the propaganda effort, and a dispatch was sent to Slidell which first designated Slidell for the job, but a postscript from Benjamin informed Slidell of DeLeon's superior role in the matter of propaganda. "Thus," Charles P. Cullop wrote, "Benjamin planted one of the seeds of future discord between the two men." Nevertheless, this "scion of a prominent southern family, thus seemed well qualified for his new position. He would bring to the post of propaganda chief experience as a journalist, a diplomatic official, and as a traveler."[267]

Edwin DeLeon went to Europe in April 1862 as a special envoy to promote the South's cause with the French and British press, intelligentsia, and populace as well as their governments. A January 1863 letter from Benjamin to DeLeon refers to the funds sent to DeLeon as "secret service money." These accounts and vouchers were kept confidential, did not leave the department, and did not "pass through the Treasury books," Benjamin told DeLeon, and therefore DeLeon had to be scrupulous in providing receipts.[268] DeLeon states in his memoirs that at his own request, Davis and Benjamin "gave me full secret instructions, but did not label and advertise me."[269]

DeLeon returned to Europe in 1862 as a passenger once again on a "blockade-breaker," this time the *Theodora* sailing from Wilmington, North Carolina, for England. The captain gave him a cigar, and "out of bravado I lit mine; but must confess I never enjoyed my tobacco less." Chased and almost captured by a Union blockader, the captain "ground his unlit cigar to pulp between his teeth" before they made their escape.[270]

On the way to Europe, however, DeLeon made a serious error in judgment. He opened confidential diplomatic dispatches which had been entrusted to him to deliver to Confederate agents. One of the dispatches was intended only for Slidell and contained a proposal to offer the emperor of France a large bribe of cotton to break the blockade.[271]

When DeLeon arrived in England in June 1862, he went to see Lord Palmerston but was no more successful in his efforts to secure his support for the Confederacy than his predecessors had been. DeLeon was granted an interview with Palmerston through mutual friends. "Had you come to me, in any official character," the minister told DeLeon, "I must have declined seeing you … but as a private Southern gentleman and friend of Henry's [the grandson of Lady Palmerston], I am most happy to see and converse with you."[272]

DeLeon published a pamphlet titled "Three Letters from a South Carolinian Relating to Secession, Slavery and the Trent Case," in which he vigorously set forth the Southern position. He lambasted the views of Cassius M. Clay, Lincoln's minister to Russia, as reported in the *Times*: "Mr. Clay has drawn upon his imagination for his facts and figures," he argued, telling his readers that secession was now a "part of history; and never in the annals of mankind has such entire unanimity of sentiment and of action been manifested by any people as in the formation, deliberations, and action of the cotton States." He answered Clay's assertion that the "revolted States" could be subdued by military force by harking back to the Mexican War: "The bloody battle-fields of Mexico, where the South furnished about 45,000 and the North about 20,000 men, can attest to Southern valor and discipline…. The old watchword of the Jacobins in France's darkest day of blood and tears, '*Fraternite, ou la mort* (Be my brother, or I will kill you!)' is now the rallying cry of the 'free North,' not of the South, who stands with drawn sword beside her own altars." The North, he wrote, would find it impossible to subjugate twelve million people who would fight to the death against their former allies, "now their most inveterate and unscrupulous enemies."

DeLeon soon found that Henry Hotze, a Confederate commercial agent sent to London by former Secretary of State Robert M. T. Hunter in November 1861, had accomplished much of what DeLeon thought needed to be done. Hotze had already created a well-organized propaganda operation, which included publication of a pro-Confederate weekly newspaper, the *Index*.[273]

Finding Confederate efforts to influence British public opinion under way, DeLeon departed for Paris. Once settled at the Hotel du Rhin at the Place Vendôme, he wrote a pamphlet titled *La vérité sur des États Confédérés*, complete with a picture of President Davis, a positive description of slavery, and the Confederacy's argument for its place in the family of nations. He sought out members of Emperor Louis-Napoléon's entourage and made valiant efforts to influence newspapers all over France, using his contacts from his days in Egypt. He reported back that his efforts, which involved the generous use of bribes and payments to journalists, were succeeding. Imitating Hotze's success in London, DeLeon made financial arrangements with the editor of the Paris *Patrie*, which became a pro-Confederate publication until funds ran out in 1864.[274]

DeLeon's mission succeeded in the limited sense that he got the Southern message out to the French people. But it failed because the French opposed slavery and their government had no reason to become involved in the war. "It is vain to tell them," DeLeon wrote Benjamin, "how utterly impracticable [emancipation of the slaves] must be, and that the Southern people never would consent to purchase recognition [by France] at the price of such a confession of wrong doing as it would imply."[275]

DeLeon made an enemy of the powerful Slidell when Slidell was given the dispatch DeLeon had carried with the seal broken. Slidell undermined DeLeon at every turn. He refused to give him any information or introduce him to those who could help him. He wrote critical letters to his old ally, Benjamin. DeLeon reacted in kind and accused Slidell of speculating in Confederate bonds. DeLeon began to express these opinions in letters to Davis, together with descriptions of the French as money-hungry, corrupt, and a "far more mercenary race than the English."[276]

Unfortunately for DeLeon, these letters came into enemy hands in November 1863 when they were thrown overboard from the *Lady Davis*.[277] The Union officer who seized them realized their value: "This paper is interesting," he wrote Gideon Welles, "and apparently of value, as it relates to the intrigues and disappointments of the rebel emissaries abroad." When DeLeon's letters were published in the *New York Daily Tribune* on November 16, 1863, Benjamin was enraged. He had had enough of DeLeon. "As a propagandist his usefulness was over with the publication of his criticism of the French," Frank Owsley concluded, "and his criticism of Slidell made it impossible for the Confederate government to maintain them both in France."[278]

DeLeon was notified of his dismissal in February 1864. He was angry and defensive and realized he had been outmaneuvered by Benjamin, a Slidell ally. DeLeon defended his actions. He was, he told the Secretary of State, the "confidential personal friend and correspondent" of President Davis and contended he was only doing his duty in giving Davis his frank opinions. He felt that "the gallio jade is not J. W. Slidell but one of the men [that is, Benjamin!] who surround the President at home."[279] He appealed directly to the president, but Benjamin prevailed.[280]

DeLeon did not return to the Confederacy. He realized his position was indefensible and that Benjamin had far more influence with Davis than he. In June 1864 he was still in Paris. DeLeon's failure was due to Benjamin and Slidell as well as "an inordinate personal ambition" and an exaggerated view of his friendship with Davis.[281]

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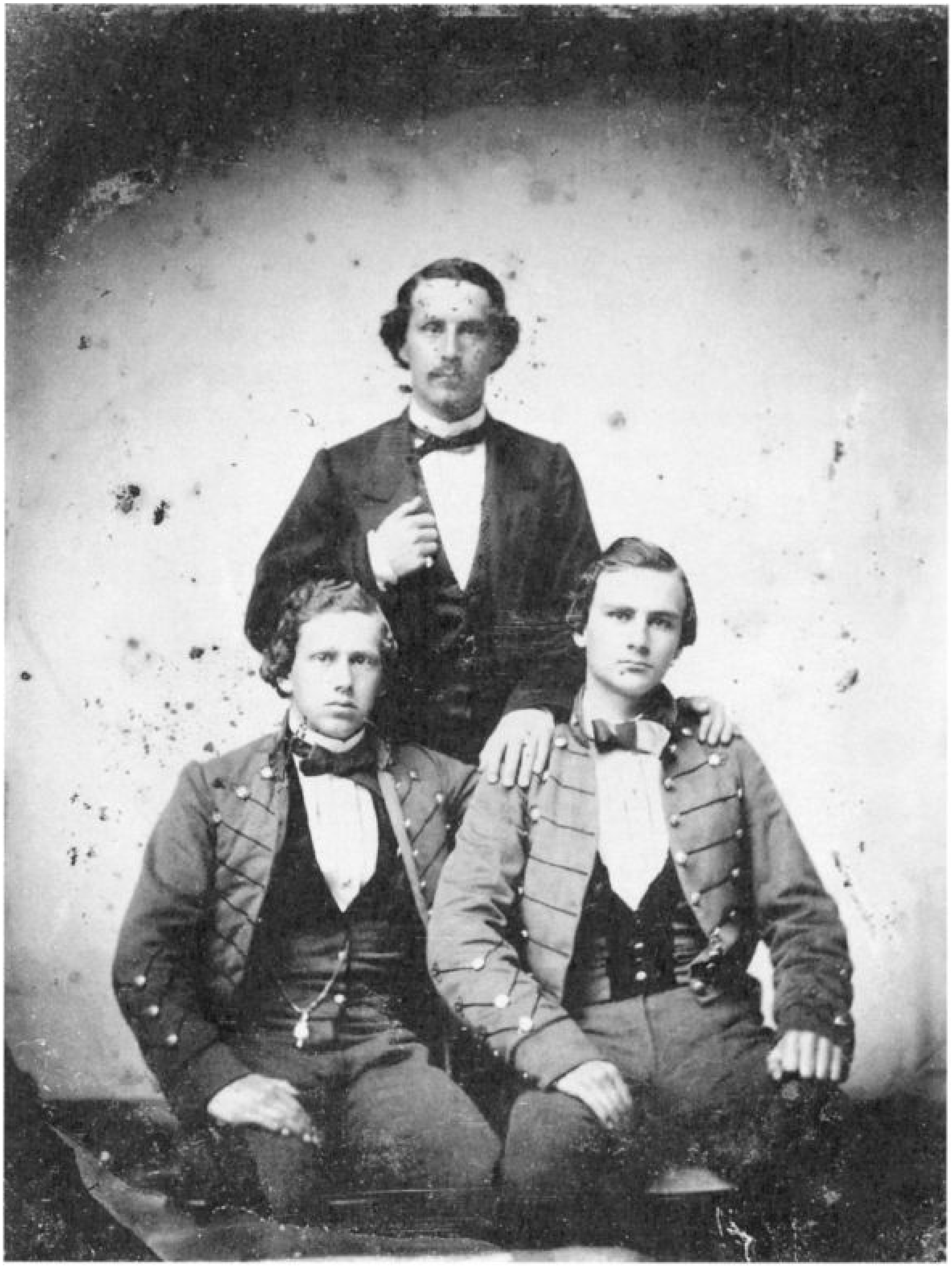
The South lost the flower of its young manhood in the Civil War. Its civilian population suffered grievously. It has been estimated that the Confederacy mobilized between 750,000 and 850,000 men and that 258,000 of them died on the battlefield or from disease. Another 200,000 were wounded.[282] "What had taken place," J. G. Randall and David Donald wrote, "was the collapse of a civilization."[283]

Southern Jewry also lost many a fine young officer to the cause. Hebrew officers and Israelite gentlemen were among the casualties. In addition to Col. Leon Marks, Lt. Albert Luria, Lt. Joseph Calhoun Levy, and Lt. Isaiah Jacobs, numerous other Jewish officers were killed. Capt. Madison A. Marcus of Company I, 15th Georgia, was wounded at Chickamauga and killed near Darbytown Road, Virginia, in October 1864.[284] Twenty-one-year-old 1st Lt. Will Meyer Wolf of Company G, 11th South Carolina, was killed defending Petersburg at Swift Creek, Virginia, May 9, 1864. "Although many and sad have been the casualties," his colonel wrote Wolf's father in Ridgeville, South Carolina, "few have been missed and more felt than that of your son…. I looked upon him as one of the most efficient, active and charming officers of his rank in my Regiment." Wolf was buried in a coffin procured by his company, and he was buried in "a patriot's grave on the battlefield upon which he fell."[285]



The Moses brothers of South Carolina. This photograph, which depicts Joshua Lazarus Moses (*standing*), Isaac Harby Moses (*left*), and Perry Moses (*right*), was taken at the beginning of the war. Perry is wearing his Citadel uniform. Josh Moses was killed at Fort Blakely near Mobile. Perry Moses survived the war, was active in the Confederate Veterans,

and served as commandant of his camp in Sumter, South Carolina. He died in 1916. Isaac Harby Moses served as a private in the Citadel Cadet Rangers and was known as "Lord Shaftsbury" because of his scholarly style of writing. He saw action late in the war and survived. As to Isaac Harby Moses, see Gary R. Baker, *Cadets in Gray* (Columbia, S.C.: Palmetto Bookworks, 1989), 171, 199. (Courtesy of Anne F. Jennings of Charleston, South Carolina.)

One of the Jewish community's most poignant deaths was that of Lt. Joshua Lazarus Moses. One of five Moses brothers who served the Confederacy, Joshua attended the South Carolina Military Academy (the Citadel) in the late 1850s. He enlisted in the spring of 1861 in (Palmetto Guards) Company I, 2d South Carolina, and was wounded at First Manassas. He next served in the (Wilson Light Artillery), Company C, 3d (Palmetto) Battalion, and became a first lieutenant in January 1862. In April 1865 three Moses brothers, Perry, Joshua, and Jack (Andrew Jackson) were serving in the defense of Mobile. Perry was wounded. On April 2, the Union forces surrounded Fort Blakely as Confederate forces evacuated Richmond. Josh was killed in action at Fort Blakely near Mobile on the very day Lee surrendered at Appomattox, April 9, 1865. His last words were "For God's sake, spare my men, they have surrendered."[286]

"Josh Moses the flower of our circle was killed at Blakely," Eleanor Cohen wrote in her diary. He was "a noble man, another martyr to our glorious cause."[287] He lies buried in the Confederate Rest Section of Magnolia Cemetery in Mobile. The inscription on his monument reads:

He fired the last gun in defense of Mobile.

He fought for the cause from its birth and

refusing to surrender gave his life

to die with it.

Oh death where is Thy Sting?[288]

In 1868, Josh Moses's mother, Octavia Harby Moses, wrote a long poem "To My Dead Son, J. L. Moses, Killed at the Battle of Blakely, Ala." She was still an unreconstructed rebel:

Sleep sweetly in thy lonely grave,

my good, my beautiful, my brave,

and honored thou, and happy I

that thus my gallant son should die.[289]

CHAPTER 4

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Jewish Johnny Rebs

WE WILL NEVER KNOW the number of Jewish men who served in the Confederate armed forces. Neither Union nor Confederate armed services recorded men's religion; many Jewish communal records were lost or destroyed; and many Jews did not affiliate with their synagogues. Identifying Jews by their names is useful but uncertain. In the 1890s, Joseph Goldsmith, a Jewish arms contractor from Richmond, recalled a visit he and Rabbi Max Michelbacher had with Adj. Gen. Samuel Cooper to request furloughs for the Jewish boys for the 1864 High Holidays. General Cooper received his visitors kindly but declined their request for a general furlough. "Gentleman," he said, "look, we have here a roster of all our soldiers and we know, as far as possible from their names, how many of them belong to your religious denomination, and astonishing it is that we count about 10,000 to 12,000 Jews who are serving in our Army." Cooper felt that if he granted the furloughs, it would decimate certain commands in the field.[1]

There is little reason to doubt Goldsmith's recollection, although the numbers are clearly erroneous. Indeed, if the names men like Cooper *thought* were Jewish were totaled *today* from the list of more than one million Confederates, the number would be greater than twelve thousand. What was a Jewish-sounding name to nineteenth-century Americans? Most Americans believed that all German names were or could be Jewish names. For example, the Confederate secretary of the Treasury, Christopher G. Memminger, a German Protestant, was believed by many in both the North and the South to be Jewish. And there were thousands of recent German Jewish immigrants in the South. Thirty years after the war, Brig. Gen. Thomas N. Waul stated that Waul's Texas Legion contained two infantry companies with a large number of Jews. A roster of the Legion contains many German-sounding names which may or may not be Jewish, and Waul probably did not know the difference.[2]

In 1895 Simon Wolf, a prominent Jewish lawyer in Washington and national spokesman for Jewish causes, published a book, *The American Jew As Patriot, Soldier and Citizen*, in reply to anti-Semitic charges that Jews had not fought in the Civil War. He attempted to list every Jew who had served in the armed forces of the North and South as well as earlier wars. While his compilation is seriously flawed, it is the only one ever attempted. Wolf lists a total of 1,340 Jewish Confederates.[3] Given the gargantuan nature of the task, which even today is impossible, Wolf omitted hundreds and possibly thousands of names and included some with Jewish-sounding names who were not Jews. Carolyn LeMaster points out that "well over seventy Jewish Arkansans fought on the Confederate side," as opposed to Wolf's 52.[4] Eric Brock found 78 Jewish Confederate soldiers in Shreveport, but Wolf only lists 35. Booth's *Records of Louisiana Confederate Soldiers* lists a number of Jewish Rosenthals. Wolf lists none. Using Shreveport as an example, Wolf could have omitted a thousand Jewish Confederates. He likely had less connection with the newer German, Polish, and Russian Jewish communities of Louisiana, Texas, western Tennessee, and Mississippi than he had with the eastern states, and his count is therefore low.[5]

Pvt. Leon Fischel was drilling with the Tensas Cavalry Company, a state militia unit from Tensas Parish, Louisiana, as early as March 15, 1861. He enlisted for the war with his company at age twenty-seven in August at Memphis. The company became Company A, Wirt Adams's Confederate Cavalry Regiment (1st Mississippi Cavalry) in October. It later became Company A, 15th Louisiana Cavalry Battalion. The battalion was still later a part of the 3d (Isaac F. Harrison's) Louisiana Cavalry. According to family tradition, Fischel was a courier or aide to Gen. Albert Sidney

Johnston. (Courtesy of Bert Fischel, Dallas, Texas, and Frieda [Kline] Fischel, Vicksburg.)

It is possible that there were three thousand Jewish Confederate soldiers, although two thousand is a good estimate. Recordkeeping in the critical period of the 1860s in the South was unreliable. The Jewish immigrants of the 1850s and even the early 1860s (the first shot at Fort Sumter was in April 1861) were overwhelmingly single males who had come to America to seek their fortune first and marry later. These immigrants frequently lodged together or with a family. Thus, there was a disproportionately large percentage of young males in the Jewish population of 1861 compared to the general population and traditional demographics.

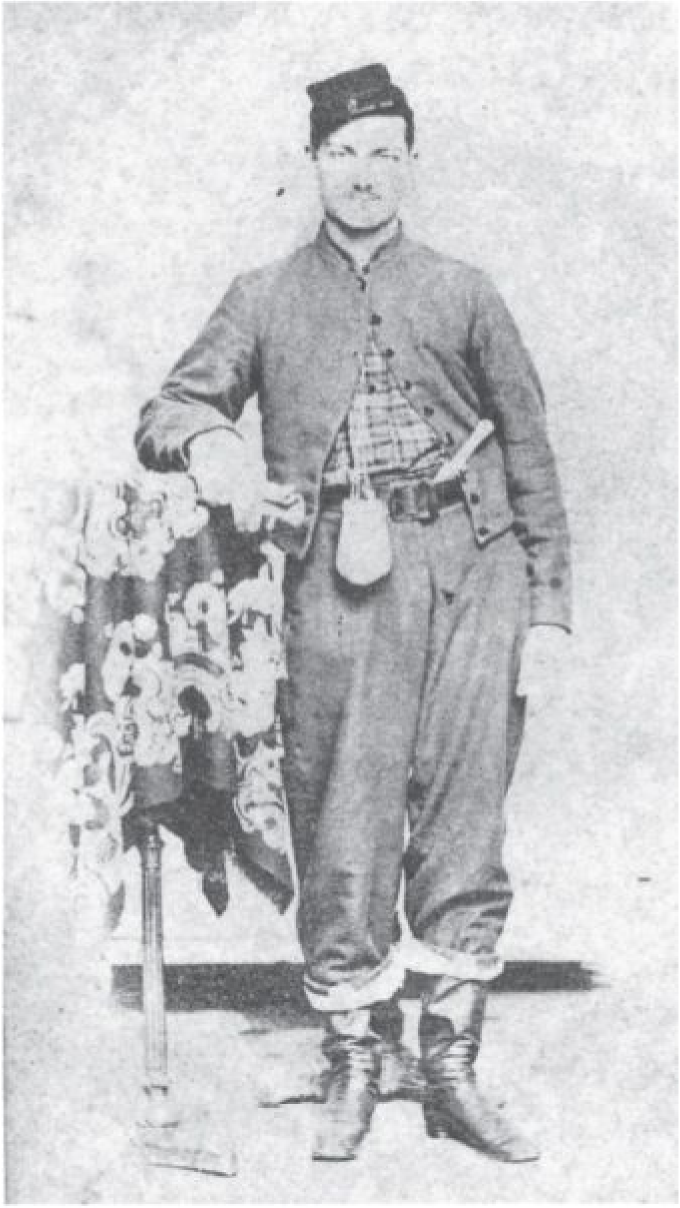
The typical Jewish soldier, like the typical Johnny Reb, served in the infantry. Wolfs 1895 list reflects this simple fact: Of the 1,340 men listed, 967 served in the infantry, 116 in the cavalry, 129 in the artillery, and 11 in the navy or marines. Rabbi Elzas's more precise list of Jewish South Carolinians shows 117 in the infantry of a total of 167 men. Ezekiel and Lichtenstein's *The History of the Jews of Richmond* list is consistent, showing approximately 70 of 100 in the infantry, as is Brock's Shreveport list.[6] There were Jewish Johnny Rebs in every aspect of the war. They were privates in infantry units all over the South and in every major campaign. They were cooks, sharpshooters, orderlies, teamsters, and foragers. They dug trenches, cut trees, guarded prisoners, and served on picket duty.

Zalegman Phillips Moses of Sumter served as a clerk in the Navy Department. (Courtesy of Robert A. Moses, Sumter, S.C.)

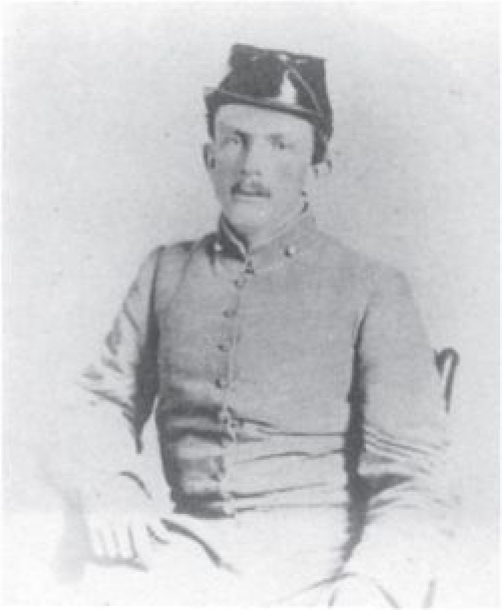
Solomon Solomon of New Orleans. A sutler with the 14th Louisiana and the 18th Mississippi, Solomon went to Virginia to sell merchandise. Soldiers needed basic supplies, food, cigars, and other items sold by sutlers. According to his letters home, Solomon was also in combat. (Courtesy of Alice Dale Cohan of Great Neck, New York.)

Most of the historical data about Jewish Confederate soldiers is contained in the letters, diaries, reminiscences, and biographies of well-known, powerful, and therefore much older men, such as Judah Benjamin or Raphael Moses. Yet the average Confederate soldier was in his twenties, and this was undoubtedly true of the Jewish Johnny Rebs. We know nearly nothing about most of these young men except their names and units, but there is information on enough men in the ranks to make some generalizations.[7]

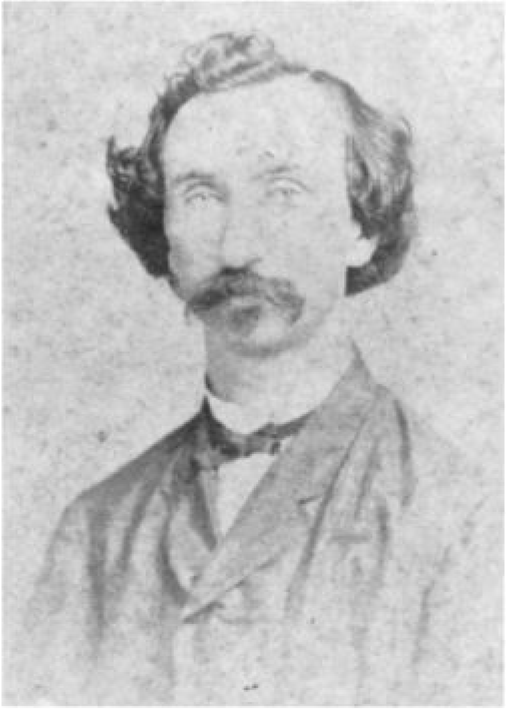
The majority enlisted in companies in their home towns with men whom they knew, often fellow Jews. The young men who enlisted in the Confederate army, like soldiers at all times and places, preferred serving in units with their friends and relatives. Jewish Johnny Rebs were no exception. There were seven Rosenbalms in Company H of the 37th Virginia. Philip Rosenheim of the Richmond militia was proud of his service and his friends: "Charley Marx and David Mittledorfer, Julius Straus, Moses Hutzler, Sam and Herman Hirsh, Simon Sycles, Gus Thalheimer, Abr. Goldback and a good many other Yuhudim all belonged to the same company, which I did." Louis Merz came to LaGrange, Georgia, from Durkheim, Bavaria, in 1853, and when the war came he enlisted in the West Point Guards, Company D, 4th Georgia, with Isaac Heyman, Jacob Friesleben, Anselm Sterne, and Levi Stern. But unlike Irish and German immigrants and their sons, who formed ethnic companies, the Jews who fought in the Civil War did not form distinctively Jewish companies. The reason is obvious: Jews fervently desired to be seen as citizens of their state and nation, not as a separate nationality. They had no desire to stand out as a group as they had been forced to do in Europe. Unlike the Irish, who also wanted to be seen as equal citizens, the Jews had been forced to live in ghettos in Europe, and true equality to them meant belonging to the general population. Judaism was a religion, not a nationality, and Jews did not want to be seen as a separate nationality. Their mission, therefore, was the exact opposite of other ethnic groups, such as the Irish, who took pride in their ethnic organizations. Jewish soldiers sought to prove that they could be like everyone else. They avoided anything smacking of the ghetto. There were no Catholic or Lutheran units in the Confederate army, and, therefore, there would be no Jewish units. In addition, as a practical matter, there were few wealthy Jewish men with the military background and political influence needed to organize a company of troops. Unlike a Moise of South Carolina or a Hyams of Louisiana, the majority of Jewish Confederates were recent young immigrants. They were followers, comrades-in-arms, not leaders.[8]



Pvt. Isidore Danziger was born in Paris in 1842 and came to New Orleans in 1848 with his parents. He served in the Orleans Guards Battalion at Shiloh. (Courtesy of Catherine Kahn, New Orleans.)



Sgt. Julian Levy. This portrait is reproduced from a carte de visite at the Museum of the Confederacy. Levy served in Company E, 3d Alabama Infantry. (Courtesy of the Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia.)



Pvt. Simon Kohlman, Point Coupee Artillery (Louisiana). (Courtesy of Cecile Levine, New Orleans.)

The story has been told that there were two Jewish companies in the Confederate army, both from Georgia. One was supposed to have been organized at West Point, Georgia, at the start of the war and the other at Macon in 1862 for the purpose of defending Savannah.[9] But the story is not verifiable. A history of Macon Jewry by Rabbi Newton J. Friedman discounts the Macon company story, and Louis Merz, a Jewish Confederate, states that the Jewish men of West Point enlisted in the West Point Guards. Thirteen Jewish Confederates served in the Macon German Artillery, a home guard unit.

Nevertheless, there were units with many Jews in them. Because Louisiana had the largest Jewish population, it was natural that the closest thing to a “Jewish Company” was Company K, 11th Louisiana Infantry, “The Shreveport Rebels” of Caddo Parish. Doubtless, the influential Hyams family had a hand in raising the company and the regiment. Its second lieutenant was Isaac R. Hyams.[10] Other Shreveport Jews served in Companies E, F, and I, 3d Louisiana. Samuel Meyers Hyams was lieutenant colonel of the 3d Louisiana and helped raise the regiment. J. B. P. (“Pink”) Hyams served with Company E and was wounded at Iuka and captured at Vicksburg, as was Pvt. David March with Company I. Julius A. Jacob served in Company F of the 3d Louisiana. The 1st Georgia contained many Jews from Savannah, including seven Cohens and four Levys.[11]

Lewis Leon’s first company, the Charlotte Grays, Company C, 1st N.C. Volunteer Infantry, included 1st Lt. E. B. Cohen, Cpl. George Wolffe, and privates Jonas Engle, John R. Israel, Jacob Katz, I. C. Levi, Jacob Leopold, Sam Oppenheim, and two Wolfes in addition to Leon. His second unit, Company B, 53d North Carolina, included J. Eigenbunn, Jonas Engal, Sgt. Maj. Aaron Katz, three Markses, and Cpl. Henry Wertheim.[12] Leon spent much of his leave time with his brother Morris Leon, originally in Company I, 44th Georgia. By May 1863, the Leon brothers’ regiments were assigned in brigades in Rodes’s Division of Ewell’s corps.[13]

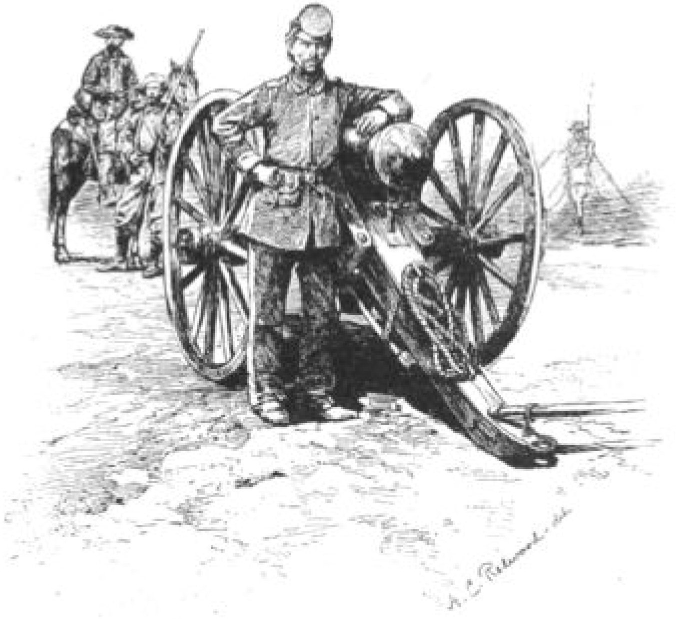
The majority of Jewish Confederates served as privates or corporals in the infantry, but there were Jews in all branches of the service and in all departments. In Wolfs listing for Alabama, for example, 105 served in the infantry and 21 in the cavalry. His Arkansas list shows almost as many cavalry as infantry. Texas had 73 Jewish infantrymen and 21 cavalrymen. As the Jews went west, they apparently rode horseback more often and tended to live in small towns. One requirement of a cavalry soldier was to provide his own mount (for which he was paid sixty cents per day).[14]

Leopold Levy and his brother Sampson served in Company G, 1st Virginia Cavalry. A third brother, Solomon, was in Company C, 23d Virginia. Leopold, a native of Altenstadt, Bavaria, had married a *landsman* (fellow citizen of the same country), Rosena Hutzler of Richmond. Her parents, Abraham and Yetta Hutzler, had emigrated from Hagenbach, Bavaria. They lived in Amelia County and operated a general merchandise business. Leopold was a member of the Amelia County Troop before the war. It became part of the 1st Regiment of Cavalry commanded by Col. J. E. B. Stuart and remained in his commands as he was promoted.

Emanuel Gerst, another immigrant from Bavaria, joined Company G, 6th Virginia Cavalry Regiment. Gerst was twenty-six when he became a citizen of the United States at Williamsburg in 1845. His brother Julius was a merchant or peddler living in Richmond. Emanuel married a Gentile, Mary W. Cunningham, who owned a large plantation, “Glenmary,” on the Dan River in Halifax County. Emanuel remained a lifelong member of the German synagogue in Richmond, Beth Ahabahh. He served as a sergeant in the 6th Virginia from the fall of 1861 to 1863. His unit initially served in Manassas and acted as a screen to delay the expected Federal invasion from Washington. In his forties, Gerst became ill during the war and was forced to return home, where he likely joined the home guard. He hired a substitute to replace him in the ranks.[15]

Jacob Holberg left his German homeland at age nineteen. Beginning as a peddler, he established a small store in Macon, Mississippi. In 1861 he enlisted in Company G, 1st Mississippi Cavalry, and served four years, being promoted to sergeant. According to family tradition and at least one memoir, Leon and Sam Fischel from Alsace-Lorraine served in the 15th Louisiana Cavalry Battalion. Leon Fischel was drilling with the Tensas Parish Cavalry, a state militia unit, as early as March 15, 1861. He enlisted for the war at age twenty-seven in August 1861 at Memphis. The Tensas Cavalry became Company A, Wirt Adams’s Confederate Cavalry Regiment (also known as the 1st Mississippi and Wood’s Confederate Cavalry) in October 1861. The company later became Company A of the 15th Louisiana Cavalry Battalion. Leon Fischel was an aide to Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston at Shiloh, according to *Jews in Early Mississippi*. The Fischels lived in Vicksburg, and after the war Leon named his son Albert Sidney Johnston Fischel.[16]

Jews also served in artillery units such as the Washington Artillery of New Orleans. Wolf’s list for Texas shows five artillerymen; five for Alabama; and eight for Arkansas. Both Edwin Kursheedt and Eugene Henry Levy served in the artillery. Marx Cohen and Gustavus A. Cohen served in James F. Hart’s Company (Washington Artillery, South Carolina), initially a part of Hampton’s Legion, as did five other South Carolina Cohens. Young Marx E. Cohen was killed as General Johnston made a final stand against Sherman at Bentonville. Perry Moses of Sumter served in a number of units, including Culpepper’s Battery. In 1863, he was in charge of a twelve-pound Napoleon. “I fought a battery of four guns for over an hour,” he wrote his mother, Octavia Harby Moses, in 1863, “giving them gun for gun.”[17]



Confederate artilleryman. (*Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*.)

Some Jewish Johnny Rebs served in the local militia or home guards, which were organized for local self-defense. At the beginning of the war, many men who did not want to leave home or serve in the regular army joined the militia. As the war progressed and conscription instituted, the home guards consisted of those too young, too old, or too infirm to serve, as well as those exempt by virtue of their occupations or political office. Philip Rosenheim of Richmond was a youngster who served in the local militia in the summer of 1863, when Richmond was under attack. Mayor Joseph C. Mayo issued a broadsides warning of the approach of the Union army: "TO ARMS! REMEMBER NEW ORLEANS! Richmond is now in your hands. Let it not fall under the rule of another BUTLER."[18] Philip and others responded, "I, as well as all the Boys rallied to the call and we stood firmly at our Flag ready to meet the foe," he wrote his sister and brother-in-law, Amelia and Isaac Meinnart. "We were held in readiness and we drilled every afternoon from 4 til 7 in the square and our orders were at the Toll of the Bells to meet promptly at our places of Rendevous." Philip was moved by the mayor's plea, as were others, "as old men with grey locks, whitened from the frosts of many winters, came forth with their muskets, ready at any moment to drive the foe from our glorious city."[19]

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Like their fellow Johnny Rebs, many Jewish Confederate soldiers were anxious to enlist when the war began, believing that the war would be short and they did not want to miss it. This was a widespread Southern belief. Sen. James Chesnut told one Charlestonian "there will be no war…. I will drink all the blood shed in the war."[20]

Albert Luria of Columbus, Georgia, enlisted within a week of the firing on Fort Sumter, as did the sons of the old established families who were expected to lead the way.[21]

Octavus S. Cohen was the son of Octavus and Henrietta Levy Cohen, members of Mikve Israel and Savannah society. (Young Octavus's mother, Henrietta, was the sister of Phoebe Yates Levy Pember and Eugenia Levy Phillips.) His father was a wealthy and distinguished commission merchant and cotton exporter with offices on Bay Street. When the war began, Octavus was a volunteer in the Savannah Artillery, a state unit, then a volunteer artillery instructor, and, finally, a volunteer aide-de-camp to Brig. Gen. William D. Smith, before he even enlisted as a private. Meanwhile, the elder Cohen and other family members attempted to secure a cadetship in the Confederate army for his son, who was only seventeen years old. (The elder Octavus served briefly as a major and quartermaster in the Georgia State Troops, but was unsuccessful in obtaining a commission in the Confederate army. G. B. Lamar wrote to George Randolph, the secretary of war, "His being an Israelite should be no objection—he has lived long in this community.")[22] Octavus Cohen's cousin, Frederick Myers, like Cohen, joined Captain Claghorn's Artillery Company (Chatham Artillery) of the 1st (Olmstead's) Georgia Infantry. He remained with it when it became Captain Weaton's Chatham Artillery Battery with the reorganization of the 1st Georgia into strictly an infantry regiment in late 1862.[23]

The Moses family had been in South Carolina for a hundred years by 1860. Their ancestors had arrived from Barbados before the Revolution, and the founding father, the colonial merchant Myer Moses, had served as a private in Bentham's Company of Militia in the American Revolution. The Moses boys from Sumter, South Carolina, joined Company D, 2d South Carolina Infantry. Henry Claremont Moses enlisted as a private on April 8, 1861; his brother Meyer B. Moses enlisted the next day; Joshua and Perry Moses both enlisted as privates on May 1. Henry was wounded at First Manassas, was discharged in October 1861, reenlisted in Company B, 15th (Lucas's) South Carolina Artillery Battalion as a lieutenant in December, and assisted in the construction of fortifications in Charleston harbor. Meyer, who rose to the rank of quartermaster sergeant, was wounded at Fredericksburg, captured at Cedar Creek, and sent to Point Lookout Prison.[24]

Leading Jewish Richmonders had been members of the Richmond Light Infantry Blues for generations. The unit participated in quelling the Gabriel slave revolt in 1800 and was called into service in 1807, when the British man-of-war *Leopard* attacked the *Chesapeake* off Norfolk. Thus, when the Richmond Blues left the city for the war on April 24, 1861, fifteen of its ninety-nine members were Jewish, including Ezekiel J. ("Zeke") Levy, fourth sergeant; Henry Adler, Bernard Goldstein, Abraham Isaacs, Thomas W. Lyon, William Lovenstein, Joseph Levy, Lewis and Calvin Myers, Hugo

Plaut, Henry Rosenheim, Jacob Semon, Joseph Schoenthal, Jacob Son, and Levi Wasserman. The Blues, now in Confederate services as Company A, 46th Virginia, served in West Virginia and saw combat at Roanoke Island in February 1862. "Soon a ball [bullet] came from the Yankees," the company's record states, and "one of our boys, Mr. L. Wasserman, replied." Henry Adler was mortally wounded. Isaacs, Lyon, Levi Wasserman, and Joseph Levy were captured. They were exchanged in August. Adler, after suffering a great deal from his wounds, died at the naval hospital in Portsmouth and was buried by the Blues, who turned out en masse to honor their first private killed in the war. The Blues served throughout the war in Virginia, North Carolina, in the defense of Charleston, and later in the defense of Richmond and Petersburg. They fought to the end at Appomattox. In June 1864, the Blues' captain killed and first lieutenant wounded, Lt. Ezekiel J. Levy became commanding officer.[25]

The Richmond Grays, Company A of the 1st Virginia Volunteers (later Company G of the 12th), also contained a number of Jewish soldiers, including Ellis Ellis, Herman Hirsh, Isadore Lovenstein, Ezekiel M. Ezekiel, Philip Whitlock, and Simon Rosenfels or Rosenfield. The company was called into service in 1859, before the war began. It was ordered to Harpers Ferry to help capture John Brown, who had seized the arsenal there and taken two local planters as hostages, including Lewis Washington, a great-grandnephew of the first president. Later, it went to Charlestown, Virginia, to witness Brown's hanging. When the war began, the Grays went to Norfolk on detached service, where they became part of the 12th Virginia.[26] The Jewish boys were the sons of Jewish merchants in downtown Richmond. Rosenfield's father had a store on Seventeenth Street opposite the old market. (He later obtained a substitute and left the army.) Marx Myers was killed in action early in the war. Herman Hirsh was the son of Abram Hirsh, who kept a dry goods store on Broad Street.[27]

Myer Angle, the first president of Beth Ahabah, had six sons in the Confederate army: James Beale, Company D, 1st Virginia, who "took part in the immortal charge [presumably Pickett's charge] at Gettysburg" and was wounded; Joseph, of the Richmond Blues, who was killed in battle; Meyer, who enlisted in April 1861, in Company A, 12th Virginia, and was captured at Sayler's Creek; Montrose, who served in the Richmond Fayette Artillery, Company I, 1st Virginia Artillery; Benjamin M., in the Home Guard; and Solomon, with Company E, 23d Virginia. Three Levy brothers of Richmond served: Leopold and Samson, with the Amelia Troop (Company G) of the 1st Virginia Cavalry, and Solomon, who died of wounds, in Company C, 23d Virginia.[28]

The Myers brothers of Richmond. This wartime photograph shows Herman Myers (*right*), Isidore (*left*), and Marx Myers (*center*). All of the brothers served in the Confederate army. Marx served in Company A, 1st Virginia, and Company G, 12th Virginia (Richmond Grays). He was killed at Manassas. (Courtesy of the Beth Ahabah Museum and Archives, Richmond.)

Eugene Henry Levy of New Orleans was born in Grand Gulf, Mississippi, in 1840. His father, like many acculturated Louisiana Jews, was born in Charleston and moved first to Mississippi and then to Louisiana. His ancestors were English Sephardim, and one was a Captain Lazarus, who fought in the American Revolution. Eugene's mother was a Marks from Philadelphia. Eugene was quite literate and graduated from the University of Louisiana with honors. The Levys had three sons who fought for the Confederacy: Eugene Henry Levy in Company C, 1st Louisiana Battalion (Rightor's) and the Donaldsonville Artillery; Julian H. "Doc" Levy in the Donaldsonville Artillery; and

Joseph Calhoun Levy in Company C, 1st Louisiana Battalion, then in the 1st Louisiana Regulars (Strawbridge's), who was killed at Shiloh.[29]

Young Jewish boys, like youths throughout the South, attempted to enlist even if they were too young to serve. Fifteen-year-old Isaac Cohen of Richmond enlisted one evening, and, early the next morning, his father found his new uniform and musket and promptly returned them to the recruiting officer. Cohen said later he had the shortest term of service on record: two hours and a half. Simon Sycle of Richmond enlisted, but he was underage and his father withdrew him from the army. On his way back to school in Baltimore, he was arrested as a spy and sent to prison. Augustus Smith enlisted upon the last call of the authorities in 1865 at the age of sixteen.[30]

Moses Jacob Ezekiel, a Sephardic Jew, the fifth of fourteen children of modest merchant parents, grew up in a Richmond neighborhood where whites and blacks and Jews and Christians "were all jumbled together." When the war began, young thirteen-year-old Moses, along with all the little boys in Richmond, "howled and jumped for joy." He was so enthusiastic that he begged his grandparents to let him go to the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) so that he could somehow get into the war. "Mose" Ezekiel was one of the first Jewish cadets to attend VMI. A fellow cadet said that Ezekiel "never could chisel himself into a pretty soldier… he looked like a tin soldier that had been broken in the middle and mended with sealing wax. There was but one worse soldier than myself in the world, and that was Ezekiel."[31]

According to Charles W. Joyner, the Jews of Georgetown, South Carolina, contributed a number of men to Confederate service during the Civil War. The Emanuel family sent at least four men into the service. Maj. W. P. Emanuel commanded the 12th Cavalry Battalion, which later formed part of the 4th S.C. Cavalry. Edwin C. Emanuel, a butcher and sergeant in Company A, 10th S.C. Infantry, died of fever in Oxford, Mississippi, in the summer of 1862. His nephew, eighteen-year-old Pvt. Washington Emanuel, served in the same company and was wounded in the Battle of Atlanta in the summer of 1864. His arm was amputated and he later died. Solomon ("Sol") Emanuel, Washington's older brother, also enlisted in the same company and served throughout the war as a private in the infantry and as clerk to Lt. Col. Cornelius Irvine Walker. He fought at Corinth, Mississippi, in 1862 after Beauregard's retreat from Shiloh, in the Kentucky and Tennessee (Murfreesboro, Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge) campaigns and in the bloody battles around Atlanta in 1864. He was admitted to the hospital in January 1865, but when his regiment was ordered back east to resist Sherman's march through his native state, "Sol hobbled out and took his place in ranks."[32]

Haiman Kaminski immigrated to Charleston from Posen, Prussia, in 1854 at the age of fifteen and moved to Conwayboro, near Georgetown, two years later. He was working as a clerk in Elkan Baum's store when the war began. Like many of the men of the Georgetown area, Kaminski enlisted in the 10th South Carolina in the spring of 1861. He was promoted to sergeant and served as a commissary until his surrender at Greensboro. Sol Emanuel, who would go into business with Kaminski after the war, was clerking in his father's dry goods and general merchandise business when the war came.[33]

Young German Jewish recruits swelled the Confederate ranks, as did a substantial number of Polish and Eastern European Jews as well. Marcus Baum, a native of Schwersenz, Prussia, moved to Camden, South Carolina, just before the war and enlisted in Company E, 2d South Carolina, in July 1861, although as a foreigner he was exempt from military service. Two Oppenheim brothers, Edwin and Henry H., also enlisted in Company K, 2d South Carolina on May 12, 1861. They would later serve along with Sgt. Julius H. Oppenheim in Company B, 17th S.C. Cavalry Battalion. Levi Wasserman, a clerk in Isaac Robinson's store in Petersburg before the war, was the first member of the Richmond Light Infantry Blues to fire a shot in battle. The Jews of Petersburg, Virginia, twenty-one miles south of Richmond, enlisted many in the local Petersburg Grays, 12th Virginia. Virtually all of these men were immigrants from either England or one of the German states. Mark E. Kull, whose father, Jacob, immigrated from Germany, enlisted as a private within days of the firing on Fort Sumter. Aaron S. and Isadore Reinach, H. Seligman, and Uriah Feibelman served in the Grays. Aaron Kadden of Petersburg served in the 10th Virginia Cavalry; Alexander Myers was a private in the Confederate Guards, 9th Virginia, Pickett's division, Longstreet's corps; Simon Frankenthall and Jonas Weinburg served in Company B, 1st Virginia.[34]

The smaller communities of Virginia also furnished German Jewish immigrants to the Confederate cause. Max Guggenheimer, born in Bavaria, arrived in Lynchburg in Southwest Virginia in 1856 to study English and to visit his relatives who had settled there in 1838. He stayed, and at the age of nineteen enlisted in Company G, 11th Virginia. A cousin, Maurice Guggenheimer, served in the 2d Virginia Cavalry throughout the war. Henry Gintzberger, a peddler and a recent immigrant, arrived in Salem, Virginia, in 1860. He enlisted in the Salem Flying Artillery, which was the 1st Company A, 9th Virginia.[35] Twenty years old, Isaac Hirsh came to Fredericksburg, Virginia, in 1860. His parents had brought the family to America from Baden in 1856. They lived in New Haven and Baltimore before moving to Spotsylvania County just before the war started. In May, Isaac joined Company A, 30th Virginia and saw action.[36]

Jews from small towns in Texas, Arkansas, and Mississippi, mostly German and Polish immigrants, were no less patriotic than their eastern co-religionists and flocked to the Confederate banner. Mississippian Max Frauenthal enlisted as a private in Company A, 16th Mississippi, as a drummer. He was joined by Jews from Natchez and Woodville, which was called “Little Jerusalem” because of its large Jewish population. Solomon and Mike Loeb joined the Wilkinson Rifles (Company K, 16th Mississippi). Joseph Kohn and F. Rosenberg joined the Wilkinson Guards (Company D, 38th Mississippi), and brothers John Cline and Henry Cline joined the Hurricane Rifles (Company E, 21st Mississippi). The smallest towns of Mississippi contributed Jewish Confederates. Sampson Weiner from Heinsheim, Baden, married a fellow passenger Caroline Forscheimer aboard the boat bringing them to America in 1852. They settled in Canton. Weiner served in Company A, 1st Mississippi Cavalry and had several horses shot out from under him, according to family legend. In the 1850s Ferdinand Krauss from Leimersheim, Rhein Pfalz, Germany, settled in Fayette, halfway between Natchez and Port Gibson. He served in Claiborne Guards, Company H, 12th Mississippi, and was wounded at Seven Pines. Isadore Moise of Portigny served in Company A, 16th Mississippi, with Max Frauenthal. Emanuel Levy of Buchsweiler joined Company A, 14th Mississippi Partisan Rangers Cavalry Battalion. Both were from Alsace-Lorraine and immigrated to Summit, Mississippi. They both served as privates.[37]

The same was true of the German Jewish immigrants to Arkansas. There were nearly two hundred Jewish merchants in the state in 1860. More than a third of them served the Confederacy. David Felsenthal of Camden, Arkansas, closed his business, lost his investment, and enlisted in Captain Purifoy’s Company B, 15th (Johnson’s) Arkansas. He was captured at Fort Donelson. Brothers Ferdinand, Isaac, and David Gates of Hickory Plains joined the army. Isaac Gates, like many other Jewish Confederates, served as a quartermaster and commissary. Isaac was wounded at Chattanooga and Murfreesboro. Other brothers from Arkansas, David and Samuel Bluthenthal, served in the Company K, 9th Arkansas, and Company G, 3d Arkansas Cavalry, respectively. Three Gans brothers—Morris, Jacob, and Simon—fought, as did Peter, Jacob, and Pool Cohen. Isaac Hirst of Pocahontas fought in numerous battles in Company A, 7th Arkansas, and was badly wounded in 1864. According to Dr. Junius N. Bragg, Sam Winter of Camden, who was in Company K, 6th Arkansas, was “one of the bravest Confederate soldiers I ever knew. He would walk without hesitation to the mouth of a cannon if ordered to do so.” At least two Arkansas Jewish Confederates were killed: Isaac Burgauer in 1863 and Julius H. Levy of Company A, 6th Arkansas at Shiloh.[38] According to Eli Evans, Pvt. Isaac Gleitzman received the Cross of Honor for “conspicuous gallantry in the field,” but he was prouder of never having eaten any nonkosher food, or “trefa.”[39]

Benedict (“Ben”) Oppenheimer from Tennessee had the distinction of being one of a few deaf men who enlisted in either army. According to family tradition, Oppenheimer was born in 1827 and was deaf from the age of two as a result of scarlet fever. His father died, and he and his mother immigrated from a small town in Alsace-Lorraine to

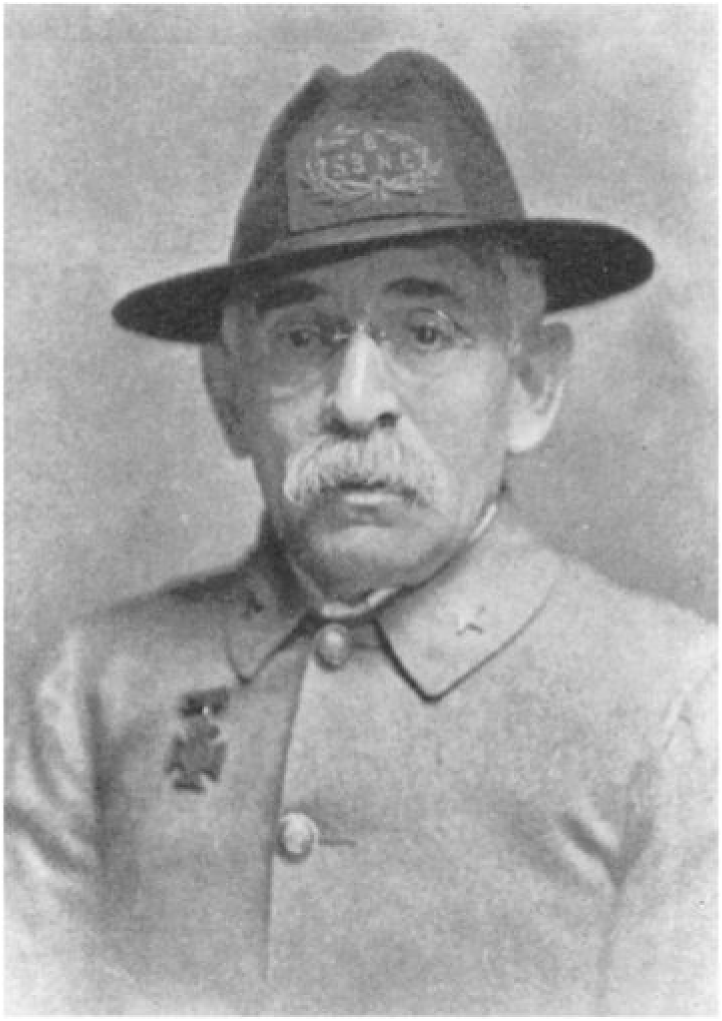
Cincinnati. Ben's mother died, and he went to live with his brother in Trenton, Tennessee. When the war began, young Ben tried to enlist in various Confederate units, but they would not have him because of his disability. Ben then ran away from home to join the army and was "a gallant soldier in the Confederate Army and was in 11 separate engagements."[40] Oppenheimer's great-niece recalled that he used to tell her in sign language or with pencil and paper some of his many experiences. The only way he would know that the enemy cannons were firing was when he would see a comrade on his right or left fall from his horse or see the horse shot out from under him. He told of how the company always picked him to fire the cannon because he was deaf anyway and it did not hurt his ears.[41]

Jacob Samuels of Fort Worth enlisted in June 1861 in a mounted company of the Texas State Troops, the Tarrant County Rifles. He later served in Capt. J. C. Terrell's Company F, Waller's 13th Battalion, Texas Cavalry. His friends Bero Berliner and John S. Hirchfield joined the same company. Samuels was born in Warsaw in 1836, a subject of the Russian czar and a resident of a ghetto where he and fellow Jews were strictly controlled by a hostile government. He declined the invitation to remain a third-class citizen of Russian Poland and left for America in 1847 at the age of eleven. He likely arrived in New Orleans, like many a young Jewish immigrant with only the clothes on his back, willing to risk everything for a chance to breathe the free air of America. He worked as a peddler and, at some point in the 1850s, moved to Fort Worth, Texas, where he went into general merchandising with Bero B. Berliner.[42]

Samuels's company saw action in Louisiana throughout 1862, defending Louisiana and east Texas from the invading Union army and navy. In April 1863 the Confederates under Brig. Gen. Alfred Mouton successfully defended Fort Bisland against the Union army near Morganza, Louisiana. In June, Samuels and his comrades were engaged in vicious combat in and around Bayou Teche near Pattersonville to the west of Brashear City. Samuels was with Maj. Hannibal H. Boone when he was shot and lost his arm. Samuels saw action at the Battles of Mansfield and Pleasant Hill in April 1864, where Maj. Gen. Richard Taylor's troops held back the Union advance.[43]

Shreveport, Louisiana, in 1860 is a striking portrait of the Southern Jewish immigrant's contribution to Confederate military service. Eric J. Brock has estimated that three hundred Jews lived in Shreveport in 1860 and that seventy-eight served in the Confederate armed forces. Almost all of them were recent immigrants who arrived in Louisiana in the 1850s. Most, like Marx Baer, were born in one of the German states or Alsace-Lorraine. David March of Company I, 3d Louisiana, was from Hechingen; Pvt. Henry Simon, Company K, 11th Louisiana, from Sausenheim, Bavaria; Abraham Sour of Company A, 8th Louisiana Cavalry, Leona, Germany; Marx Blum of the Donaldsonville Artillery, Sam and Nathan Weil, and the Dreyfusses from Alsace. Some were from

Poland: Jack Citron, Company I, 3d Louisiana, from Koval; and Jacob Gall, Company D, 19th Louisiana, from Meschisko. And some were from France: Marx Israel of Company 5, 3d Regiment, European Brigade, Onepie, near Metz; and Gottlieb Blum of the Company F, 3d Louisiana, Hatte, Elsas.[44]



Pvt. Lewis Leon as an older man. Leon was a German immigrant whose parents and a few siblings lived in New York City. He and his brother Morris lived in the South and fought for the Confederacy. Leon first enlisted in the 1st North Carolina Vounteers and later became a sharpshooter in the 53d North Carolina State Troops. He fought throughout the war with the Army of Northern Virginia and was captured at the Wilderness. (Author's collection, *Diary of a Tar Heel Confederate*, 1913.)

The wartime experiences of Jewish Johnny Rebs are illustrated by three men: Lewis Leon of Charlotte, North Carolina; Isaac Hermann of Washington County, Georgia; and Eugene Henry Levy of New Orleans. Leon and Hermann were immigrants. Leon had emigrated from one of the German states with his family. His father was a peddler in New York City, and Lewis and his brother Morris had left their parents, brothers, sisters, and their home on Norfolk Street on the Lower East Side in the late 1850s to seek their fortunes in the South. Lewis went to Charlotte and Morris to Georgia. Lewis worked as a clerk in a dry goods store. “Ike” Hermann had just come to America in 1859 from France. He worked in a store in rural Georgia. Eugene Henry Levy was an acculturated Sephardic Jew from Louisiana whose South Carolina ancestors included at least one Revolutionary War soldier and a grandfather who came to Charleston from Jamaica in the early 1800s.[45]

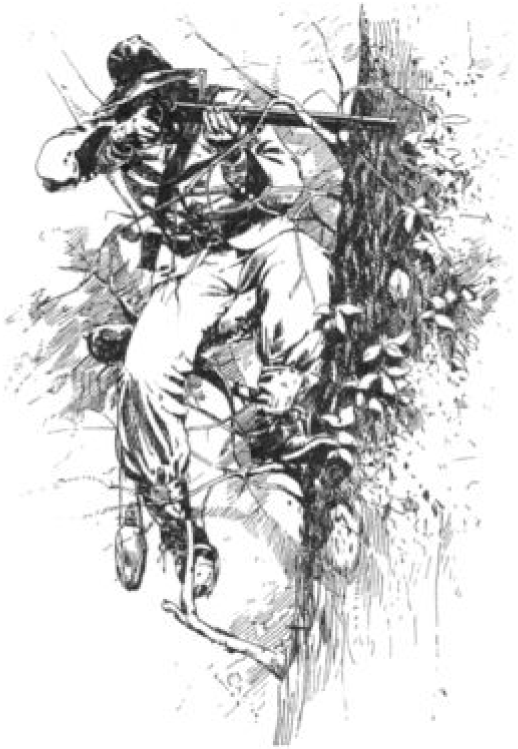
Lewis Leon was a nineteen-year-old clerk, five feet and four and a half inches tall, with a ruddy complexion and dark eyes. He enlisted on April 20, 1861, in Raleigh, and his company, the Charlotte Grays, seized the Branch Mint in Charlotte the same day. The Grays were mustered into state service for six months as Company C of the 1st N.C. Volunteer Infantry in May. The regiment was in the thick of the fighting at the first major engagement of the war at Big Bethel, Virginia, on June 10. In August, they were mustered into Confederate service at Ship Point, Virginia, for the balance of their six-month enlistment.[46]

Leon described his first months in the Confederate army in much the same way as a young college student might describe his first six months away from home: travel, girls, bad food, and some unpleasant work. Like all Johnny Rebs, Leon quickly discovered that war was unglamorous. His first tasks were digging ditches and cutting down trees, neither of which he could do very well. "Why, of course, I never thought that this was work for soldiers to do, but we had to do it…. I know I never had a pick or a shovel in my hand to work with in my life." While Leon was attempting to cut down a tree, his lieutenant, "seeing how nice I was marking it," asked him what he had done before becoming a soldier. "I told him I was a clerk in a dry-goods store. He said he thought so from the way I was cutting timber." Leon was then told to bring buckets of water to the men who could cut. But he quickly learned why digging breastworks was important: "If it had not been for them many of us would not be here now." Even though they had to sleep in horse stables, Leon and his comrades did not care. "They didn't even give us a looking-glass," he joked.[47]

Leon remained with his company for the six months, but after it returned to Charlotte to be mustered out; he did not rejoin when it was reorganized in the 11th North Carolina State Troops. Instead, five months later, on April 24, 1862, now twenty years old, he joined Company B, 53d North Carolina State Troops, for the duration of the war. His brother Morris enlisted on March 4, 1862, at Madison, Georgia, "for three years or the war." His unit, the 44th Georgia, arrived in Virginia just after the Battle of Seven Pines in the summer of 1862.[48]

Leon's regiment saw action all around North Carolina: at the Battle of Deep Gully, Weldon, and the Siege of Washington, North Carolina. He served in Virginia in the early defenses around Richmond and Petersburg; at Drewry's Bluff, Suffolk, Smithfield, the Blue Ridge, Warrington Springs, and Bristoe Station; and at Beverly Ford in support of J. E. B. Stuart. His unit was assigned to Daniel's brigade from 1862 to 1864 and Grimes's from 1864 to surrender. The 53d, while Leon was present, was with Lee at Gettysburg, the retreat from Pennsylvania, Mine Run, and the Wilderness.[49]

Even in the early days of the war, Pvt. Lewis Leon heard the "long roll"—the drumbeat for soldiers to wake up at 2 or 3 a.m.—fell into line at daybreak, got into the line of battle, and fought for hours, even days, in the sweltering heat and freezing cold. He and his comrades were shelled by Union artillery for days and weeks at a time. He volunteered for perilous service: going near the Yankee line as a scout and volunteering as a sharpshooter or as a skirmisher, whose job it was to go in the front of the line of infantry in battle and reconnoiter and "engage the enemy until a general engagement, then we fall in line with [the] balance of the army." Leon charged with his fellow skirmishers, giving the famous Rebel yell. He became a proficient marksman. “I hit a bull’s-eye to-day,” he noted proudly in April 1864.[50]



Confederate sharpshooter. (*Battles and Leaders of the Civil War.*)

Johnny Rebs idolized Robert E. Lee, and Jewish boys were no exception. Lewis Leon referred to him reverently as “our father.” He saw a lot of Lee as a soldier in the Army of Northern Virginia. He was concerned about Lee’s health in May 1863. At a review, he observed a great change in Lee’s appearance from the last time he saw him at Yorktown in 1861. “Then his hair was black. Now he is a gray-headed old man.” He admired Lee’s courage: “our father, Lee, was scarcely ever out of sight when there was danger. We could not feel gloomy when we saw his old gray head uncovered as he would pass us on the march, or be with us in a fight. I care not how weary or hungry we were, when we saw him we gave that Rebel yell, and hunger and wounds would be forgotten.” On another occasion on a freezing cold winter day, when Leon was working in a sawmill, he and his detail saw Lee ride by with his daughter. Soon after a courier appeared and gave the men some woolen socks and gloves from the general’s daughter. Leon believed Lee to be a very great general. The Union won, in his view, only because of greater resources and more men. “If General Lee only had half their men,” he wrote in May 1864, “and those men were rebels, we would go to Washington in two weeks.”[51] Like many Southerners, particularly those in the army, Pvt. Simon Mayer, even though fighting in the Army of Tennessee, believed in April 1864 that the South would win the war because of Lee’s leadership. “I doubt not but that ere this reaches you, the victorious shouts of Lee's invincible heroes will be reverberated throughout the length & breadth of our land." He looked forward to the next battle, which he and his comrades believed would be "a second Chickamauga. … All looks bright & glowing, and soon we hope to be gathered under 'our vine & fig tree' in Peace, Happiness, & Independence."[52]

Lack of food was one of a Confederate soldier's biggest problems, and Leon's diary records the obtaining of food as a signal event. Ladies were always feeding Leon and his friends on the highways. In December 1862 he traveled by railroad to Goldsboro. "The ladies on the road, especially those at Wilson, were very kind to us. They gave us plenty to eat, which we were very much in need of." Leon, Henry Wortheim, and the Katz brothers all received packages of food from home, which were very much appreciated by the men. One Eigenbrun "came to see us to-day from home," Leon recalled, "and brought me a splendid cake from Miss Clara Phile." The Confederates lived better on the march up North than they did in the South. On the march from Virginia through Maryland and Pennsylvania to Gettysburg during June 1863, Leon ate better than he had in a long time. "So far we have lived very good in the enemy's country."[53]

But, as the war progressed, food became scarce. As early as February 1863, Leon complained that "the worst of it is we have no rations." Coffee could not be had at any price. When Leon made coffee, he meant "Confederate coffee—parched corn—that is our coffee." Like many a Johnny Reb, Leon adjusted to the deplorable conditions. "Ate our corn bread and bacon," he wrote in February 1863, "and retired to our couches and slept as good if not better than Abe Lincoln." In May, he was marching and countermarching in all kinds of weather "and very often without anything to eat." As with most Confederate soldiers, his new uniform was long gone by 1863. By June he described his misery and his comrades as "poor, ragged rebels."[54]

Disease, exposure, the strain of war, and accidents killed far more Confederates than did the enemy. Bell Wiley quotes a Tar Heel private: "they hev Been 11 Died with the fever in Co A since we left kinston and 2 died that was wounded so you now See that these Big Battles is not as Bad as the fever." Lewis Leon's experience was the same. He saw a naval officer's leg cut off in a railroad accident in which he and his friend Henry Wortheim were also injured. Leon's friend Henry Wortheim got sick during the war, possibly from constant exposure to rain and cold without sufficient shelter or food. On February 25, 1863, Leon noted: "Henry Wortheim was sent home on a sick furlough, as he is very bad off." He soon died. Leon was a tough young man, but he too suffered from the cold, exposure, and cut-up feet, as did many other Jewish Confederates. By September 1862, after Antietam, Ansel Sterne of the West Point Guards wrote from

Winchester, Virginia, “The army is in poor condition, half naked and bare footed. My own clothes and shoes are in pieces and there is no chance of getting them replaced.”[55]

Leon and his friends, all young men in their twenties, were interested in the girls they met along the way, especially the young ladies who worked in the factories around Petersburg, where his regiment spent much of the war. His diary, published in 1913, gives no details of his amorous adventures, but there certainly were some. Leon, Aaron Katz, Mike Etlinger, and Henry Wortheim knew their way around Petersburg. On June 21, 1862, “We reached Petersburg, Va., this morning at half-past two, and had barely laid down with a brick wall for my pillow when breakfast was announced … I ran the blockade [that is, sneaked away from camp without permission] with Katz.” Leon’s and Katz’s behavior must not have been too bad. Katz was promoted to sergeant major. In July he and his friends “return[ed] to our factory girls again—all O.K., you bet.” In April 1863 Leon was detailed to go to Wilson, North Carolina, to pick up the baggage for his officers. At Rocky Mount, he “[s]aw some fun with a girl and an old woman. The young one had stole a petticoat from the old one, and was compelled to take it off and return it in the presence of at least fifty men.”[56]

Leon was not alone in looking for female companionship. Jacob Samuels from Texas went into Galveston with his captain and fellow soldiers in the winter of 1863-64, where they were accosted on the street by a bevy of beautiful girls who importuned the soldiers to buy tickets to a lottery to benefit war widows and orphans. Samuels told his captain that if the “dice were all right the law of gravitation would make the result, which would be providential.” They won a number of necklaces, which they gave their new female acquaintances, spent two more days “in riots most uncouth,” but justified their behavior because they were bachelors. Many a Jewish soldier found himself in a city or town with Jewish families and Jewish daughters, and occasional marriages resulted. It was only natural that the young men would seek out eligible girls. Others, like Harris Levin of the 2d Virginia Reserves, sought out prostitutes. “Several nights a week our lovely post [at Drewry’s Bluff],” he wrote in 1864, “is visited by two sisters who are rentable for riding.”[57]

Like most Confederate soldiers, Leon liked his whiskey. “Katz and myself went to Petersburg to-day,” he wrote in December 1862. “We met with friends, and the consequence you can imagine. The headache we had next day was caused by too much whiskey.”[58]

His brigade was transferred to General Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia in May 1863. Leon marched to Gettysburg with the 53d North Carolina, a regiment in Daniel’s brigade, Army of Northern Virginia. In Middleburg, the people were downhearted and “showed their hatred to us by their glum looks and silence.” The townspeople shut their doors in the men's faces, including Leon's, but the Confederates proved to the Pennsylvanians that they were not "wild animals nor thieves" and procured the supplies they needed. Leon told the townspeople he dealt with that Lee had given the men strict orders not to burn the towns through which they passed.[59]

Leon's regiment arrived at Gettysburg at 1 p.m. on July 1 and met the enemy one mile south of town "and a little to the left of the Lutheran Seminary [Seminary Ridge]. We then advanced to the enemy's line of battle in double quick time. We had not gotten more than 50 paces when Norman of our company fell dead by my side. Katz was going to pick him up. I stopped him, as it is strictly forbidden for anyone to help take the dead or wounded off the field except the ambulance corps." Leon's company was now in the fight in earnest in the push to Seminary Ridge as a part of Daniel's brigade. Two of his company's lieutenants were wounded. In a fight that lasted four hours, Company B took heavy losses. The Yankees also suffered terrible losses, and Leon's company took Union prisoners. One soldier whom Leon took as a prisoner could not speak English. He asked Leon in German, "Will I get my pay in prison?" Leon recalled that Maj. James J. Iredell, his acting regimental commander, shook his hand and complimented him for his actions.[60]

On the second day at Gettysburg, Leon's regiment was in reserve until dark but supported a battery of artillery all day. "We lost several killed and wounded, although we had no chance to fire—only lay by a battery of artillery and be shot at." At dark his division was sent into combat under terrific shelling. "Still, it was certainly a beautiful sight," he wrote. "It being dark, we could see the cannon vomit forth fire." His unit was pinned down near a fence; his friend Aaron Katz was wounded by a piece of a shell that struck him in the side, and he was sent to the rear. On the third day, July 3, Leon's brigade under General Daniel was ordered up Culp's Hill under very heavy fire. "We were on the brow of one hill, the enemy on the brow of another. We charged on them several times, but, of course, running down our hill, and then to get to them was impossible, and every time we attempted it we came back leaving some of our comrades behind." Leon's gun became so hot that the ramrod would not come out, so he picked up a gun from the ground. For a time, his regiment was trapped on the field, and the two couriers sent for help were killed. They eventually retreated safely. Pickett's charge was Lee's answer to these reverses.[61]

Leon believed that his brigade, the strongest in his division before the battle, had lost the most men. "I know that our company went in the fight with 60 men. When we left Culps Hill there were 16 of us that answered to the roll call." There had been 12 sharpshooters in his company. Now there were two, including Leon. Eleven men in Company B were killed at Gettysburg; twenty-six were wounded, three of whom would later die. Nine were taken prisoner besides the wounded. All three lieutenants were wounded and taken prisoner. “This day none will forget, that participated in the fight. It was truly awful how fast, how very fast, did our poor boys fall by our sides—almost as fast as the leaves that fell as cannon and musket balls hit them, as they flew on their deadly errand.” Leon saw many men killed, heads shot off, men cut in two or their legs severed. He heard dying men begging for water or begging their comrades for “God’s sake” to kill them. Like all the soldiers who fought at Gettysburg, Leon remembered the stench of rotting corpses, some of which were black and bloated. Leon helped bury the dead.[62]

Leon, his brother Morris, and his friend Aaron Katz all survived, but Katz was taken prisoner. At the time, Leon believed the great battle had been a draw. Each side, he thought, lost an equal number of men, and the South took more prisoners. “An army that has gained a great victory,” he wrote, “follows it up while its enemy is badly crippled; but Meade, their commander, knows he has had as much as he gave, at least, if not more.” Actually, Lee’s army lost 3,903 men as opposed to Meade’s 3,155. There were 18,735 Confederates and 14,529 Yankees wounded. The battle was a great victory for the North because Lee’s charmed army had failed in its objective, to bring the war to Northern soil and rout the Union army. Leon participated in the sad retreat from Pennsylvania in the rain and mud. “One consolation we have got,” he noted humorously, “it is raining so hard that the mud is washed off our clothing.” He would never forget Gettysburg. “We had hard marching, hard fighting, suffered hunger and privation, but our general officers were always with us.”[63]

By July 13, he was crossing the Potomac. “The river was up to my chin, and very swift.” He carried his cartridge box around his neck to keep the powder dry. Leon’s friend J. Engle got stuck in the mud until some of the boys pulled him out. “We went six miles further, and I honestly believe more of us were asleep on our night’s march than awake.” Having reached Virginia, he wrote, “We are now, thank, God, on Confederate soil, but oh, how many of our dear comrades have we left behind. We can never forget this campaign.”[64]

Leon spent the rest of the summer in Virginia, reaching Orange Court House on August 1. His regiment continued to see hard service in the Bristoe and Mine Run Campaigns. Leon was a sharpshooter, which required him to be at the forefront of many battles, sometimes spending a whole day in a pit with two other sharpshooters firing continually at the enemy. He recalled Mine Run as “cold, sleety, disagreeable weather,” and the soldiers could not even make large fires, as it would be “a sure target for the Yankees.” As the war dragged on, the early chores like cutting timber seemed like a vacation. By 1864 Leon’s company, veterans of hard combat, were put to work for a time running two sawmills to make wooden planks for roads.[65]

In March 1864, when the men were at a dress parade, an order was read stating that all troops in the army would be held until the end of the war. It did not faze Leon. “This was nothing of importance to us,” he wrote ,”as we enlisted for that time.” Actually, on that cold March day he took more interest in a snowball fight, first between his regiment and the 43d North Carolina and then with Battle’s brigade. “It was lots of fun.”[66]

Letters were a very important part of the life of Confederate soldiers. “Mail call was the brightest part of a soldier’s day—*if* he received a letter from home,” wrote James McPherson. In April 1864, having not heard from his family up North since the war began, Leon asked a Yankee picket to put a personal advertisement in a New York newspaper to let them know that he and brother Morris were well: “To A. [Abraham] Leon or any of my relatives: Let me hear from you all through Richmond Enquirer, and let me know your address. Have not heard from you since August, 1862. Morris and myself are both well. Lewis Leon.”[67]

Lewis Leon was captured at the Battle of the Wilderness, but not before he helped capture a Union sharpshooter who had positioned himself high up in a tree and was doing considerable damage to the Confederate advance with his long-range rifle. Col. James T. Morehead relates, in his history of the regiment, that “Private Leon, of Company B (Mecklenburg), concluded that this thing would have to stop, and taking advantage of every knoll, hollow, and stump, he crawled near enough for his rifle to reach, took a pop at this disturber of the peace, and he came tumbling down.” Leon then discovered the sniper to be a Canadian Indian, and, “clutching his scalplock, dragged him to our line of sharpshooters.” As General Daniel attempted to storm a Federal artillery battery near the Lacy House, Leon and five of his fellow sharpshooters had gotten too far in advance of their regiment. They mixed in with Gen. John Brown Gordon’s men and were captured as they were moving to the right to rejoin the regiment.[68]

Now a prisoner of war, he was first sent to a battlefield collection point seven miles west of Fredericksburg, where he was kept penned up with hundreds of other Confederate prisoners for three days before moving to the main collection point at Belle Plain for three days. From there he was sent to the Point Lookout, Maryland, prisoner of war camp. His friend Engle was captured the day after he was. “They think I was killed, so does my brother, but as yet the bullet has not done its last work for your humble servant.” At Point Lookout, he saw some of the men captured almost a year before at Gettysburg. On July 25 he was transferred to the notorious Elmira, New York, prison.[69]

A week after his capture and still at the battlefield collection point near Fredericksburg, Leon was surprised to see his brother Morris among the prisoners. Doles’s brigade had been overrun at Spotsylvania the day before, and Morris was captured after having "sent two of the enemy to their long home with his bayonet." The brothers were separated at Belle Plain. Morris was sent to Fort Delaware, where he took the oath of allegiance on February 13, 1865, and then returned South to Augusta, Georgia.[70]

Lewis Leon faced an ordeal while at Point Lookout that was much more difficult than being in combat. He and his fellow prisoners were guarded by "negro troops, who are as mean as hell." Jewish Johnny Rebs were no more fond of African American soldiers than their Christian comrades. When Lewis Leon was captured, he noted the "terrible cursing" and abuse the Confederate prisoners took from black soldiers. One group hollered "Fort Pillow" at his group, referring to the alleged massacre of black soldiers at fort Pillow, Tennessee, in April 1864. "I am only sorry that this brigade of negroes was not there, then they certainly would not curse us now," Leon concluded. On another occasion, Leon was delighted that one black guard accidentally killed another guard while playing with his gun and bayonet. A fellow prisoner was shot when he crossed the forbidden "Dead Line," a boundary within the perimeter fence that a prisoner could not cross. He got "five crackers with worms, a small piece of pork and coffee for breakfast and for dinner four crackers, a quarter of a pound of mule meat, and a cup of bean soup."[71]

By May 25 his friend Engle received a letter from his father, who told him they had seen Leon's parents in New York and he would hear from them soon. "This is the first time that I have heard about my parents since the commencement of the war," Leon wrote in his diary. "Thank God, my parents, as well as my sisters and brothers, are well." (They, of course, were civilians in New York, and Leon had just emerged from the Wilderness.) His family sent a box of "eatables, one or two shirts, and one pair of pants." He endured the monotony of prison life for a year until Lee surrendered in April 1865. Somehow he survived the bitter cold at Elmira, the frequent outbreaks of smallpox, and eating rats (at twenty-five cents each) to supplement his diet.[72]

According to Leon's diary, on the morning of April 12, 1865, the men learned that Lee had surrendered. Four hundred men took the "cursed oath" and were transported to wherever they wanted to go. He also told Union authorities that he had family in New York, that he was drafted, when in fact he volunteered, and that he had given himself up voluntarily rather than having been captured. These statements were obviously made in order to obtain a speedier release from a deadly prisoner of war camp. Leon went to New York City, where he was reunited with his parents and siblings, whom he had not seen for seven years. He returned to Charlotte after the war was over.[73]

Ike Hermann's war experiences were very different from Leon's. Leon was a modest soldier who did his duty, obeyed orders, fought valiantly, endured hardships without complaint, and served in hard combat throughout the war. Hermann was boastful, a soldier who sometimes did his duty, often disobeyed orders, was regularly disciplined and punished, was in and out of combat, and was out on medical disability a great deal. Like Leon, however, he too was a typical Johnny Reb.

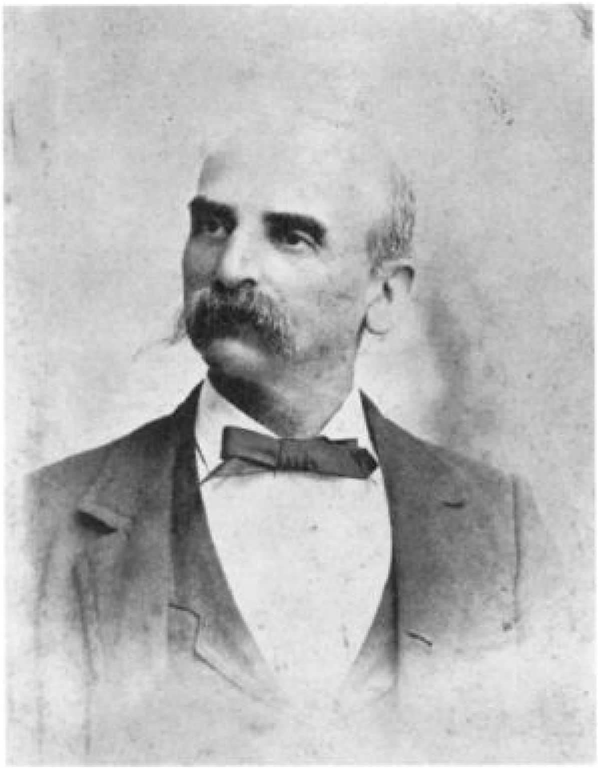
When war came, the men of Washington County flocked to the Washington Rifles, 1st (Ramsey's) Georgia Infantry, including "Ike" Hermann, who joined in the summer of 1861. The boys met at the rural railroad station. "We were all in high spirits on the day of our departure," he recalled years later. "The people of the neighborhood assembled to wish us Godspeed and a safe return. It was a lovely day and patriotism ran high. We promised a satisfactory result as soldiers of the Confederate States of America."[74]

From Davisboro, Georgia, the group of twenty-one men went to Richmond, where they were met by President Davis, "who came to shake hands with the 'boys in gray,' and speak words of encouragement." Hermann's unit participated in Robert E. Lee's disastrous Cheat Mountain campaign in western Virginia in July 1861, and General Jackson's Romney campaign in January 1862. The 1st Georgia disbanded in March 1862, and Hermann enlisted in Captain Martin's Company of Light Artillery in the fall of 1862. He served at Fort McAllister on the Ogeechee River near Savannah, the siege of Jackson, Mississippi, and in Hood's Tennessee campaign. Hermann, of course, was a curiosity more as a Frenchman ("a rather scarce article in those days in this country") than as a Jew. His major had told the men that "we'd brought a live Frenchman with us," and many went to get a glimpse of him. Hermann then jumped up on an old stump and introduced himself to the crowd: "Gentlemen, it seems that I am eliciting a great deal of curiosity; now all of you will know me as Isaac Hermann, a native Frenchman, who came to assist you to fight the Yankees."[75]

Isaac Hermann's first brush with war in the Battle of Cheat Mountain in western Virginia was also Robert E. Lee's first operation. Hermann respected Lee, who looked, he said, "every inch a soldier. His countenance had a very paternal and kind expression. He was clean shaven, with the exception of a heavy iron gray mustache. He complimented us for our soldierly bearing." Despite Lee's leadership the battle did not go well, and it propelled Gen. George B. McClellan to command of the Union forces in the East. Hermann felt that the Confederate army was poorly led, the officers elected "on account of their cleverness at home," and that "the men and officers knew more about farming than about military tactics."[76]

In his memoir, Hermann relates a story, which is implausible at best, of how he met Judah Benjamin in Richmond during this time. He was on a mission to deliver a package to General Beauregard while on his way home to Georgia after being discharged early because of poor health. According to Hermann, he went to the Treasury Department on Saturday evening to cash his paycheck. The department was closed, but Private Hermann ran into a very affable gentleman who told him to return on Monday morning and was kind enough to lend him ten dollars until then. When he had cashed his check, he found his benefactor sitting at a desk busily at work. Hermann handed him a ten dollar bill and again thanked him for his kindness. The gentleman refused it, saying, "Never mind, you are a long ways from home and may need it." Hermann replied that he did not accept gifts from strangers, whereupon the official replied, "We are not strangers, my name is Juda [*sic*] P. Benjamin." Hermann then goes on to say that Benjamin "was at that time Secretary of the Treasury of the Confederate States." Benjamin, of course, was never secretary of the Treasury; at that time, he was secretary of war and would not even have been at the Treasury Department. Hermann was a store clerk in rural Georgia recently arrived from France, and Benjamin was the former senator from Louisiana, so it is almost inconceivable that their paths had crossed. Nevertheless, Hermann wanted his readers to believe that he personally knew the most eminent Jewish Confederate.[77]

After serving a year as a private in Virginia, Ike Hermann went home, only to rejoin an artillery company in the fall of 1862 as a bugler with the rank of sergeant.[78] In late 1862 and early 1863, he was stationed at Fort McAllister on the south bank of the Ogeechee River near Savannah. Hermann's artillery unit was a part of the heroic and dangerous defense of the fort from a series of bombardments by Union warships and Gen. Quincy Gillmore's artillery siege. Union artillery had facilitated the capture of Fort Pulaski in April 1862, and Savannah could not long resist the Union offensive if Fort McAllister fell. According to Hermann, on one occasion he was sent up the Ogeechee to report the position of the invading gunboats. "While thus observing I noted a strange move of one of the boats, suddenly I saw an immense flash, and a splash in the river a couple of yards in front of me." The Yankees were firing at Hermann, who was on horseback, apparently because they thought he was an officer. The fort was badly damaged—"our breast-works had been blown to atoms"—but Hermann's unit went to work, together with slaves from neighboring plantations, with spades, shovels, and pickaxes, to repair and reinforce the fort. His artillery unit was next sent to Pocotaligo, South Carolina, to defend the railroad from a Union demolition squad. At ten o'clock one night, the Yankees came out of the marshes with torches. When they came within range, "we sent canister and schrapanel [*sic*] into the ranks." Hermann next served with the artillery in the Mississippi campaign. He claimed to have twice been wounded in action in Jackson, Mississippi, in May 1863, and, following a series of medical problems, he never returned to duty with his artillery unit. He also claims to have been captured, to have escaped, been wounded again at Spring Hill, Tennessee, and to have been sent on spy missions during the last months of the war.[79]



Pvt. Isaac Hermann emigrated from Alsace in 1859 and settled in rural Georgia. He enlisted in the Washington Rifles, 1st (Ramsey's) Georgia when the war began. He served in Virginia, Georgia, and Mississippi. At one time, he was a bugler and an orderly. This photograph was taken after the war. (Courtesy of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.)

Isaac Hermann was a true believer in the Southern viewpoint of the war. He favored secession. He believed the North had won the war because of superior manpower and paying bounties to emigrants, who were "the scum of the world." He blamed the North's refusal to exchange prisoners for the deplorable conditions at the Andersonville prison. Like Leon, Hermann wholeheartedly accepted Southern racial attitudes. After the war, Hermann derided Reconstruction measures, black officeholders, and the Freedmen's Bureau. African Americans needed no protection from white Southerners, he wrote, "as their devotion to their master and their behavior at home while every white man able to bear arms was at the front … leaving their families in the hands of their slaves … was exemplary."[80]

Hermann was, according to his own boastful account, frequently disobedient when he disagreed with the orders of his superior officers. He was reduced from bugler to the ranks on March 12, 1863, by his lieutenant for insubordination, and rather than turn over his bugle to his successor, he broke it in two, as it was his "private property." Like Leon, he had no experience at cutting wood and failed miserably when he obeyed orders to do so. Unlike Leon, however, he lost his ax and was arrested. Fortunately, the colonel to whom he reported discovered that Hermann had clerked in a store and could write well, so he was assigned a clerking position. “I had warm quarters and was relieved from camp duties for a little while,” he recalled. But this was only the beginning of Ike Hermann’s run-ins with authority. He was arrested by military authorities at least twice more during the war, once when he wrote a satirical song about officers drinking the army’s whiskey (“That’s the way Confederate whiskey goes, pop goes the Government”) and for being absent without leave. When chastised for his ditty accusing officers of drinking government whiskey, Hermann denied accusing anyone by name, “but if the cap fits,” he told his lieutenant, “you can wear it. I have nothing to retract.” Reduced in rank and ordered to wear a ball and chain as a punishment, Hermann claims to have replied: “I volunteered in the Confederate army to do my full duty … but when it comes to degrading me by making me wear ball and chain, I give you fair notice that I will kill any man who attempts to place the same on my limbs.”

That night he slept with one eye open and his pistol and sword by his side. Ike volunteered for a two-week assignment in Charleston, and when he returned to his unit, somehow the ball and chain disappeared. But Hermann knew exactly where it was: in the Ogeechee River. Later in the war, Hermann was accused of being a deserter. He refused to be arrested in Macon, where he was known. “I’ll die first, right here, before I’ll march through Macon, guarded like a horse thief,” he claims to have told the arresting officer. Once again, a colonel who did not even know Hermann intervened and agreed to see that Ike showed up at the guard house. On his arrival, Hermann got in a fistfight with the Yankee prisoners but did not stay long. He was acquitted of any wrongdoing as he had a valid furlough.[81]

In December 1863 Hermann was arrested a third time for not having proper papers on a furlough. He fought with the twelve men who had arrested him. “Luckily in my school days, which were close to an army post [in France], I went twice a week to the armory to take lessons in boxing and sword exercise,” he recalled. Once again, he was saved by the intervention of a lieutenant colonel who just happened by. He was returned to Atlanta under guard and turned over to a provost marshal who knew him. After being told that he was being charged with striking a superior officer, the provost asked Hermann, “What did you do it for?” “Well, Captain,” Hermann replied, “I fought for the rights of the Confederacy for the last three years and thought five minutes for myself was not too much.” If Hermann has given truthful accounts in his memoirs, it is a miracle he did not land in a Confederate prison for the duration of the war.[82]

It is surprising to modern students of the Civil War to learn just how insubordinate, individualistic, rude, and hardheaded Confederate soldiers really were. According to

James I. Robertson Jr., “Civil War troops were the worst soldiers and the best fighters that America has ever produced.” Disrespect for authority was rampant. These observations apply to Jewish Confederates as well. Even Lewis Leon, a modest and obedient soldier, according to his diary, nevertheless freely admits to disobeying orders on occasion. In April 1863 he asked to go on picket with his company rather than stay with the colors; his colonel told him he could not, but he “went all the same.”[83]

Like many a Johnny Reb, Hermann had become accustomed to sleeping on the hard ground with his knapsack as a pillow. When he was invited to stay with a Mr. Rothschild in Columbus, Georgia, in 1863, he was given a nicely furnished room and a feather bed. But he was uncomfortable and unable to sleep. So he got up, put his knapsack under his head, and fell asleep by the side of the bed on the carpet. Unfortunately, when the young servant came to his room to blacken his boots, he thought that their houseguest had fallen off the bed and lay dead on the floor, and he ran to report this tragedy to Hermann’s worried hosts.[84]

Isaac Hermann never mentions his religion in his memoir, but he constantly refers to Jewish acquaintances like the Rothschilds, friends, relatives, and fellow soldiers. He stayed with the Rothschilds in Columbus; his cousin Abe Hermann, who was drafted into the Georgia militia late in the war and became a sutler in Carswell’s 1st Georgia brigade; another cousin in Macon, a Mrs. Wurzbourg; a Mrs. Lyons in Yazoo City, Mississippi; and Abe Einstein, a Savannah wholesale dry goods merchant. There were a couple of other Jewish men with him in the Washington Rifles: A. H. Wessalowsky was a private, as was H. Solomon, who began the war as a private and was later promoted to captain of the 14th Georgia.[85]

The war for Hermann was as dirty and harsh as it was for Lewis Leon. The Confederate government was never able to provide adequate uniforms, and by 1863 many Southern soldiers were not even sufficiently clothed to protect them against the elements. Later in the war, Hermann, like many a Confederate soldier, lost all of his personal effects in battle and retreats, and “our wardrobes only consisted of what we carried on our backs and filth begot what we called ‘creepers,’” that is, lice. By 1864 Hermann, again like most Confederate soldiers, experienced hunger. When issued rations for three days, the men “walloped” them “out of sight at one square meal on account of its meagerness.” Ike did the same and “trusted to the future. I never felt any remorse of conscience to get something to eat, if I could; I felt that the people for whom I devoted my services in those days, owed me a living, and when the authorities failed to supply it, I took it where I could find it.” In other words, he stole food when he could.[86]

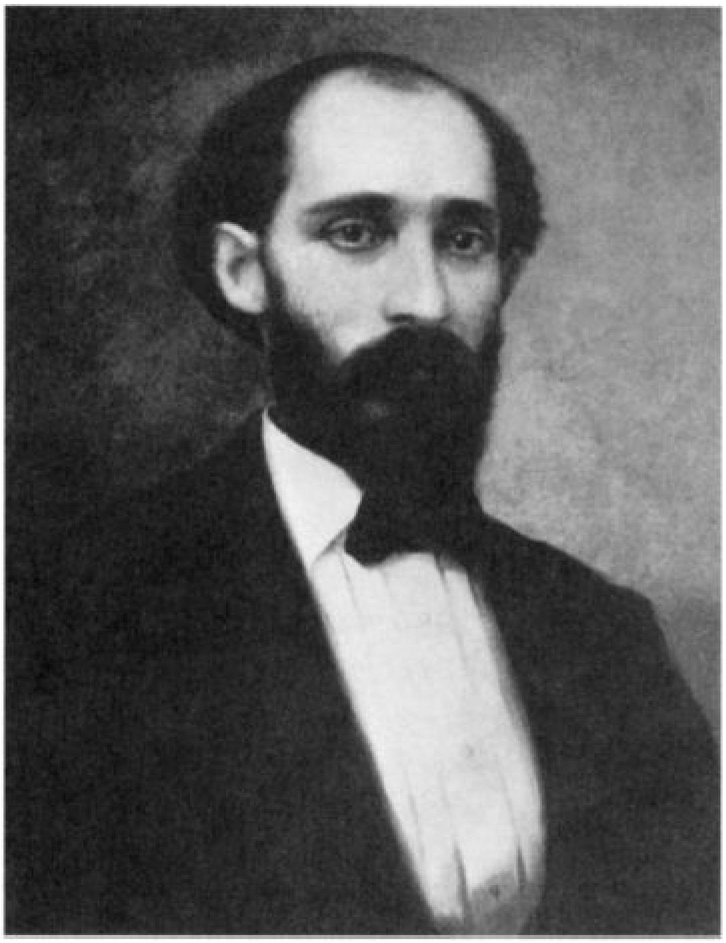
Hermann witnessed physical suffering in others. Early on he observed in the cold mountains of western Virginia that Southerners were not used to rigorous climates, and "many of our men had to succumb from exposure. My Company lost three men from pneumonia." Hermann himself was sick for much of the war. He suffered from malaria and was hospitalized near Savannah in late 1862, recovered, and went on to serve in combat at Fort McAllister. In late 1863, he complained of "Angina Pectoris" and was hospitalized in Macon. In February 1864 he was assigned by a medical examining board to hospital duty for sixty days. Then he rejoined his company only to go before another board in April, which declared him "unfit for field service." He was assigned to the medical corps as a nurse at the Fair Grounds Hospital Number 2 in Atlanta.[87]

* * *

Pvt. Eugene Henry Levy was raised in an educated, affluent, and acculturated Jewish family in New Orleans. He felt himself the social superior of Jewish immigrants in general, and German Jews in particular. His father, after all, had "married into one of the best Jewish families" of Charleston, according to Dr. Marcus. He found the Jewish girls of Richmond disappointing. By 1861 the old Jewish families were a small minority of Southern Jews. Proud, educated, affluent, and successful, accepted easily by Southern aristocrats, they were conscious of the differences between themselves and their less Americanized co-religionists. While Lewis Leon was courting factory girls at Petersburg, Eugene Levy was borrowing a volume of Shakespeare from a Miss Scribner and dropping in to visit plantation mistresses.[88]

When the war began, the Levy sons all enlisted. All served in Dreux's/Rightor's 1st Louisiana Special Battalion during its short existence. Joseph Calhoun Levy subsequently served as a second lieutenant in the 1st Louisiana Regulars (Strawbridge's). Julian H. "Doc" Levy enlisted in Dreux's Battalion with Joseph in April 1861, and Eugene joined the unit in Virginia in November. Julian's service was brief; he was discharged by the end of May. Lt. Col. Charles D. Dreux was a popular young officer, and the battalion went off to fight, first in Pensacola with the 1st Louisiana Regulars and then to Virginia in late May. In June, Dreux's companies became the 1st Louisiana Special Infantry Battalion. It included a number of companies with substantial Jewish membership, including the Shreveport Grays before they were transferred to the 1st Louisiana in June 1862.[89]

Dreux was well respected in the Sephardic community in New Orleans. When he was killed commanding an expedition on July 5 near Newport News, Virginia, he became the first Louisiana officer killed in the war. His death horrified Clara Solomon. "He was so fine, intelligent and well-liked, [a] man." His death, she wrote, "has cast a universal gloom over the community." The funeral, one of the biggest in the city's history, jammed New Orleans. Clara and her family went down Camp Street to see the procession. “The hearse was beautifully decorated,” she wrote, the Colonel’s horse “draped in mourning” walked slowly behind the car.[90]



Pvt. Eugene Henry Levy, from New Orleans, joined Dreux's Battalion and later the Donaldsonville Artillery. A native Southerner whose family had deep roots in the region, Levy was committed to the preservation of the Southern way of life, including the institution of slavery. He served throughout the war, including Appomattox. (Courtesy of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.)

Maj. Nicholas H. Rightor was promoted to replace Colonel Dreux. As members of Company C, Eugene and Joseph Levy were likely on picket duty on the Peninsula near Richmond until February 1862. The company was involved in minor skirmishes. Joseph was discharged by order of the secretary of war in February 1862. Eugene probably remained with the company until the battalion was disbanded in May 1862. Julian returned to Virginia in March 1862 to enlist in the Louisiana Donaldsonville Artillery. Eugene joined the same unit after his release from the 1st Special Battalion.[91]

Like Leon and Hermann, Levy was a thoroughgoing Southerner. "The news from the front is glorious," he wrote in his diary in May 1864. "Our brave boys, although weary, are busily engaged in the good work of slaughtering Yanks. The enemy, under the influence of liquor, have fought desperately, charging our breastworks as frequently as eight times in succession." Like his fellow Confederates, he refers to July 4th as "the once glorious fourth." On July 4, 1864, at Petersburg, he wrote, "our brass bands and those of the enemy indulged in a musical duel. The Yanks played 'Dixie,' which we cheered; then followed Yankee Doodle,' which elicited groans and catcalls from our boys." Levy took pleasure in noting in his diary during the Battle of Cold Harbor that the heavy fighting had caused large Union losses. "Their dead and wounded cover acres of ground in solid bloody phalanx."[92]

Private Levy was a gentleman and so his social life varied considerably from that of his poor immigrant co-religionists. For example, he relates an incident near Petersburg in 1864 when he found himself at an elegant mansion being importuned by the lady of the house to stay and visit. "She is evidently fast, vain, and frivolous," he wrote in his diary, "romantic in the extreme, fond of admiration, and disposed to hold lightly the hymenial pledge." He was frequently the guest of prominent Jewish families in Richmond and attended both Beth Shalome, the synagogue of the elite families, and Beth Ahabah, the German synagogue, but makes no mention of the Polish congregation. The Jewish soldiers were invited to Christian services and included in Christian religious celebrations. Eugene Levy spent a memorable Christmas Day in 1864 enjoying "a sumptuous dinner" at four o'clock, consisting of "turkey, mutton, and pork, a variety of choice vegetables and the usual appendage of a delicious dessert. After dinner all hands went to work to arrange the Christmas tree." After playing chess and a late eight o'clock supper, “the door of the sitting room was thrown open amid exquisite strains of music, and the tree in all its glory was displayed, each bough loaded with presents.” The family did not forget their Jewish guest, “as a pair of fine woolen socks and a heart pincushion fell to my share.”[93]

Levy’s behavior was similar to Leon’s and Hermann’s in many respects. Like all Confederate soldiers, he was willing to break the rules when it came to food. He joined in a raid on a train containing commissary stores near Petersburg in 1864. “My share of the plunder,” he recorded in his diary, “was ten lbs. rice, two lbs. of sugar, and a half gallon beans.” In the aftermath of Cold Harbor, Levy wrote in his diary that “all was quiet in front. Doc was sent on business to the wagon yard and started designing to run the blockade [that is, leave camp without permission] and visit father.” (The Levy brothers’ father, Jack Levy, was in Richmond at the time.) In early July, Levy “ran the blockade” to attend a church service and have a meal with some comrades. (He was disappointed in the service, which he described as “quite flat without sacred music.”) As late as March 29, 1865, Levy was anxious to visit Richmond and decided to “run the block [blockade]” on the “sick furlough” of a fellow soldier.[94]

Levy was wounded defending Petersburg. “On our left, the forces are so near each other that an incessant fusillade is kept up during the day and night. The shelling of Petersburg continues … and, as yet, the brutal Grant has not notified the authorities to move noncombatants,” he wrote in his diary on July 8, 1864. On July 30, Levy was in the Confederate trenches when a huge explosion was set off by the Union army. For a month, coal miners of the 48th Pennsylvania had been digging a tunnel nearly six hundred feet long. When it exploded, “the earth appeared to throb beneath our feet and, a moment after, as if a volcano had burst from the bowels of the land (200 yards to my left), men, wheels, spades, logs, vast boulders of earth, and an indescribable debris obscured the rising sun. The enemy had sprung a mine, and while we yet stood transfixed with horror at the appalling spectacle, a crash of artillery came whizzing, shrieking, tearing at us.” Levy was wounded in the back, on his face, and then in his ribs by a burning shell. “The shock turned me quite around, and I immediately assured my companions that I was not badly hurt. A little water soon cleared my right eye.”[95]

On his way back from the Battle of the Crater, Levy realized that Gen. Robert E. Lee and his staff were approaching. He stood aside and saluted. “My noble commander … remarked in a tone which indicated profound sympathy: ‘My friend, I hope you are not badly hurt?’ This exhibition of his noble nature overcame me. I answered: ‘No, General, thank God!’ and pressed quickly on to avoid his beholding the tear of gratitude which coursed down my cheek. Can it be wondered at that this man has won our hearts and minds? Opposed as I am to hero worship, I shall never utter the name of Robert E. Lee unless with respect and veneration.” Levy walked to the Confederate hospital on

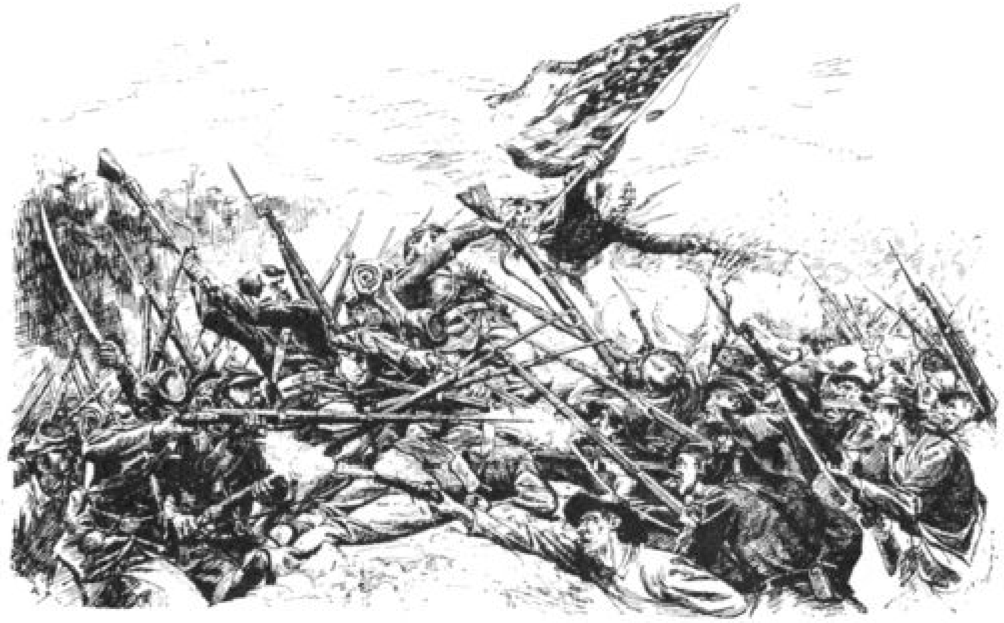
Washington Street accompanied by his brother "Doc." He was apparently not too badly hurt, as he immediately "commenced a flirtation with the good-looking Miss W … the matron of my ward." Doc returned to the front.[96]

Unlike Leon and Herman, Levy felt the personal horror of losing loved ones. His brother Joseph Calhoun Levy was killed at Shiloh and buried in the Dispersed of Judah Cemetery in New Orleans. We do not know his feelings firsthand because his diary from 1862 was destroyed, but on Sunday, July 31, 1864, he records in his diary the deaths of the "courteous" Captain Rush and "the gallant Lieutenant Levy." They "were numbered among many choice spirits who, on the fatal Saturday, 'slept the sleep that knows no waking.' Peace to their ashes! Poor Jacob [Levy] came to see me in the course of the day. He seems absolutely brokenhearted."[97]

In May and June of 1864 Levy described the fighting at Cold Harbor, jotting down the news as a private in the ranks heard it while Grant and Lee maneuvered for the best strategic positions to pit their armies against each other. "It is now conceded," he wrote, "that Butler's advance … has proved a failure; he has been slipping his force down the river and reinforcing Grant. Beauregard's army is passing through Richmond on the way to our lines." On June 3 he wrote, "A heavy engagement commenced directly East of our bivouac shortly after daylight this morning … we could frequently distinguish amid the din of battle the shout of the Yankees as they advanced in *drunken* array to charge the earthworks which our men had erected during the night … General Lee has just passed the battalion conveyed by a light Jersey wagon. The old patriot looks as calm and pleasant as if Grant's defeat has been already consummated." Levy continued to believe in Confederate victory and fought all the way to Appomattox.[98]

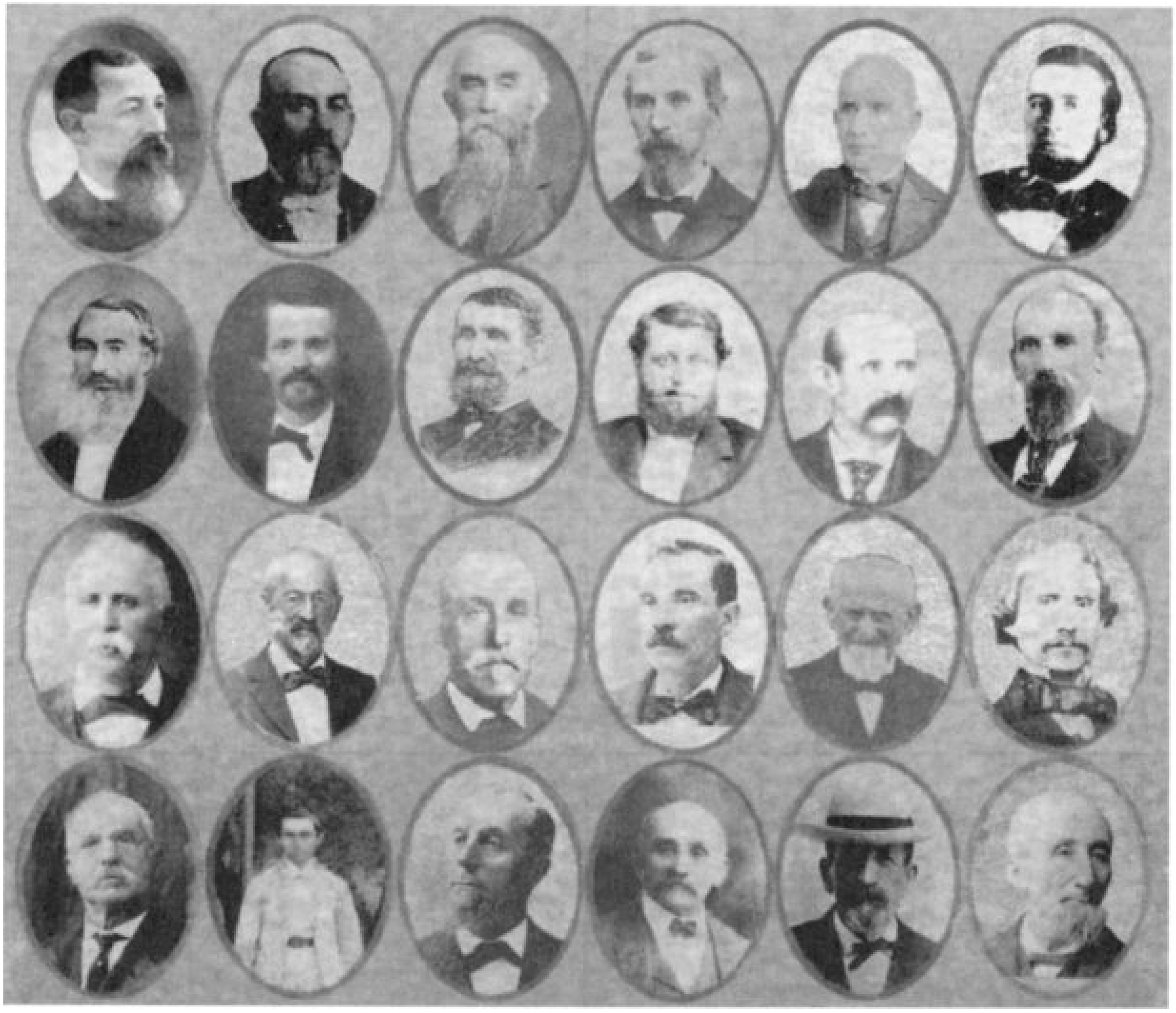
* * *

Lewis Leon, Ike Hermann, and Eugene Levy represent the typical Jewish Johnny Reb. They served as privates and lived to tell about it. None of them considered himself a hero, although all of them risked their lives for the Southern cause. Jewish Johnny Rebs, like most Civil War soldiers, were modest. Fischel Cohen, a telegraph operator on Beauregard's staff, once told his nephew, "Yes. I was a brave man in the war—always where the bullets were thickest—under the ammunition wagon."[99]



The “Bloody Angle” at Spotsylvania. (*Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*.)

There were some Jewish Johnny Rebs who were genuine heroes. Max Frauenthal, Summit Rifles, Company A, 16th Mississippi was, according to Carolyn LeMaster, “an unsung hero…. For those who knew him and served with him during the conflict, his name became synonymous with the word *bravery*.” He fought in many battles, but particularly distinguished himself at Spotsylvania Court House, Virginia, in May 1864. Southeast of the Wilderness, where a major battle had been fought the week before, Spotsylvania was the scene of the continued maneuvering between Grant and Lee. Lee’s army valiantly held its position at a terrible cost against three corps sent against the entrenched Confederates. At 4:30 a.m. on May 12, after four days of ferocious fighting, Grant hurled Winfield Scott Hancock II’s corps against the Confederate’s “Mule Shoe” salient, the forwardmost projection of the Confederate fortifications. The armies battled for twenty hours in some of the most murderous fighting of the war. The lines were only a few yards apart, and at one point called “The Bloody Angle,” where the heaviest combat occurred, stood Max Frauenthal. Col. A. T. Watts later recounted how trees with trunks from eight to ten inches were mowed down by the “leaden hail.” He also recalled how “Fronthall [*sic*], a little Jew, though insignificant in appearance, had the heart of a lion. For several hours he stood at the immediate point of contact, amid the most terrific hail of lead, and coolly and deliberately loaded and fired without cringing. After observing his unflinching bravery and constancy, the thought occurred to the writer—I now understand how it was that a handful of Jews could drive before them the hundred kings; they were all Fronthalls!” Years later in Texas, it was said that people referred to a courageous person as “a regular Fronthall.”[100]



Arkansas Jewish Confederate Veterans. Little Rock residents: *top row*: Isaac Bott; Herman Ehrenberg; Simon Gans; Abraham Kempner; Isaac Levy; Samuel Lyons; *2d row*: Morris Navra; Abraham Ottenheimer; Phillip Ottenheimer; Phillip Pfeifer; Abraham Pollock; Louis Volmer; *3d row* (*statewide residents*): Simon Adler; Moses Baum; David M. Bluthenthal; Ferdinand Dreyfus; David Felsenthal; Col. Solomon Franklin; *4th row*: Max Frauenthal; David Gates; Gabriel Meyer; Henry Meyer; Charles Weil; Max Weil. Max Frauenthal, one of the heroes of "The Bloody Angle" at Spotsylvania, "had the heart of a lion," according to his colonel. (Courtesy of Charles A. Elias, North Little Rock, Arkansas.)

Spotsylvania was a terrible and bloody battle. Even those who held staff or headquarters positions were called on to risk life and limb. One "Israelite" ordnance sergeant, Morris Guggenheimer of Company C, 2d Virginia Cavalry, whose job was to manage Col. Thomas T. Munford's "mess" and write letters and reports, was in the midst of a very dangerous assignment before the battle ended. In a letter to the sergeant's daughter after the war, Colonel Munford said that he sent two couriers back for ammunition; one was shot and the other "dodged." Munford sent for a third courier and "told him to tell your father to bring me some ammunition himself, and not to let anybody or thing deter him. In a very little time he came galloping to me with a big bag of ammunition before and behind him on horseback, and just as he arrived we were heavily pressed; a mince [minie] ball killed his horse and down it fell. But he went on getting out the cartridges amid the cheers of his comrades, who saw his gallant behavior.… He was a faithful soldier often tried."[101]

Toward the end of the war in a battle with Union forces under Gen. Hugh J. Kilpatrick, Pvt. Isaac Harby Moses, a mere cadet at the Citadel, had his horse shot out from under him. When he got up, Moses was attacked by a Union soldier wielding a saber. "Though small in stature," Gary R. Baker wrote, "Moses lowered his head and charged the bluecoat, grabbing him around the middle and wrestling him to the ground." A fellow cadet shot and killed the Federal.[102]

Many a Jewish Confederate died a heroic death. Perry Moses Jr. was mortally wounded at Malvern Hill in 1862. Aaron (Company B, 35th Mississippi) and Jacob (Company C, 13th Mississippi) Rosenbaum's names appear on the Confederate monument in the town square in DeKalb, Mississippi. Sons of Carolyn and Marx Rosenbaum, they apparently were killed on the battlefield and lie buried in unknown graves. Marcus Baum was a thirty-two-year-old Prussian immigrant serving as an orderly or aide on General Kershaw's staff. He was accompanying Brigadier Generals Kershaw and Micah Jenkins and Lt. Gen. James Longstreet as they were making arrangements for a flank attack on the southern end of the Union line in the Wilderness. In a moment of confusion, they were caught in a volley of friendly fire. General Jenkins, General Kershaw's aide-de-camp, Capt. Alfred E. Doby, and Marcus Baum were instantly killed. Lt. Gen. Longstreet was gravely wounded in the throat and right shoulder. Baum's body was never recovered. He lies in an unmarked grave on the blood-stained soil of the Wilderness. Dr. Simon Baruch wrote of this "German and a Hebrew" in *Confederate Veteran* magazine in 1914: "No braver man, none truer to the cause, no soldier more loyal to his chief ever breathed than Marcus Baum, of Camden, S.C., special aide to Gen. Joseph B. Kershaw, his friend."[103]

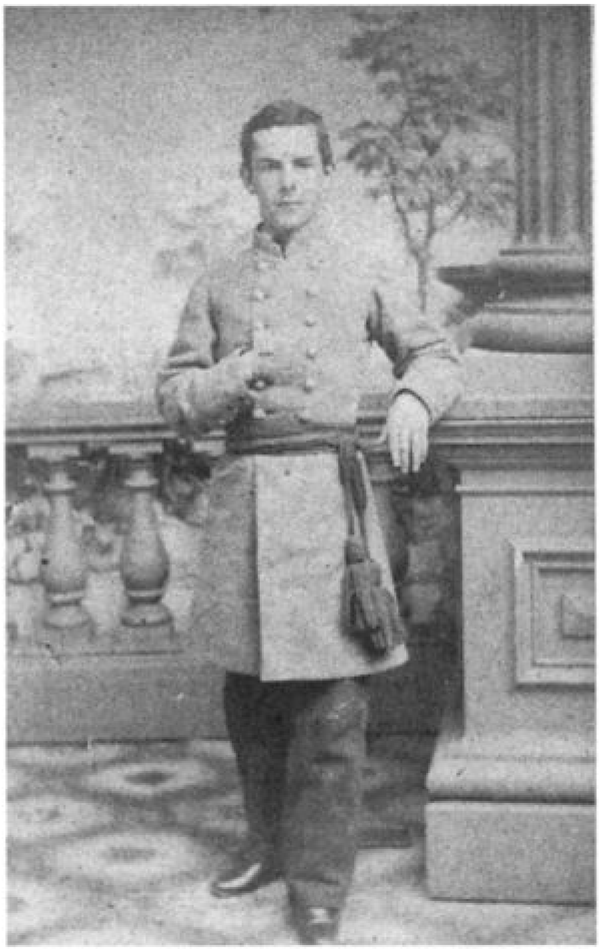
Several Jewish Johnny Rebs were killed alongside their Christian comrades. The Jewish community of Columbia, South Carolina, which numbered fewer than two hundred souls in the 1860s, lost three boys: Pvt. Thomas W. Mordecai died of disease at Fort Moultrie in 1861, Pvt. Samuel S. Levin at Sharpsburg in 1862, and Pvt. Clarence J. Pollock at Spotsylvania in 1864. Levin, a machinist, had enlisted as a private in Capt. Thomas W. Radcliff's Company A, 15th South Carolina, on August 15, 1861, for the war. In Augusta, Georgia, where the sole synagogue, B'nai Israel (Children of Israel), had only forty members, four Jewish Confederates were killed: 1st Lt. Jacob J. Jacobus, a former president of the congregation at Shiloh; Capt. George W. Rush and 1st Lt. Nathaniel Elcan Levy at the Battle of the Crater; and 1st Lt. Jake R. Levy (Elcan's brother) at Hatcher Run. Pvt. Conrad Weil, Company H, 16th Louisiana, a native of Lagerheim, Bavaria, was wounded at the Battle of Spanish Fort, Alabama, and died at Mobile in May 1865. He is buried in the Old Hebrew Section of Magnolia Cemetery in Mobile.[104]

There were Jewish Confederate casualties in every major engagement of the war. Ten Jewish Confederates were killed at the Battle of Shiloh (Pittsburg Landing). Capt. Isadore P. Girardey reported the death of Jacobus: "In this engagement, Lieutenant J. J. Jacobus fell mortally wounded while gallantly commanding his section." He was shot above the left eye. Second Lt. David C. Levy of Company G, 13th Louisiana, was killed at Murfreesboro (Stone's River) on December 31, 1863. In less than an hour of combat in two actions during that battle, the 13th Louisiana lost 19 officers and 332 men killed, wounded, or missing in action. According to Mel Young, seven Jewish Confederates, including Albert Luria, were killed at Seven Pines (Fair Oaks) in May 1862. At the Seven Days Battle in late June and early July 1862, 19 Jewish Confederates were killed, according to Young.[105]

Louis Merz of West Point, Georgia, emigrated to the United States from Bavaria in 1853 and became a peddler. He settled in West Point, Georgia, between LaGrange and Columbus. When the war broke out, Merz enlisted in the West Point Guards and was killed in action at Sharpsburg

(Antietam). (Courtesy of Cobb Memorial Archives, H. Grady Bradshaw, Chambers County Library, Valley, Alabama.)

The roll of the Jewish Confederate dead can be called for the remaining battles of the war: Five dead at Second Manassas; seven at Sharpsburg (Antietam) including the Bavarian immigrant Louis Merz, who had settled in West Point, Georgia. Merz was an infantryman in the West Point Guards, Company D, 4th Georgia, Ripley's brigade, D. H. Hill's division. He was killed early in the battle near the little brick church. His body was found by Union officers, who "on account of his cleanly appearance," decided to bury this particular Confederate private. They dug a hole with their swords and buried him on the battlefield in an unmarked grave. The LaGrange *Reporter* concluded his obituary as follows: "May the brave and true-hearted soldier rest in peace; and his noble spirit inspire emulation in the hearts of others."[106]



Gratz Cohen of Savannah, the son of Solomon Cohen, was fatally wounded at the Battle of Bentonville, North Carolina, late in the war. He is buried in Laurel Grove Cemetery in Savannah. This is a carte de visite taken in Charleston at a time when Cohen was probably an aide with the

rank of captain, on the staff of Gen. George P. Harrison, Sr. (Courtesy of Bob Marcus, Springfield, Virginia.)

Theodore Belitzer, a member of Beth Elohim, served in Company B (Wilmington Rangers) 17th South Carolina Cavalry Battalion, and in Company G (German Hussars), 3d South Carolina Cavalry. According to his family, he was captured at Wilmington and died when the Federal steamer taking prisoners to Fort Monroe caught fire at sea. (Courtesy of Selina Leidloff Rosen and K. K. Beth Elohim Archives, Charleston, South Carolina.)

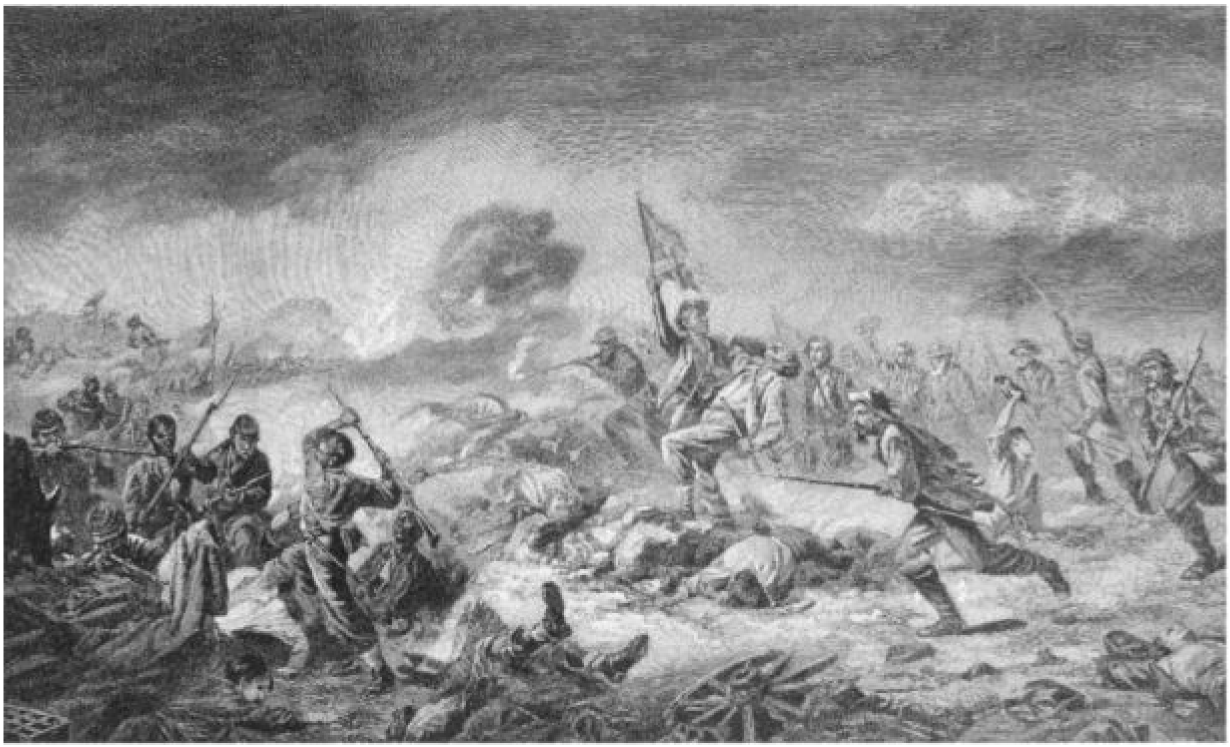
There were six Jewish Confederates killed at Vicksburg, including Col. Leon D. Marks; seven at Chancellorsville; three at Brandy Station; six at Gettysburg (three from Texas); two each at Chickamauga and the Wilderness. Six Jewish Confederates were killed at Spotsylvania and twelve defending Atlanta late in the war. Three were killed at the war's end in defense of Mobile. Some Jewish Confederates died in prisoner of war camps. There are at least twenty buried at the notorious Union prison camp at Elmira, New York. Most died from exposure during the severe winter of 1864–65.[107]

Cadet Moses Ezekiel finally realized his dream of being a Confederate soldier. He served as a cadet at the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) during the war and participated in the famous Battle of New Market. (Courtesy of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.)

Henry Gintzberger, the immigrant peddler, served with the Salem Flying Artillery until his death in battle in 1864. He served at Williamsport, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville (where he was wounded), Gettysburg, and Spotsylvania Court House, and was killed at Cold Harbor in June of 1864. A fellow soldier, Pvt. N.B. Johnston, recalled that “the only Jewish soldier in the Command was shot through the head while peering over the breastworks immediately alongside him.” The register of his death shows he had no money and that his only “effects” were “1 pr. shoes.” The muster roll states: “Jew:

killed at Cold Harbor June 2, 1864," and that he was interred at "Jews burying ground, Richmond, Virginia."[108]

Moses J. Ezekiel experienced the death of a special friend. Ezekiel, along with the entire corps of young cadets at VMI, had joined Gen. John C. Breckinridge's army in May 1864 in its efforts to halt the Union invasion of the Shenandoah Valley. On their march down the valley the young lads, aged fifteen to eighteen, were met by the young ladies of Staunton and greeted with buckets full of lemonade and baskets filled with sandwiches and cakes. They had no tents. The VMI cadets fought valiantly at the Battle of New Market. Ten cadets were killed. When the battle was over, Ezekiel and a cadet officer went out on the battlefield to find their classmate Thomas G. Jefferson, a descendant of the famous president. On discovering his mortally wounded friend, Ezekiel walked to town to secure a wagon to transport the boy. The young cadets took their comrade to a nearby home and tended to him. Ezekiel put his own shirt on his dying friend. "I never closed my eyes once during the whole time of his illness," Ezekiel recalled. Jefferson asked him to read from the Bible, and Ezekiel asked him what he would prefer to hear. "Please read the chapter in St. John where there is a chapter which says: In my Father's house are many mansions.' So I read that for him." That evening, when everyone else was asleep, Jefferson asked Ezekiel to light a candle. "A cold chill ran over me, because I remembered once having heard my Grandmother say, that when anyone is dying they lose their sight first of all; so without telling Jefferson that the candles were burning, I went to the bedside and took hold of his hand." The sixteen-year-old VMI cadet breathed his last breath.[109]



The Battle of the Crater at Petersburg. (*Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*.)

One of the most poignant Jewish deaths of the war was that of Pvt. Isaac Levy of the 46th Virginia, who had written to his sister about Passover in Adam’s Run, South Carolina, and his brother Zeke’s procuring matzo. His captain endorsed him with “conduct as soldier and gentleman worth of emulation in every respect.”[110] He was twenty-one when he was killed by an exploding shell in the Petersburg entrenchments. “Gusta brought me the sad news of the death of Isaac Levy,” Emma Mordecai wrote in her diary. “A fine young solder, killed in the trenches near Petersburg. He & his brother Ezekiel Levy have observed their religion faithfully, ever since they have been in the army, never even eating forbidden food.” Emma Mordecai went to visit the Levy family. “Isaac was an example to all young men of any faith—to those of his own most especially,” she wrote afterward. “A true Israelite without guile—a soldier of the Lord & a soldier of the South.” The orthodox funeral service at the Hebrew cemetery in Richmond was filled with emotion as Isaac’s brother-in-law, Rev. George Jacobs, read the ancient burial rite.[111]

Young Levy’s tombstone, most of it in Hebrew, reads as follows (in its English transliteration):

L’zekher olam

(To Eternal Memory)

Yiyeh Ha’tzadik Ha’bakhur

(The righteous Youth)

Yitzchak ben R’Yakov

(Isaac the son of Jacob)

Meth b’milkhamot Petersburg

(Killed at the Battle of Petersburg)

B’yon alef yud-teth yamim l’khodesh Menachem

(On the First Day, 19th of the Month of Av)

Shnath 5624 If’k

(In the year 5624)

T.N.Z.B.H.

(May His Soul be Bound up in the Bond of Eternity)

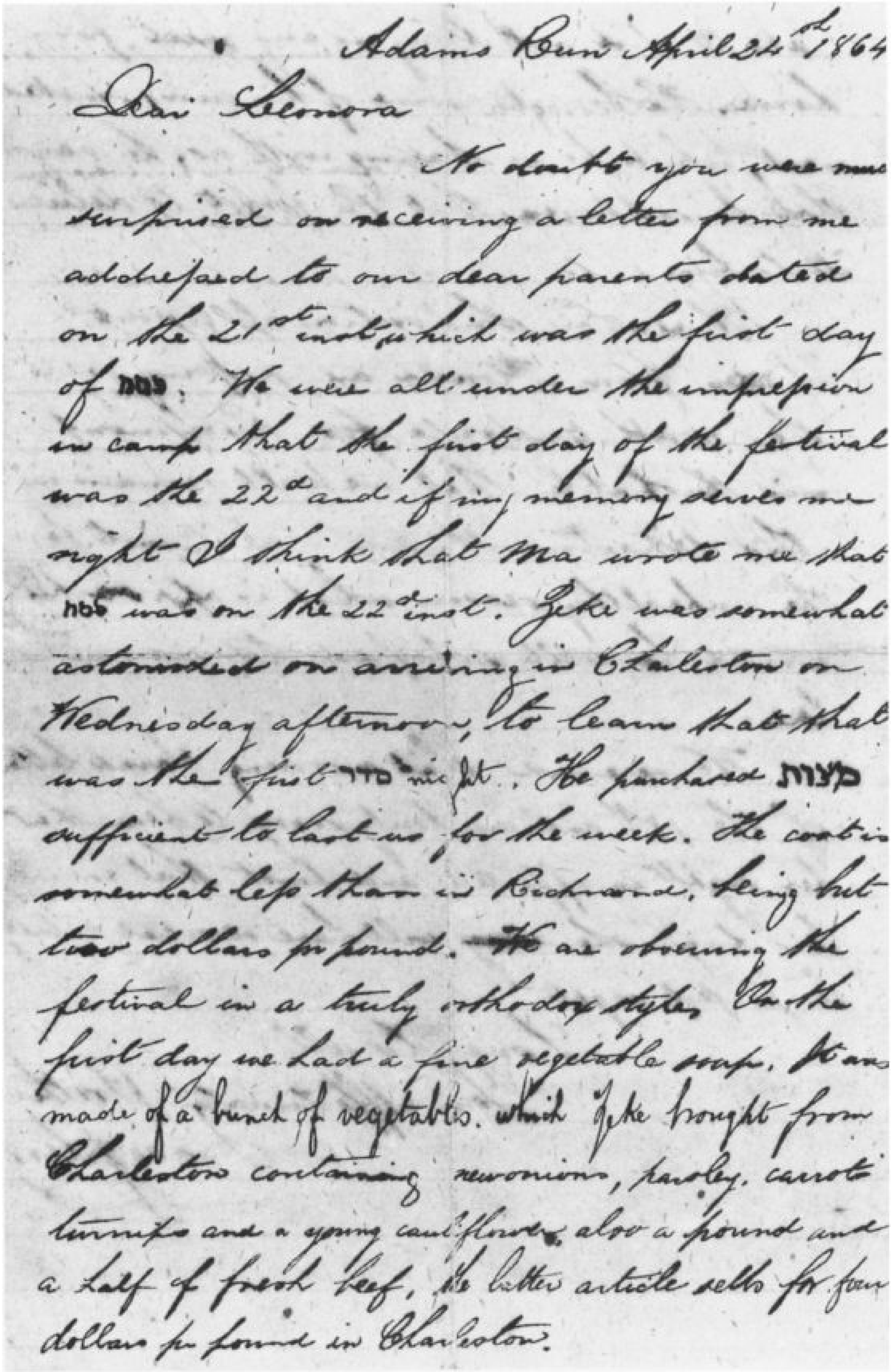
In Memory of Isaac J.

beloved son of

Jacob A. & Martha Levy

who fell in battle.[112]

Three Jewish boys were killed at the Battle of Secessionville on James Island, South Carolina, in June 1862: Robert Cohen, a private in the Company A, 22d S.C. Infantry; Gustavus Poznanski Jr., a private; and Isaac D. Valentine, a corporal in Company D (Sumter Guards), 1st South Carolina Battalion. In the summer of 1862 the Union army hoped to cross James Island, overwhelm the Confederate defenders, and capture Charleston, the Cradle of Secession. It would have been a dramatic and important victory. But the Confederate defenders of Charleston were not about to lose the symbolic capitol of the South and so when Union troops landed, a pitched battle ensued at Secessionville, a tiny hamlet on a creek that led out to the harbor.[113]



Adams Run April 24th 1864

Dear Leonora

No doubt you were much surprised on receiving a letter from me addreſsed to our dear parents dated on the 21st inst which was the first day of פסח. We were all under the impreſsion in camp that the first day of the festival was the 22d and if my memory serves me right I think that Ma wrote me that פסח was on the 22d inst. Zeke was somewhat astonished on arriving in Charleston on Wednesday afternoon, to learn that that was the first סדר night. He purchased מצות sufficient to last us for the week. The cost is somewhat leſs than in Richmond, being but two dollars per pound. We are observing the festival in a truly orthodox style. On the first day we had a fine vegetable soup. It was made of a bunch of vegetables which Zeke brought from Charleston containing new onions, parsley, carrots turnips and a young cauliflower, also a pound and a half of fresh beef, the latter article sells for four dollars per pound in Charleston.

Zeke E did not bring us any meat from home. He brought some of his own, smoked meat, which he is sharing with us, he says that he supposes that Pa forgot to deliver its to him.

No news in this section at present. Troops from Florida are passing over the road enroute for Richmond. 'Tis probable that we will remain in this department, and were it not for the unhealthy season which is approaching would be well satisfied to remain here.

We received this morning Sarah's letter of the 18th and are truly sorry to hear that her sight is affected, and trust that in a few days she ~~may~~ will have recovered entirely her perfect sight.

Love to all
Your affectionate Brother
Isaac J Levy

Pvt. Isaac J. Levy's letter to his sister Leonora. Written at Adam's Run, South Carolina, in April 1864, Levy's letter describes his Passover, which is spelled in Hebrew (*Pesach*) on the fifth line down (page 1). He describes his brother Zeke's purchase of matzo, also written in Hebrew (middle of page 1). (Courtesy of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.)

The Charleston Battalion (1st South Carolina Battalion), made up of Charlestonians defending their homes, was a part of the vigorous Confederate defense. On June 16, 1862, according to Patrick Brennan in *Assault on Charleston*, the "sons of Charleston responded as one as Capt. Henry King led his cheering company, the Sumter Guard, up the parapet to support the decimated artillerists." King was badly wounded, as was Isaac D. Valentine, who fell in the same rifle fire that wounded his captain. Isaac's brother Hertz was shot through the arm. Defending the Tower Battery, the Charlestonians held their position against killing Union fire. Privates Cohen and Poznanski were killed in this same battle.[114]

Simon and Phillipena ("Pena") Brown. The Browns (Braun in German) were immigrants from the German states. They lived in New York but moved to South Carolina to establish a new life in Blackville, South Carolina, because Pena feared Simon's involvement with Russian anarchists. Family tradition has it that Simon was a reluctant Confederate. His records show that he enlisted in the 7th South Carolina,

but not until April 1864. He was captured in August. (Courtesy of Max and Marcelle Furchgott, Charleston.)

Poznanski, the rabbi's son, had, according to the *Charleston Courier*, expressed to several friends his "solemn presentment that he was to fall in battle, and yet went forward to repel the stormers and received his death wound on the rampart." On June 21 the newspaper reported that "After serving upon other fields, [Poznanski] joined the Sumter Guard and through the campaign on James Island cheerfully labored by the side of his comrades in the trench, or exposed his life in the perilous duties of the picket. "This sad event," the *Charleston Courier* wrote of Valentine, "has poured the most agonizing sorrow into the hearts of his family, and cast a terrible gloom over a large circle of friends." The obituary noted that, through the monotony and "dull routine of camp life," he was always cheerful; when South Carolina seceded, he sought no position, but joined his company seeking only to defend the interest and honor of his state. He "fell gallantly endeavoring to protect the former and preserve unsullied the latter."[115]

Many Jewish Confederates were captured and suffered as prisoners of war. Leopold Levy of the 1st Virginia Cavalry served at First Manassas, Williamsburg, and Winchester. He was captured in 1863 by Stoneman's raiders and was sent, under very trying conditions, to the Old Capitol prison in Washington. He was incapacitated as a result of his trials and, when paroled, he served out the remainder of the war in the quartermaster general's department.[116] A. F. Woolfe enlisted as a private in Company A (Bayou City Guards), 5th Texas, in Harris County (Houston) in July 1861. He was later wounded at the Battle of Seven Pines in June 1862, wounded again near Richmond eight days later, and mortally wounded at Antietam three months later. He died in a Federal prisoner of war hospital and is buried in the Confederate cemetery in Hagerstown, Maryland.[117] The 1st Sgt. of Company A, 33d Alabama, Julius Yaretzky, was taken prisoner and sent to Johnson's Island on Lake Erie. Pvt. Marcus Levy of the Pointe Coupee Louisiana Artillery was captured at Island No. 10. He was transported to Camp Douglas, Illinois, where he died one month later as a result of his wounds. Sergeant Isadore Lovenstein, "a gallant soldier" of Company G, 12th Virginia, was wounded at Malvern Hill in July 1862 and was captured on the retreat to Appomattox.[118]

Not all Johnny Rebs rushed out to enlist the day after Sumter was bombarded. Indeed, the majority did not. It was one thing for unmarried young clerks like Lewis Leon and Isaac Hermann to enlist, but it was quite another for married men with children to leave home. When the war broke out, Philip Sartorious was living in Milliken's Bend, Louisiana, a tiny village on the Mississippi fifteen miles north of Vicksburg. He did not enlist. He and his young wife, Rose, were working hard to support their family, and many farmers, merchants, and planters could only leave their businesses at great sacrifice. “Volunteers were called for, and all thought it was a picnic, but found it before long a sad reality,” Sartorious wrote in his memoirs. He continued to operate his store, sold goods to the Confederate army, and went about his business. Once he went to New Orleans to collect on a debt for wood he had sold to the crew of a Confederate gunboat. The Federal fleet arrived that very day and Sartorious was lucky to escape with his life.[119]

By February of 1863 Grant and Sherman were literally in Sartorious’s backyard. The Confederacy was drafting all men who could fight, and Sartorious, who had an exemption as postmaster, now joined the 15th Louisiana Cavalry Battalion as a private. “We had to furnish our own horses and accouterment, or march on foot to Munroe [Monroe] and join the infantry,” he recalled. “I got my accouterment from a Yankee deserter.” He was made steward of the unit’s mess.

Milliken’s Bend was located in a large bend in the Mississippi River upstream from Vicksburg. General Grant vowed to capture Vicksburg and made Milliken’s Bend his headquarters. From that base he planned his campaign from January to July 1863. Philip Sartorious went with the Confederate army into the swamps, bayous, and rivers surrounding Vicksburg to stop Grant and Sherman. His unit spent a great deal of time tracking Grant’s movements. One day Sartorious attempted to visit his family, but Rose begged “me to return at once, as the Federal cavalry were expected every moment, and had been there several times looking for me. Very reluctantly I bid poor Ma good-bye and returned to camp.” On March 29, 1863, General McClernand went on the march to open a road from Milliken’s Bend to New Carthage, Sartorious and his comrades got in the way, and Sartorious was wounded. “I thought my arm was shattered. The gun fell out of my hand, and, after staggering some twenty feet, I fell on my face. The bullets fell around me like rain, and I thought that if the bullet that hit me would not kill me, some stray one would, and I wanted to see the sky when I died.” Sartorious was captured by the Union army, and “a young excuse of a surgeon” from an Indiana regiment treated him. “He cut my clothes off. The bullet lodged under my skin at the end of my shoulder blade. He had no instruments with him but an old rusty pocket knife. Some of the soldiers that were there said: ‘Doctor, don’t hurt him any more than you can help.’ He replied: ‘Oh hell! He is nothing but a d—d Rebel s–b.” Sartorious survived, but he could never again use his hand to write.[120]

Sartorious’s family heard he had been killed because his new uniform was stolen by a Union officer. But Sartorious was treated kindly by his captors. They allowed his wife to come and visit him. The sutler of the Union regiment turned out to be his second cousin. A doctor gave him a certificate stating that he could no longer fight, and consequently he was paroled and allowed to return home rather than being sent up North to prison. Sartorious had done his duty but was glad to be excused from more of it.[121]

Of course, not all Jewish Confederates did their duty. Jewish Southerners, like all Southerners, preserved the memories of patriotic and noble deeds and tried to forget about the cowardly and unpatriotic ones. Thus, community histories are replete with the stories of heroes, but little or nothing is to be found on shirkers, deserters, and cowards. Ezekiel and Lichtenstein's *History of the Jews of Richmond* and Rabbi Elzas's *History of the Jews of South Carolina* were published in the early years of the twentieth century, when Confederate veterans and their children were still living. Both depict the loyal service of Jewish Confederates at a time when many Jews in Richmond, Norfolk, Petersburg, Charleston, Sumter, and Columbia well knew who had fought bravely and who had run from the fight. As Bell I. Wiley has written, "Cowardice under fire, being a less gratifying subject than heroism, has not received much attention from those who have written or talked of the Confederate Army."[122]

Heyman Herzberg was living in Cartersville, Georgia, when the war began. He recalled in a memoir that the excitement was great and every young man was expected to join some military organization. His brother Herz went to Pensacola, Florida, with the 36th Georgia (Villepigue's) and brother Sol joined Company B, 40th Georgia, and became a corporal. Business was at a standstill, so Heyman closed his store, packed up his young family and his merchandise, sold his house and furniture, and sent his family and all of his belongings to his brother-in-law in West Point, Georgia. Herz returned from his unit in Florida, where he participated in the bombardment of Fort Pickens, and the two brothers joined Villepigue's regiment, now designated the 1st Confederate Infantry and went to Fort Gaines on Dauphin Island on the Gulf of Mexico. Life was monotonous except for an occasional ship attempting to run the blockade. "I remember well the excitement we had one morning to see the gunboats chasing a blockade-runner who had succeeded during the night in getting close to the shore under the protection of the guns of Ft. Morgan. We were all ordered to the fort to assist in keeping off the vessels. … A good many of the shells came screeching over us and fell harmless in the sand on the island." The living conditions were abominable, and, had it not been for the kindness of friends in Mobile, "we would have fared badly indeed."[123]

One day, Heyman and Herz were pleasantly surprised by the arrival of brother Sol, sick from exposure as a result of the severe winter camping out in the Cumberland Mountains of east Tennessee. Sol had secured a substitute for himself, had been discharged from the Confederate army, and offered to find a substitute for Herz. Herz immediately accepted Sol's offer, and the two brothers left for Philadelphia to live with their parents. Heyman, left alone, decided to secure a substitute also. "I had to wait another month, however, as our captain would not accept more than one substitute a month. I succeeded, however, in getting an able-bodied man who was beyond the age limit of the soldier. Every male person over eighteen and up to fifty was obliged to serve in the Army unless employed in some other capacity of the government. My substitute was about sixty years, and, by giving our first lieutenant my handsome gold watch as a souvenir, I succeeded in getting my discharge from the Confederate States Army."[124]

Heyman resumed his occupation as a merchant but moved to Atlanta. In searching for goods in the country, he traveled with a friend to Lafayette, Alabama, where the two men were accosted by a recruiting officer. Not having papers showing their military status with them, Herzberg and his friend were ordered to a military camp. Herzberg asked the officer to let them first take dinner at the hotel. The officer agreed and said he would wait at the tavern next door. Herzberg recalled: "Now was our chance to escape. I gave a colored man a dollar to hitch up in the yard and place the buggy back of the hotel, paid for our dinner but did not stay to eat it, got in the buggy, and used our whip to such advantage that we soon left the town with the recruiting officer far behind." The officer fired several shots, but the men were too far away. They "never stopped until we were out of the country and got again in Lafayette. We left there to West Point the next day, having had sufficient experience in trying to buy country stocks of goods." Herzberg later traveled illegally up North to buy merchandise to sell down South, and, believing the South doomed, eventually took his family on a long harrowing journey out of the South.[125]

Philip Whitlock of Richmond, a Russian Polish immigrant and a tailor, was a member of the Richmond Grays before the war. He went with his company to witness the hanging of John Brown and claimed to have stood next to John Wilkes Booth during the execution. When the war began, Whitlock served as a private with the Grays, then Company G, 12th Virginia. He later recalled that he "did not see any chance to improve my condition as the profession of a 'sodier' [*sic*] was not to my taste." By 1862 Whitlock was convinced that the South could not win. He tried to hire a substitute so that he could quit the army "honorably if possible." When he got sick, he somehow obtained leave and wrangled an appointment in the Quartermaster Department in Richmond. By "being friendly" with the army doctor, he somehow continued on sick leave. "In his account," Ernest B. Ferguson concluded, "Whitlock never uses the word *bribe*, but repeatedly hints at it in explaining how he crossed the lines [to bring in goods from the North] and retained his safe assignment." Whitlock wrote in his memoirs that he was not in "any way unpatriotic but in the way things looked to me then, that it was a *lost cause*, and every human being that lost his life was a useless sacrifice."[126]

Herman Whitlock, Philip's brother, felt no allegiance to the Southern cause and left Richmond with his family in early 1864. Philip, now married, lived in his brother's house and attended to his duties while his wife ran a small store they had purchased.[127]

There were even a few Jewish "Galvanized Yankees"—that is, Confederate soldiers recruited in Federal prisoner-of-war camps who served in the Union army. One such "repentant Rebel" was Louis Wolf, who arrived from Germany in 1856, lived in Savannah just before the war, and fought for the Confederacy for eighteen months when he was taken prisoner. (He lived in Lynn, Massachusetts, after the war, and when he died the *Lynn Item* called him a "veteran of both sides in Civil War.")[128]

And there were Jewish deserters from the Confederate army. Bernard Rosenblatt, a native of Warsaw who lived in Charleston, was drafted into the Confederate army. According to *Hartford Jews* by Rabbi Morris Silverman, "Upon learning that the Confederate Army was fighting to uphold slavery, he [Rosenblatt] ran away and enlisted in the Union army in the 4th N.Y. Heavy Artillery, an Irish Regiment." Isaac Arnold, a young immigrant and a member of Company D, 8th Alabama, was arrested for cowardice and absence without leave in the presence of the enemy. He was given the death sentence. Rabbi Michelbacher petitioned General Lee for mercy and enlisted a number of prominent people, including Confederate Congressmen from Alabama and Mississippi, in an effort to spare Arnold's life. "From what we have heard," the rabbi told the general, "we fear that the fact of being an Israelite and of foreign birth, has had an injurious tendency towards the decision of his deplorable fate—we hope for the sake of the common humanity of our race, that this report may be untrue." Michelbacher argued that Arnold did not appreciate the seriousness of his behavior. However, he had confidence that Lee would not hesitate to attest "to the courage and soldier-like abilities of the Israelites in those legions of our beloved Confederacy that have aided in giving an heroic name to the army."[129]

Max Neugas was a clerk in Darlington, South Carolina, at the beginning of the war. He had two brothers in New York City and most likely came South in the 1850s seeking employment. He had no family in South Carolina. Neugas nevertheless enlisted as a private for the duration of the war in Capt. David Gregg McIntosh's Company, the Pee Dee Rifles, 1st Regiment, S.C. Volunteers, in July 1861. The regiment, originally commanded by Col. Maxcy Gregg, was later commanded by Col. Comillus W. McCreary. In March 1862 Neugas's Company D became the Pee Dee Artillery Battery and was sent to Virginia. On June 27, 1862, during the Seven Days Battle, he was severely wounded at Gaines' Mill.[130]

Neugas returned to Darlington to recuperate. He therefore missed some of his battery's hardest fighting, including Sharpsburg (Antietam) in September 1862, where McIntosh's battery was captured on the heights above Rohrbach Bridge. He soon returned to his unit and fought at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. His company saw heavy fighting at the former in support of Maj. Gen. Ambrose P. Hill's Division, and in the latter it was engaged after Gen. “Stonewall” Jackson’s flanking move around Gen. Joseph Hooker’s army on May 2 and 3.[131]

But Neugas had enough of the war and deserted on the first day of the Battle of Gettysburg, July 1, 1863. In a letter petitioning President Lincoln to pardon him, Neugas described how he hid in a shed just as his battery was going into battle, that he walked through the Confederate lines by “putting on a bold face,” and slept in the woods. “After a short nights rest I got up the next morning, thankful to the Almighty of having me released, out of the clutches of the Rebel tyrants.” Neugas relates how he stayed at the homes of friendly townspeople who also gave him a change of clothes. He was picked up by pickets of the 21st New York Militia at Cashtown on July 5. He offered to take the oath of allegiance but was sent to Fort Delaware as a prisoner.[132]

In his petition, Neugas told the president that prior to the “breaking out of this wicked Rebellion, I was clerking in South Carolina and as I remained longer in that State than I ought to have done, I was forced to enter the rebel army after the Conscription Act passed in April 1862.” This statement was false, as Neugas enlisted on July 29, 1861. He said he “tried several plans” to leave the state, but failed. “I own no property down South,” he told Lincoln, “and no slaves and I am in nothing interested there whatever, also I have no relatives in the South.”

Neugas was not pardoned and was not released until the war was over. In 1863 and 1864, Neugas and several other Jewish Confederate prisoners wrote to Rabbi Isaac M. Wise in Cincinnati for help. Wise’s October 16, 1863, issue of the *American Israelite* contains this story:

> MUST WAIT—Several weeks ago we received a letter from Jewish prisoners at Fort Delaware, stating that they were forced into the service of the Confederacy, and were desirous to return to civil life as loyal and peaceable citizens. We sent the letter and our remarks appended to Washington, and received the following reply: OFFICE COMMISSARY GEN. OF PRISONERS (WASHINGTON, D.C., Oct. 8, 1863) Rev. Isaac M. Wise, Rabbi of Cincinnati, Ohio—Sir: I am directed by the Commissary General of Prisoners to inform you that the petition forwarded by you, recommending the release of Henry Maas, Dalton Brannshweiger, Max Newgas, A. Wausserman, Louis Meyersburg, S. Cohen, H. Brash, prisoners of war, now confined at Fort Delaware, has been submitted to the Secretary of War, by whom the cases have not been favorably considered.
>
> Very respectfully,
>
> Your obedient servant,

W. H. HUNT, Captain and A.A.G.

One year later Neugas, Louis Meyersburg of Mobile, and Aaron Waterman of Hawkinsville, Georgia, wrote to the *Israelite* again stating that they still had not been released and were now appealing "through you to your congregation to assist us…. We are in need of some pecuniary aid or food, especially coffee." (Henry Brash later became mayor of Marianna, Florida. On December 9, 1889, he issued a proclamation upon the death of "the illustrious chieftain of the late Confederacy"—Jefferson Davis.)

And, sad to say, there were even a few traitors. A sutler, Levi Strauss, from Lexington, Virginia, and a neighbor of Stonewall Jackson's, was discovered missing one night during one of the Valley campaigns in Virginia. His wagon was searched, and military plans and other information were discovered. He was court-martialed and hanged as a Union spy.[133]

Jewish soldiers hunted and punished deserters. Lewis Leon relates constant problems with desertion in his regiment. He witnessed men whipped and executed for desertion. In May 1863, his unit was marched to an open field and drawn up in line to see two men shot for desertion. "Their coffins were by their sides, right close to their graves, so that they could see it all." In August 1863 Leon and Si Wolf were sent on a detail looking for deserters. They went house to house, searched the woods, barns, and, at times, private homes. Leon once found a deserter in a hayloft after the owner of the house objected to his squad searching the area. They were sometimes invited for meals by the people who appreciated their fighting for the Southern cause. On one occasion, some rural Virginians, apparently never having seen a Jew, asked, "Is there a Jew in your detachment that caught a deserter yesterday?" They wanted to see him. One of the soldiers told the people that Leon was the Jew in question. "After that," he recalled, "I had a very good time there, and in fact wherever I went I was received very kindly." Indeed, Leon was sorry to leave when the time came. Pvt. Louis Merz, of the West Point Guards, was assigned to guard a deserter, but was elated when another deserter was spared execution. "What a narrow escape," he wrote in his diary, "and what a lesson to such who indulge in liquor and cannot master and govern themselves when under its influence."[134]

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Jewish Johnny Rebs, or at least a portion of them, sought out religious worship services and the assistance of rabbis or Jewish "ministers," in the parlance of the Reform Jewish faith. There were no Jewish chaplains, as such, in the Confederate army, but there were laymen who ministered to the Jewish Confederate soldiers. Rabbi B. Nordlinger served the Jewish community of Macon, Georgia, and joined F. H. Burghard's Light Artillery (the Macon German Artillery). His military record shows that he served as a bugler and a musician, not a chaplain, but he likely ministered to the Jewish men in his unit. Uriah Feibelman, Company C, 12th Virginia, of Petersburg, Virginia, a musician, was recognized as “a minister of gospel in the Hebrew Church” in 1864, but enlisted as a private, and no surviving record shows him as a chaplain. Rabbi Korn speculates that both men progressed from blowing the *shofar*, the ancient ram’s horn used on the Jewish New Year, to the bugle.[135]

The Confederate Congress, unlike the U.S. Congress, made no distinction between religions in the appointment of chaplains. Northern Jews were forced to launch an extensive lobbying effort against a law limiting chaplain appointments to ministers “of some Christian denominations.” The Confederate law referred to “every minister of religion.” Rabbi Korn concludes that, in this instance, “the Confederate Congress was more liberal and tolerant than its Washington counterpart.”[136]

Like their comrades of the Christian faith, Jewish Johnny Rebs frequently brought the Holy Scriptures with them to the front. (Jews do not refer to the Holy Scriptures as the Bible.) The Holy Scriptures (which Christians call the Old Testament) consist of the Five Books of Moses (the Torah, the Law, or the Pentateuch, “five books” in Greek), the Prophets, and Writings (which include Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, for example). When Henry Smith (who was Jewish, despite his name) was killed at the front, his captain wrote his father, “His Bible and effects I will endeavor to have forwarded to you.”[137] And like their Christian comrades, Jewish Johnny Rebs called upon God to help them achieve victory. Pvt. Simon Mayer was a religious Jew who, like his fellow Confederate soldiers, called upon God, “the great ‘Ruler of the Universe,’” to aid him, his family, and the Southern cause. “May the God of Israel guard & protect you … and may He vouchsafe to us all good health,” he wrote his family.[138]

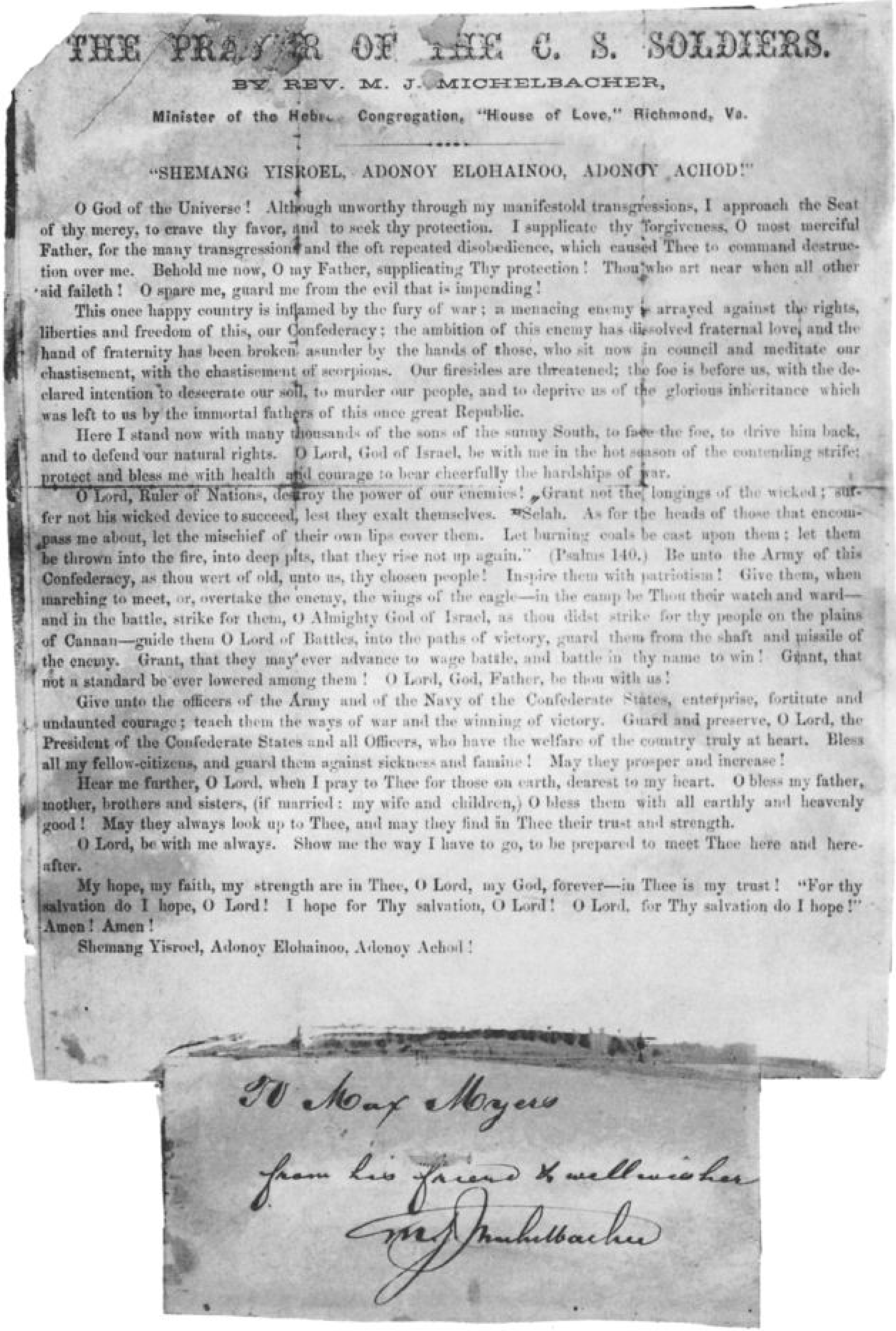
Many Jewish Johnny Rebs attended services at the synagogues in Richmond or at one of the Charleston, Savannah, or Memphis congregations. Some of the soldiers in Virginia were able to obtain individual furloughs on some occasions to attend services on the High Holy Days, and on at least one occasion, General Lee allowed a general furlough. Lewis Leon noted in his diary: “Brother Morris returned from Richmond yesterday, where he has been for ten days on a furlough. Before our Jewish New Year there was an order read out from General Lee granting a furlough to each Israelite to go to Richmond for the holidays if he so desired. I did not care to go.” Ezekiel and Lichtenstein wrote that the commandant of the provost guard, the military police, put a detail outside the synagogue in Richmond on Friday nights to catch the Jewish soldiers absent without official leave. “The soldier boys were true to their faith,” the authors concluded; a “prettier tribute could not be paid them.”[139] Many a young Jewish Confederate “walked from his sweetheart," Herbert Ezekiel said in 1915, "into the arms of the guard, and the visions of a good Friday night supper melted into the stern reality of an enforced sojourn in the guardhouse."[140]

It is safe to assume that many Jewish Johnny Rebs observed the High Holidays in camp or on the field, some in small groups and others alone. Capt. Marcus Hofflin, Company K, 4th North Carolina, told of a Kippur (Day of Atonement) service held in a tent in the Shenandoah Valley in 1862 after the battle at Sharpsburg (Antietam). Stonewall Jackson, a student of religion, was said to have observed a part of the service. Lewis Leon always recorded the New Year (Rosh Hashanah), but he never attended a synagogue. On September 15, 1863, he recorded in his diary: "Still some firing in front. We are in reserve. I went to see the fight. I saw the enemy very plainly, and thus I spent my New Year's Day." On September 23 he records, "Day of Atonement to-day."[141] Ike Hermann never mentions the holidays or attending a service in his memoir, probably because his non-Jewish readers would not have been interested.

On Saturday, October 1, 1864, Eugene Henry Levy decided to attend synagogue on account of Reverend Michelbacher's appeal to General Lee for a furlough for the Jewish soldiers. He attended to demonstrate his gratitude to his commander. Levy, however, was "not sufficiently affected by the religious ceremonies to feel in the humour for praying." The next day, Rosh Hashanah, Levy attended the service at the German synagogue, Beth Ahabah. The next week Levy was "called up" for a blessing while the Torah was being read. He observed Yom Kippur by attending Beth Ahabah in the evening and "the Mayo Street Shool [that is, the Sephardic Synagogue] in time to hear Mr. [George] Jacob's excellent and appropriate sermon." Levy fasted on Yom Kippur as is the Orthodox custom. He spent from 8:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. at synagogue on Kippur Day, October 10, 1864. Despite the war, Jewish Confederate soldiers were still Jews and still had the traditional complaints about the length of the service. "Did not feel impressed by the Hebrew service," Levy wrote, "and am more than ever convinced of the necessity of reforms in the mode of service." He spent the rest of the day and evening visiting local Jewish families and broke his fast at 6:30 with "coffee and cakes *à la mode d'Europe*." A devout and practicing Jew, Levy attended services at the synagogues throughout the war. On Saturday, December 17, 1864, he attended "devine services and had the honor to carry the 'scroll of the law.' Bade many of my friends farewell at the door of the synagogue."[142]

Reverend Michelbacher wrote and published a prayer, which the Jewish soldiers took with them to the front. Entitled "The Prayer of the C.S. Soldiers," it was in English except for the Shema, which Michelbacher wrote as "SHEMANG YISROEL. ADONOY ELOHAINOO, ADONOY ACHOD" (Hear, O Israel. The Lord our God is one.). This prayer or proclamation called the *Shema* ("hear") is the central and most important theological statement in Judaism, its confession of faith. Its modern translation is “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one,” and expresses the ancient Jewish belief in monotheism.[143] The prayer connected ancient Jewish imagery with the Confederacy and linked Jewish soldiers with the Southern cause. “This once happy country is inflamed by the fury of war; a menacing enemy is arrayed against the rights, liberties and freedom of this, our Confederacy…. Here I stand now with many thousands of the sons of the sunny South, to face the foe, to drive him back, and to defend our natural rights. O Lord, God of Israel, be with me in the hot season of the contending strife; protect and bless me with health and courage to bear cheerfully the hardships of war. … Be unto the Army of this Confederacy, as thou wert of old, unto us, thy chosen people! Inspire them with patriotism! Give them when marching to meet, or, overtake the enemy, the wings of the eagle—in the camp be Thou their watch and ward—and in the battle, strike for them, O Almighty God of Israel, as thou didst strike for thy people on the plains of Canaan—guide them, O Lord of Battles, into the paths of victory, guard them from the shaft and missile of the enemy.”[144]

Jewish Confederate soldiers in the field had to fend as best they could on the Jewish holidays. Obtaining kosher food was impossible and matzo, unleavened or flat bread, was difficult to find during Passover. In fact, when the soldiers were in the field, they had trouble determining the exact dates of the Jewish holidays. “No doubt you were much surprised on receiving a letter from me … on the 21st [April 21,1864], which was the first day of [Passover],” Isaac J. Levy of Richmond wrote his sister Leonora. “We were all under the impression in camp that the first day of the festival was the 22nd and if my memory serves me right I think that Ma wrote me that [Passover] was on the 22d inst. Zeke [Capt. Ezekiel J. Levy of Richmond] was somewhat astonished on arriving in Charleston on Wednesday afternoon, to learn that was the first [Seder] night.”[145]



THE PRAYER OF THE C. S. SOLDIERS.

BY REV. M. J. MICHELBACHER,

Minister of the Hebrew Congregation, "House of Love," Richmond, Va.

"SHEMANG YISROEL, ADONOY ELOHAINOO, ADONOY ACHOD!"

O God of the Universe! Although unworthy through my manifestold transgressions, I approach the Seat of thy mercy, to crave thy favor, and to seek thy protection. I supplicate thy forgiveness, O most merciful Father, for the many transgressions and the oft repeated disobedience, which caused Thee to command destruction over me. Behold me now, O my Father, supplicating Thy protection! Thou who art near when all other aid faileth! O spare me, guard me from the evil that is impending!

This once happy country is inflamed by the fury of war; a menacing enemy is arrayed against the rights, liberties and freedom of this, our Confederacy; the ambition of this enemy has dissolved fraternal love, and the hand of fraternity has been broken asunder by the hands of those, who sit now in council and meditate our chastisement, with the chastisement of scorpions. Our firesides are threatened; the foe is before us, with the declared intention to desecrate our soil, to murder our people, and to deprive us of the glorious inheritance which was left to us by the immortal fathers of this once great Republic.

Here I stand now with many thousands of the sons of the sunny South, to face the foe, to drive him back, and to defend our natural rights. O Lord, God of Israel, be with me in the hot season of the contending strife; protect and bless me with health and courage to bear cheerfully the hardships of war.

O Lord, Ruler of Nations, destroy the power of our enemies! "Grant not the longings of the wicked; suffer not his wicked device to succeed, lest they exalt themselves. Selah. As for the heads of those that encompass me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them. Let burning coals be cast upon them; let them be thrown into the fire, into deep pits, that they rise not up again." (Psalms 140.) Be unto the Army of this Confederacy, as thou wert of old, unto us, thy chosen people! Inspire them with patriotism! Give them, when marching to meet, or, overtake the enemy, the wings of the eagle—in the camp be Thou their watch and ward—and in the battle, strike for them, O Almighty God of Israel, as thou didst strike for thy people on the plains of Canaan—guide them O Lord of Battles, into the paths of victory, guard them from the shaft and missile of the enemy. Grant, that they may ever advance to wage battle, and battle in thy name to win! Grant, that not a standard be ever lowered among them! O Lord, God, Father, be thou with us!

Give unto the officers of the Army and of the Navy of the Confederate States, enterprise, fortitute and undaunted courage; teach them the ways of war and the winning of victory. Guard and preserve, O Lord, the President of the Confederate States and all Officers, who have the welfare of the country truly at heart. Bless all my fellow-citizens, and guard them against sickness and famine! May they prosper and increase!

Hear me further, O Lord, when I pray to Thee for those on earth, dearest to my heart. O bless my father, mother, brothers and sisters, (if married: my wife and children,) O bless them with all earthly and heavenly good! May they always look up to Thee, and may they find in Thee their trust and strength.

O Lord, be with me always. Show me the way I have to go, to be prepared to meet Thee here and hereafter.

My hope, my faith, my strength are in Thee, O Lord, my God, forever—in Thee is my trust! "For thy salvation do I hope, O Lord! I hope for Thy salvation, O Lord! O Lord, for Thy salvation do I hope!" Amen! Amen!

Shemang Yisroel, Adonoy Elohainoo, Adonoy Achod!

To Max Myers
from his friend & wellwisher
M J Michelbacher

“The Prayer of the C.S. Soldiers.” This Jewish soldiers’ prayer was written by Rev. Max Michelbacher and distributed to the Jewish boys in the Virginia theater. (Courtesy of the Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia. Photograph by Katherine Wetzel.)

Passover was difficult to celebrate on the field of battle. Isaac and Zeke Levy and their Jewish comrades were fortunate during the Passover of April 1864 to be stationed at Adam’s Run, South Carolina, as it was close enough to Charleston for Zeke to buy matzo sufficient to last them for a week. Isaac noted in his letter that the “cost is somewhat less than in Richmond, being but two dollars per pound.” Isaac and Zeke Levy made the best of their situation: “We are observing the festival in a truly orthodox style. On the first day, we had a fine vegetable soup. It was made of a bunch of vegetables which Zeke brought from Charleston containing new onions, parsley, carrots, turnips and a young cauliflower, also a pound and a half of fresh beef, the latter sells for four dollars per pound in Charleston.”[146]

And, of course, the Jewish boys sought the comfort of their religion when they were dying. Adolph Rosenthal, Company D, 38th Georgia, a German Jew from Savannah, was severely wounded in Virginia in May 1864, at Spotsylvania Court House, and lay dying for two weeks. He was cared for by his sweetheart, Rachel Semon, at her home and by others in the Richmond Jewish community. Rachel was brokenhearted at Adolph’s death and wrote Joe Rosenthal, Adolph’s brother, that Adolph “died a good Jew. We even had him *benched* [blessed by the giving of a new name]. His name was *Moses*. I will tel you all som day as he told me every thing what to do four days befor he died…. God bless his sole. May he rest in peace. I even toock his remains to Savannah and burried him.”[147]

★ ★ ★

When all is said and done, Southerners respected the willingness to fight, the bravery under fire, and sacrifices of their Jewish comrades in arms. “They were all volunteers, and I know there was not a Jew conscript in the Legion,” Gen. Thomas Waul wrote. “As soldiers they were brave, orderly and well-disciplined and in no respect inferior to the gallant body of which they formed a prominent part.” No Jewish soldier was court-martialed, they did not seek a disproportionate amount of leave, nor were they on the hospital rolls, according to Waul. “I will say,” he concluded, “I neither saw nor heard of any Jew shrinking or failing to answer to any call of duty or danger.”[148] Henry E. Henderson of Louisiana recorded in his memoirs that his unit, Company B (Stafford Guards), 9th Louisiana, consisted largely of the sons of planters, but also included a few “roughs” from the “piney wood region” north of Alexandria, Louisiana, “and perhaps half-a-dozen Jews, most of whom had carried a pack along the Red River.”

Henderson continued: “These Jews, singular as it may seem, proved themselves as faithful and efficient soldiers as any in the command, and shed their blood for the cause of the South as freely as the natives ‘to the manner born.’”[149]

Pvt. Solomon Cohen served in Company B, 28th (Thomas’s) Louisiana. He was paroled at Vicksburg in July 1863. (Courtesy of Cecile Levine, New Orleans.)

After the war, Jewish Confederate veterans passed on their guns and swords to their sons. They also passed on their good names and pride in their war record. Julius Yaretzky wrote a touching letter to his son after the war:

> You wish to know about what I, if any, had left and brought home with me from the War, such as arms or otherwise. So I will inform you fully of it. I did not bring anything home with me for the following good reasons. When I was in the army, I possessed a large knife, pistol and sword. The knife I found useless in battle and left it at Pensacola, Fla. Navy Yard, as we evacuated that place to go to Corinth, Miss. to participate in the battle of Shiloh.… The pistol was a Colts powder & ball and it was damaged in the battle of Perriville, Ky. and became useless. The cylinder of same was struck by a ball from grape shot and, therefore, [I] did not have any further use for it. The sword was taken from me when I was captured at

> the Battle of Franklin, Tenn. near Nashville. I tried to get the Yanks to let me keep it so I could bring it home but was refused and was compelled to give it up. So, dear boy, I have none of the war relics left to send you but a good record of a faithful soldier I then was.[150]

An Augusta, Georgia, editor wrote after the war that no one could “impugn their patriotism in this war.” A Charleston newspaper wrote in 1892 that “the list of South Carolina Jews who remained true to their country and to their country’s cause in the darkest hours and who proved their fidelity and patriotism by laying down their lives upon the field of battle could be greatly extended…. They possessed what Napoleon called ‘the two o’clock in the morning courage,’ and they followed the flag with superb loyalty to victory and defeat.”[151]

PART 3

Sympathetic Soul and Busy Hands

* * * * * * * * * *

THE JEWISH CONFEDERATE HOME FRONT

’Tis mercy’s self in woman’s form appears,

Whose untold kindness every heart endears.

Behold in hospitals, where dread disease

Lurks …

this noble woman ‘midst the gloom,

Dispenses sunlight thro’ each darken’d room.

Admist the suffering sick, this angel stands,

With sympathetic soul and busy hands;

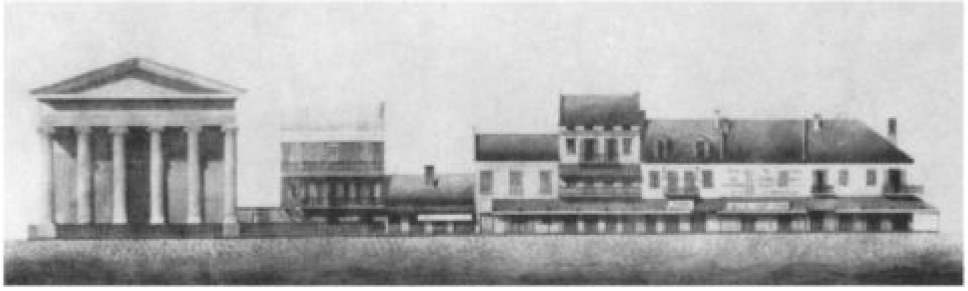
Bends o’er the soldier’s couch with mother’s care,

And soothes the palid brow so deadly fair,

Cheers the sad heart, and hope reviving springs,

And health returning, waves her joyous wing….

Col. Alfred M. Hobby
quoted in Stanley R. Brav, The Jewish Woman,
1861–1865, *AJA* (April 1965), 35–36



Touro Synagogue (Dispersed of Judah) and Canal Street block in the 1850s. This building, formerly an Episcopal church, stood at Canal and Bourbon Streets and was given to Dispersed of Judah by Judah Touro in the late 1840s. (Courtesy of Historic New Orleans Collection.)

CHAPTER 5

★

This Most Suffering Land

Trembling before thy awful throne we kneel,

Beseeching mercy at thy gracious hand,

Praying that in compassion thou wilt heal

The bleeding wounds of this most suffering land.

—Capt. Samuel Yates Levy, November 2, 1863

FROM RICHMOND TO NEW ORLEANS and from Memphis to Mobile, Southern Jewish civilians—women, the elderly, the young, and the men who would not or could not serve in the armed forces—contributed to the war effort and suffered through the war alongside their neighbors. The largest Jewish populations were in the major Southern cities, which in turn were the chief objects of the Union military juggernaut. The Union navy planned the assault on the Confederacy's largest port, New Orleans, early in the war. Richmond, the capital of the new nation, was the Union army's foremost objective from the first week of the war until it fell on April 3, 1865. Charleston, the "Cradle of Secession," was a principal target of combined land and sea operations, both for its symbolic value as "the place where the Rebellion began" and for its strategic importance. The port cities of Savannah, Mobile, and Memphis, home to smaller Jewish communities, were also Union targets. Thus, the majority of Southern Jewish civilians lived in cities under siege for some or all of the war. In the peculiar demography of the South, despite their small numbers in the region, Jewish Southerners constituted a meaningful percentage of the white population of Southern cities.[1]

Many other Jews lived in smaller cities, towns, and villages in every part of the Confederacy. Some, like Sumter, South Carolina, and LaGrange, Georgia, became a refuge from the fighting in larger urban areas. Others, like Natchez, Vicksburg, and Nashville were battlegrounds and were occupied by Federal forces. Still other small towns, like Georgetown, South Carolina, and Woodville, Mississippi, were fortunate in being located away from the chief theaters of the war.

Jewish Southerners who were not serving in the military continued to engage in selling merchandise as peddlers, or in some other aspect of the mercantile trade. Many men served in the home guard or local militia. More provided services, such as innkeepers, tanners, apothecaries, doctors, or teachers. Unlike the overwhelming majority of Southerners, who lived on farms in rural areas, the Jewish population was dependent on trade in urban areas and small towns for their livelihood. Therefore, once the naval blockade was implemented, Southern cities and Jewish merchants immediately began to suffer economically. When, for example, the siege of Charleston began and the city was shelled by Union artillery, Jewish merchants, store clerks, and their families were forced to close their businesses on lower King Street and either refugee inland or remove to another location beyond the shelling. In Richmond, the city's population swelled, and, at least in the early years of the war, many civilians' businesses improved. In New Orleans, the blockade disrupted commerce, and after the surrender of the city in April 1862, New Orleanians lived under military rule. Thus, each of these Jewish communities experienced a different aspect of the Civil War.

Jewish women, like Southern women generally, ferventlfy supported the cause, tended to the wounded, knitted clothing, and were involved in a variety of war-related activities. Mary Chesnut recorded one typical event in June 1862 when her "Hebrew" friend, Miriam ("Mem") DeLeon Cohen, went to the hospital in Columbia, South Carolina, with "a beautiful Jewess friend," Rachel Lyons:

> Rachel we will call her (be it her name or not) was put to feed a very weak patient. Mem noticed what a handsome fellow he was, and how quiet and clean. She fancied by those tokens that he was a gentleman.
>
> In performance of her duties, the lovely young nurse leaned kindly over him and held the cup to his lips. When that ceremony was over and she had wiped his mouth, to her horror she felt a pair of by no means weak arms around her neck and a kiss upon her lips—which she thought strong indeed. She did not say a word. She made no complaint. She slipped away from the hospital and hereafter she will in her hospital work fire at long range no matter how weak and weary, sick and sore, the patients may be.
>
> "And," said Mem, "I thought he was a gentleman."
>
> "Well, a gentleman is a man after all—and she ought not to have put those red lips of hers so near &c&c&c."[2]

Rachel “La La” Lyons, the daughter of Jacob and Louisa Lyons of Columbia, South Carolina, had grown up as a Southern Jewish belle. Her aunt Isabel Lyons married Moses Cohen Mordecai, owner of the Mordecai Steamship Line, and her uncle Henry Lyons served as mayor. At thirteen she gave the graduation address at the annual Israelite Sunday School Examination.[3] Now at twenty-three she was the most beautiful young Jewish woman of Civil War South Carolina. Her brother, Capt. Isaac L. Lyons, commanded Company A, 10th Louisiana, in Virginia. She was described by Cooper DeLeon as “a marked woman in Columbia society and her quick wit and sinuous grace at once attracted attention at the capital.”[4]

Rachel “La La” Lyons was born in Columbia in 1838 into an observant Jewish home. She was a student at Boanna Wolff’s Hebrew Sunday School. During the war, she was a femme fatale who enchanted Henry Timrod, later the “poet laureate” of the Confederacy, as well as Mary Chesnut, who described her as a “beautiful Jewess.” She married Confederate surgeon Dr. James Fontaine Heustis and moved to Mobile after the war. (Author’s collection.)

Miriam DeLeon, first cousin to Edwin, Camden, Agnes, and Cooper DeLeon, was born and raised in South Carolina. She married Dr. Lawrence L. Cohen. Miriam and Mary Boykin Chesnut were old friends. “Mrs. Cohen was Miriam DeLeon,” Mary wrote in her diary, “I have known her intimately all my life.” Indeed, Mary Chesnut knew all of the DeLeons.[5] Miriam had two children, a young daughter, Isabel (“the sweetest little thing,” according to Mary), and a son, Lawrence Ludlow Cohen Jr., his “mother’s idol.” Young Cohen served in John Chesnut’s cavalry company, Boykin’s Rangers, initially organized by Mary Chesnut’s uncle, Capt. Alexander Hamilton Boykin.[6] The South Carolinians called it “Company A No. 1.” Mem was very fond of Capt. John Chesnut and proud of his courage. “Lieutenant Chesnut’s horse bolts with him,” she told Mary in June 1862, “but right into the heart of the enemy.” She was worried, however, about her son’s safety. By June of 1862, his unit was part of Whiting’s brigade, which had now been sent to Stonewall Jackson’s corps. “[S]he has persistently wept ever since she heard the news,” Mary recorded on June 16, 1862. “It is no child’s play, she says, when you are with Stonewall. He don’t play at soldiering. He don’t take care of his men at all. He only goes to kill the Yankees.”[7]

Mem’s life in Richmond revolved around her family and her friends. She worried about everyone and assisted the ailing. In May 1862, she took Mary Chesnut scarce medicine. “Mem Cohen missed me,” Mary wrote. “The Jewish angel. She came with healing on her wings (She found me very ill.) That is, in her hands she bore opium.”[8] Mem and Mary joked incessandy. They nicknamed Brig. Gen. Johnson Petügrew, who was reportedly killed at Seven Pines and lived to read his own “splendid” obituary, “Insensible to Fear.” They talked on a daily basis. One entry in Marys diary begins, “Miriam’s story today” and relates how a friend of Mem’s heard that her son had been killed then heard it was all a mistake. She fell on her knees with a “shout of joy,” only then to see next the hearse drive up in the midst of her family’s celebration with “the poor boy in his metallic coffin.”[9]

Adah Isaacs Menken as a French spy. A voluptuous, witty, risqué, and mysterious actress from Louisiana, Menken may or may not have been born Jewish, but she became an active Jew after marrying Alexander Isaac Menken in 1856. She was outrageous, appearing "nude" (in a flesh-toned body stocking) while strapped to a horse in *Mazeppa*. She was active in Jewish causes even after divorcing Menken a few months after the wedding. In December 1862, just after Fredericksburg, Menken made a public spectacle of herself in Baltimore by loudly supporting the Confederate cause. She had her dressing room painted Confederate gray and decorated with pictures of Davis, Lee, Bragg, and Van Dom. The newspapers had a field day; one of her gentleman callers was arrested as a Confederate spy. Next, Menken was arrested "for Being a Secessionist." She retorted, "Of course, I did not deny the charge." She refused to leave for Dixie or swear an oath of allegiance. The publicity helped her career. She tried the same publicity stunt again in Baltimore in

March 1864, but was arrested and sent to Washington, where the government was too busy to prosecute her. Menken has fascinated historians, but she had little real connection to the Confederacy or the war. See John S. Kendall, '"The World's Delight': The Story of Adah Isaacs Menken," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (July 1938): 846–68 (no, she was not born Jewish); Wolf Menkowitz, *Mazeppa: The Lives, Loves and Legends of Adah Isaacs Menken* (New York: Stein and Day, 1982), 90–92, 125–29; Allen F. Lesser, "Adah Isaacs Menken: A Daughter of Israel," *PAJHS* 34 (1937): 143–47 (yes, she was born Jewish); Leo Shpall, "Adah Isaacs Menken," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (January 1943): 162–68 (yes, again). (Courtesy of Bob Marcus, Springfield, Virginia.)

Sen. James Chesnut of South Carolina and his wife, Mary Boykin Chesnut. The Chesnuts lived in Richmond for much of the war. Mr. Chesnut was a close advisor to and confidante of Jefferson Davis. Like many Southern aristocrats, Mrs. Chesnut had a number of Jewish friends, including Miriam ("Mem") DeLeon Cohen, Rachel Lyons, Cooper DeLeon, and Phoebe Pember. This is a prewar photograph recently found by descendants. (Courtesy of Martha Williams Daniels, Camden, South Carolina.)

Like all Southerners, Mem was anxious for the safety of her family. She had long periods of silence and was sometimes absentminded, worrying about her son. If she were suddenly aroused, she would exclaim, "with overflowing eyes and clasped hands, 'If it please God to spare his life.'" During the Battle of Seven Pines, daughter Isabel warned Mary not to mention the battle raging around Richmond—"young Cohen is in it." Like most Jews, she was also anxious for the safety of her co-religionists. She once gave Mary a clipping about a battle. "[O]ne of her Jews is in it," Mary wrote. When there was a battle and her sons survived, "Mem takes up on her Hebrew Bible and sings that glorious hymn of her namesake Miriam: 'Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed, &c&c&c.'" (In the Torah, Miriam was said to be the sister of Moses, and the song of Miriam celebrates the victory of the Israelites over the Egyptians.)[10]

Another South Carolina Jew, Penina Moise, a poet and the first well-known Jewish woman in the field of American literature, had a different wartime experience. She left her home in Charleston for the safety of inland Sumter. She was accompanied by her widowed sister, Rachel, and Rachel's daughter, Jacqueline. They lived in a two-room cottage and eked out a bare living by running a school. Sixty-four when the war began, Penina Moise was almost totally blind and in poor health. She had been published in the local newspapers, *Godey's Lady's Book* (Philadelphia), newspapers in Boston and New York, and the national Jewish press. Her 1833 collection of poetry, *Fancy's Sketch Book*, was the first published book of poetry by an American Jewish woman.[11]

Eliza "Lize" Moses, age fourteen. She waited for the return of Lt. Albert Luria, but he was mortally wounded at age nineteen at Fair Oaks in May 1862. (Courtesy of Raphael J. Moses of Boulder, Colorado.)

Penina Moise of Charleston. (Photograph courtesy of Solomon Breibart, Charleston, South Carolina.)

When the war began, Miss Moise, like the rest of the Jewish community, was excited about secession. She wrote “Cockades of Blue”:

Hurrah for the Palmetto State!

Whose patriots the “Minute” await

That shall summon their band

To engage hand to hand

Any foe that dare enter its gate!

But as the war dragged on, lives were lost and Southern fortunes declined, and she became despondent. She wrote “A Reverie”:

A chilling dream of brighter days to come, When peace shall be the angel of each house—

And mapped on Freedom's atlas will be found

The old Palmetto state with glory crowned …

As with the prophet's dream in ages past

Coming events may now their shadows cast,

The blest design of Providence to show,

Which sendeth balm for every chastening blow.

Lift Carolina—proudly lift thy head,

God, through the desert, hath thy children led.[12]

In Galveston, Texas, Rosanna Osterman gave so much of her time and resources to wounded soldiers that, upon her death in 1866, the *Galveston News* predicted she would never be forgotten by those she helped. Col. Alfred M. Hobby wrote, "Amidst the suffering sick, this angel stands / with sympathetic soul and busy hands." Isabel Adeline Moses was, at age fourteen, the youngest member of the Soldiers Aid Society of Columbus, Georgia. Like many a Southern girl, she nursed the wounded at the local hospital.[13]

Southern women worked in sewing circles making clothes. The "Jewess ladies" of Charlotte raised $150 to assist the volunteers of the Charlotte Grays. Even the aristocratic Eugenia Phillips considered it her duty to make garments for the soldiers "and looking to the well being of their poor families—making lint bandages as far as in our limited power doing everything to encourage the cause we thought ourselves right in espousing." Southern women were "all heroines," Eugenia Phillips wrote, "everything like dress, amusement, or frivolity was abandoned." Eleanor H. Cohen of Charleston lamented, "We struggled for freedom, but found it not."[14]

Before the war, Jewish immigrant women, like their sisters in Europe, worked beside their husbands (and often their children) in small stores and shops, in the market stalls, sewing clothes to sell, and in the petty trades in which most Jews were engaged. Most Jewish women in the 1860s were hard-working storekeepers, seamstresses, merchants, grocers, peddlers, dressmakers, and small boardinghouse operators. Frederick Law Olmsted described a German Jewess operating a small hotel with her husband in Washington, Louisiana.[15] Both Moses Ezekiel's grandfather Ezekiel and grandmother

Hannah worked in their family store.[16] Judah Benjamin's mother opened her small shop on the Sabbath.[17] "Constant references in memoirs and autobiographies to Jewish female work in the nineteenth century," Hasia Din concluded, "contrast sharply with the conventional image of Jewish women of that time as predominantly middle-class … while official records may have only portrayed the male 'Jewish shopkeeper,' gender made little difference behind the counter."[18]

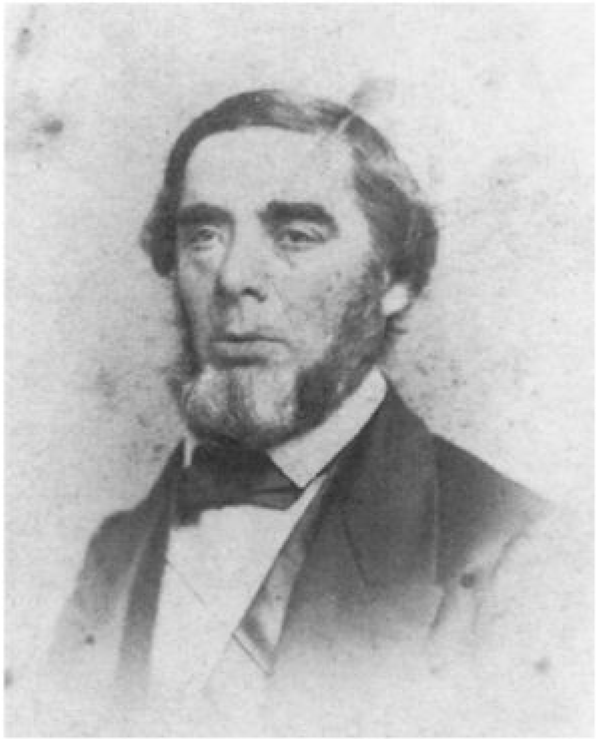
While many a well-to-do Southern woman had never learned to sew before the necessities of war introduced them to knitting and dressmaking, most Jewish women were adept at their newly important skill.[19] And while most Southern women lived on farms and experienced the Civil War as both devastating and liberating, the role of Jewish women, who lived in cities and towns and who had always worked in the same marketplace as their husbands, did not change.[20]

The Jewish women of Richmond had a special responsibility to keep families together and give comfort to Jewish soldiers from throughout the South. Beth Shalome and Beth Ahabah cooperated to provide relief especially to the Jewish poor. The women of Beth Shalome met daily in the basement of the synagogue to make clothes. The women of Beth Ahabah did likewise. Jewish women served in the hospitals and took wounded soldiers into their homes. The Jews of Richmond, Herbert Ezekiel wrote, "were just like other people. They fed the hungry, clothed the poor, nursed the sick and wounded, and buried the dead."[21] Emma Mordecai visited Richmond's Seabrook and General Winder hospitals. She wrote in her diary of the "distressing picture … of the condition of our brave men, now more prostrate and helpless than infants." She traveled by train from her sister-in-law's plantation, where she resided, to take a supply of buttermilk, sweet milk, and other items. She nearly fainted on one occasion while assisting a surgeon in dressing a wound, but "got over it by sitting near an open window when no longer needed." Others, like Rachel Semon, cared for Jewish soldiers in their homes. Adolph Rosenthal, wounded at Spotsylvania, died in the Semon home before his family could arrive from Savannah. Phoebe Pember, the daughter of Fanny and Jacob C. Levy of Savannah, came to Richmond to serve as matron of Chimborazo Hospital.[22] In this she was quite the exception. "A number of women of prominent background did take matron posts during the war," Drew Gilpin Faust has written. "For the most part, however, Southern ladies regarded a matron's duties as too laborious, too indelicate for women of their social standing."[23]

View of Main Street, Richmond. This photograph was taken just after the war ended, but it is a good depiction of one of the main Jewish retail areas of the city. Many Jewish Confederates lived and worked on this street. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress.)

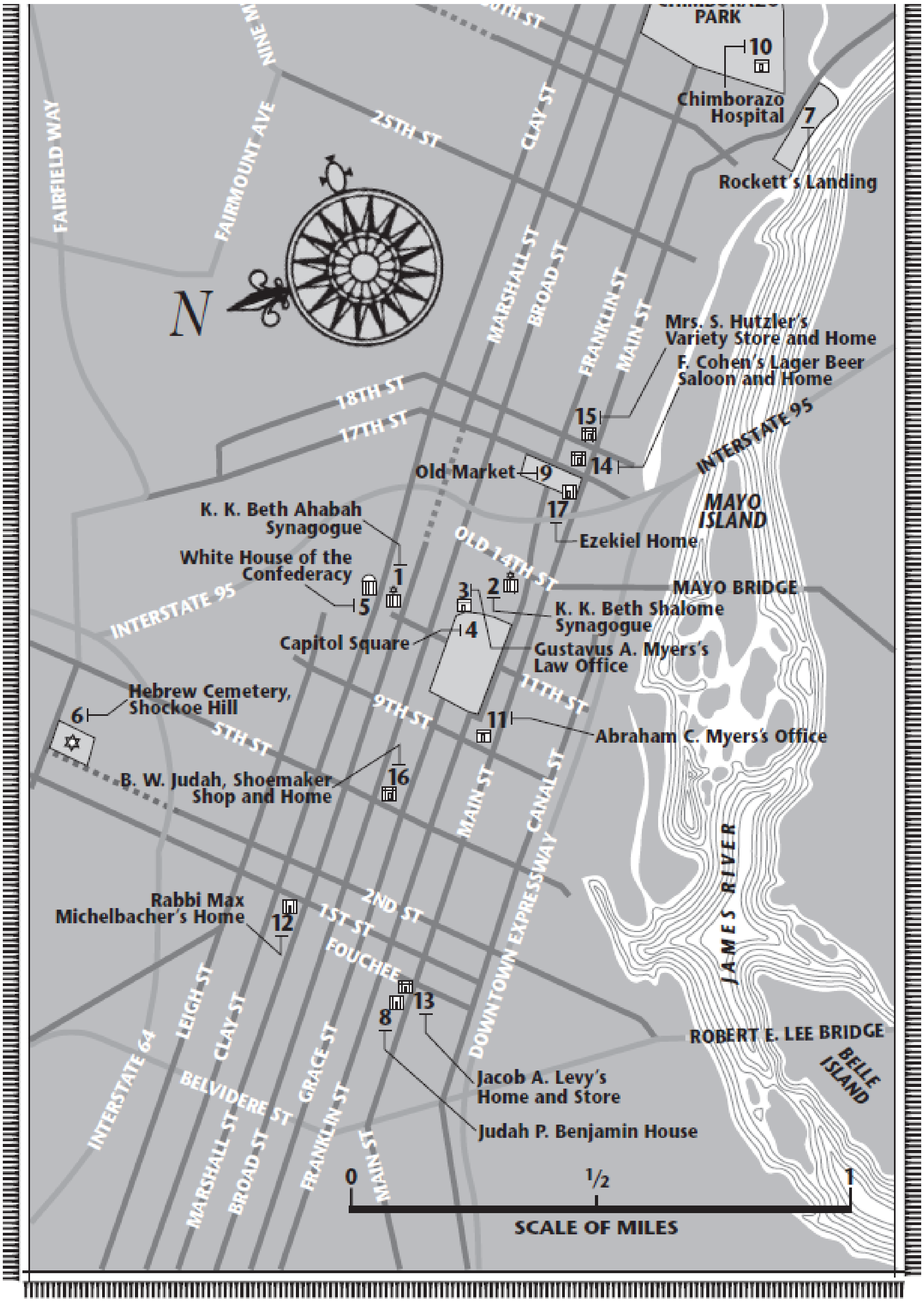
As the capital of the Confederacy and the chief target of the Union invasion, Richmond was sorely tested by the Civil War. Its population tripled from 37,000 in 1861 to 100,000 by 1865. Housing was scarce; services were disrupted; food and goods were in short supply. The Jewish population increased as Jewish soldiers and government officials arrived. All of the city's congregations and Jewish organizations now took on much greater responsibilities. Both Rabbis Michelbacher and Jacobs ministered to the needs of Jewish boys away from home, refugees, people in want, widows, and grieving families, and they defended their co-religionists against anti-Semitic attacks on the Jewish community. Religious services continued throughout the war. In October 1864, Emma Mordecai recorded in her diary that she "passed into Richmond, where I went to attend Rosha Shannah services" on the very day of a battle raging around the city. On October 10, she went back to town "to spend several days, Monday being Yom Kippur…. The services on Kippur eve were solemn and impressive. Mr. Jacobs delivered a short but excellent discourse." She returned on the fifteenth to stay for a week "to keep the Feast of Tabernacles which commenced that evening." She attended "all the services at the Synagogue" and "visited most of my friends and acquaintances."[24]

The Jewish population of Richmond was caught up in the excitement, exhilaration, patriotism, and pathos of the war. The leading Jewish families were ardent supporters of the Confederacy, and their sons and husbands served in the Confederate army. Jacob Levy had come to Richmond forty years earlier and established himself in the dry good business on Main Street. His store, like those of many Jewish merchants, remained opened throughout the war. A well-respected merchant, Levy had two sons in the war, Capt. Ezekiel J. "Zeke" Levy, the eldest, and Pvt. Isaac J. Levy. Daughter Adeline was married to Rev. George Jacobs, the rabbi at Beth Shalome. Two other daughters would later marry Jewish Confederate officers they met during the war.



Jacob A. Levy, Ezekiel and Isaac Levy's father and a prominent Richmond merchant. His home, the *Richmond Dispatch* reported upon his death, "was the rendevous of Confederate soldiers of the Jewish faith." (Courtesy of Beth Ahabah Museum and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.)

Richmond
Gillies Creek
CHIMBORAZO


PARK
10
Chimborazo Hospital
7
Rockett's Landing
25TH ST
CLAY ST
FAIRFIELD WAY
FAIRMOUNT AVE
N
MARSHALL ST
BROAD ST
FRANKLIN ST
MAIN ST
Mrs. S. Hutzler's Variety Store and Home
F. Cohen's Lager Beer Saloon and Home
18TH ST
17TH ST
15
14
INTERSTATE 95
Old Market
9
17
MAYO ISLAND
K. K. Beth Ahabah Synagogue
Ezekiel Home
OLD 14TH ST
White House of the Confederacy
1
5
3
2
MAYO BRIDGE
K. K. Beth Shalome Synagogue
INTERSTATE 95
Capitol Square
4
Gustavus A. Myers's Law Office
11TH ST
Hebrew Cemetery, Shockoe Hill
6
9TH ST
11
Abraham C. Myers's Office
5TH ST
B. W. Judah, Shoemaker Shop and Home
16
MAIN ST
CANAL ST
JAMES RIVER
Rabbi Max Michelbacher's Home
12
2ND ST
1ST ST
FOUCHEE
DOWNTOWN EXPRESSWAY
13
8
ROBERT E. LEE BRIDGE
BELLE ISLAND
INTERSTATE 64
LEIGH ST
CLAY ST
BELVIDERE ST
GRACE ST
MARSHALL ST
BROAD ST
FRANKLIN ST
MAIN ST
Jacob A. Levy's Home and Store
Judah P. Benjamin House
0
1/2
1
SCALE OF MILES

Map of Richmond showing key Jewish Confederate sites. (Courtesy of Tim Belshaw.)

Some Richmond families were divided by the war. Jacob Ezekiel, born in Philadelphia, was loyal to the Union, but his grandson, whom he raised as a son, Moses Ezekiel, was an ardent Confederate. Jacob stayed in Richmond on account of his large family, which was pro-Confederate. He contributed, however, to the relief of the Union prisoners at Libby prison in Richmond.[25]

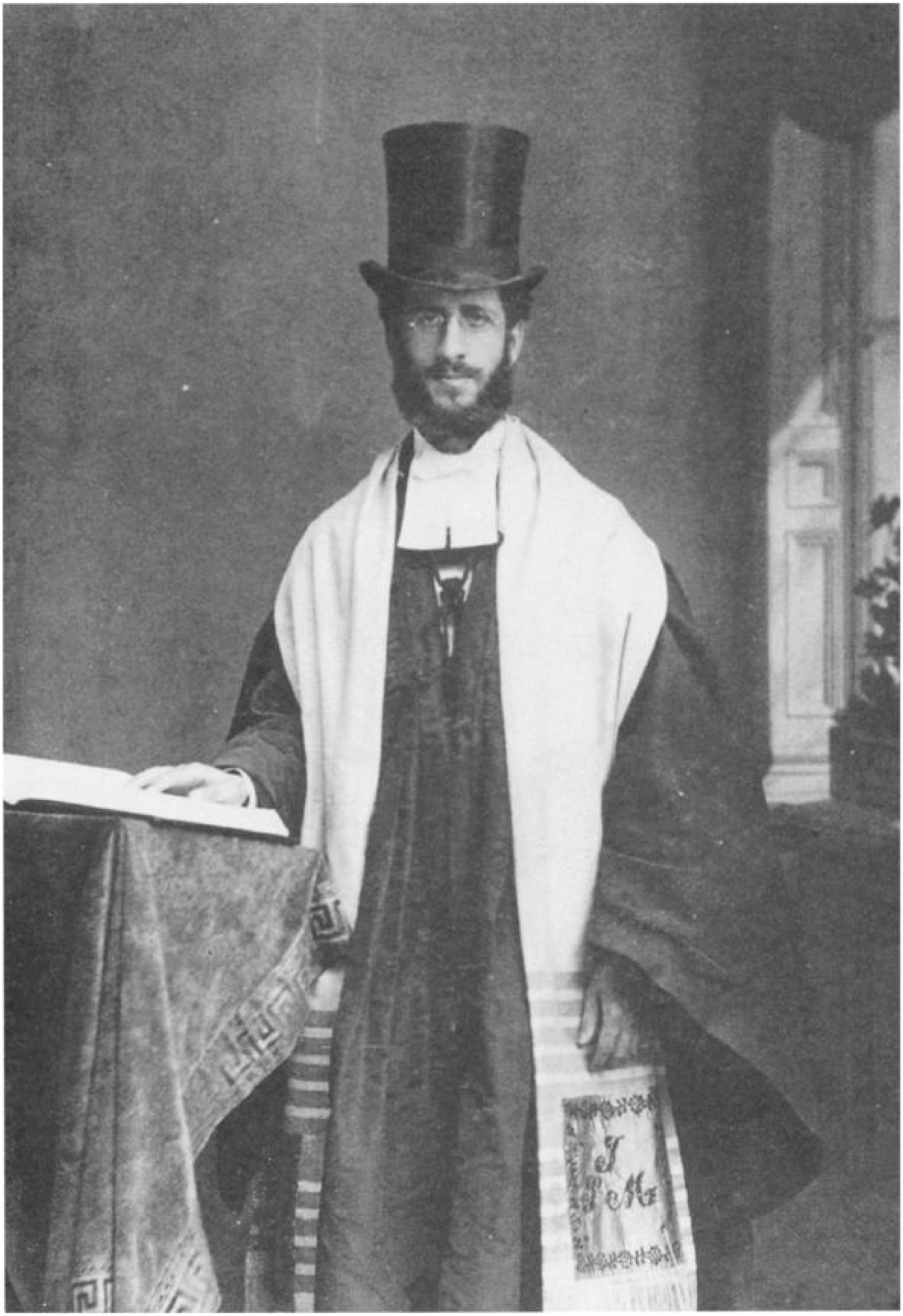
Members of the Richmond Jewish community lived throughout the city, but many, if not most, of them lived above and behind the stores where they worked—on Main, Broad, and Franklin. The Milhisers lived at and operated a dry goods store on Broad between Fifth and Sixth. Isaac Rosenheim sold shoes and lived at 23 West Main. Mrs. C. Abram operated her grocery store on Broad near Jefferson. A. Bodecker & Company sold drugs, medicines, and spices at 10 Main Street. F. Cohen ran a "lager beer saloon" on Seventeenth Street between Main and Franklin. Jacob A. Levy's store was at 15 West Main, as was his residence. The Lichtenstein's clothing store and home was on Franklin between Seventeenth and Eighteenth. The "Old Market" on Seventeenth Street was home to German and Jewish merchants. One "might be at a loss," Samuel Mordecai wrote, "to know whether German or English is the language of the country."[26]

There were few great Jewish merchants in Richmond in 1860. Indeed, the 1860 city directory lists few Jewish names in its section showing "the best in their respective business." The same directory shows that the clothing and retail trade was dominated by small Jewish establishments and that half of the dry goods stores were owned by Jewish Richmonders. There were few doctors, lawyers, or professionals.

Beth Shalome, then still known as the Portuguese synagogue, although there were few Sephardic members, was located on Mayo Street near the state capitol. Beth Ahabah, the German synagogue, was on Eleventh between Clay and Marshall, only one block from Jefferson Davis's residence.

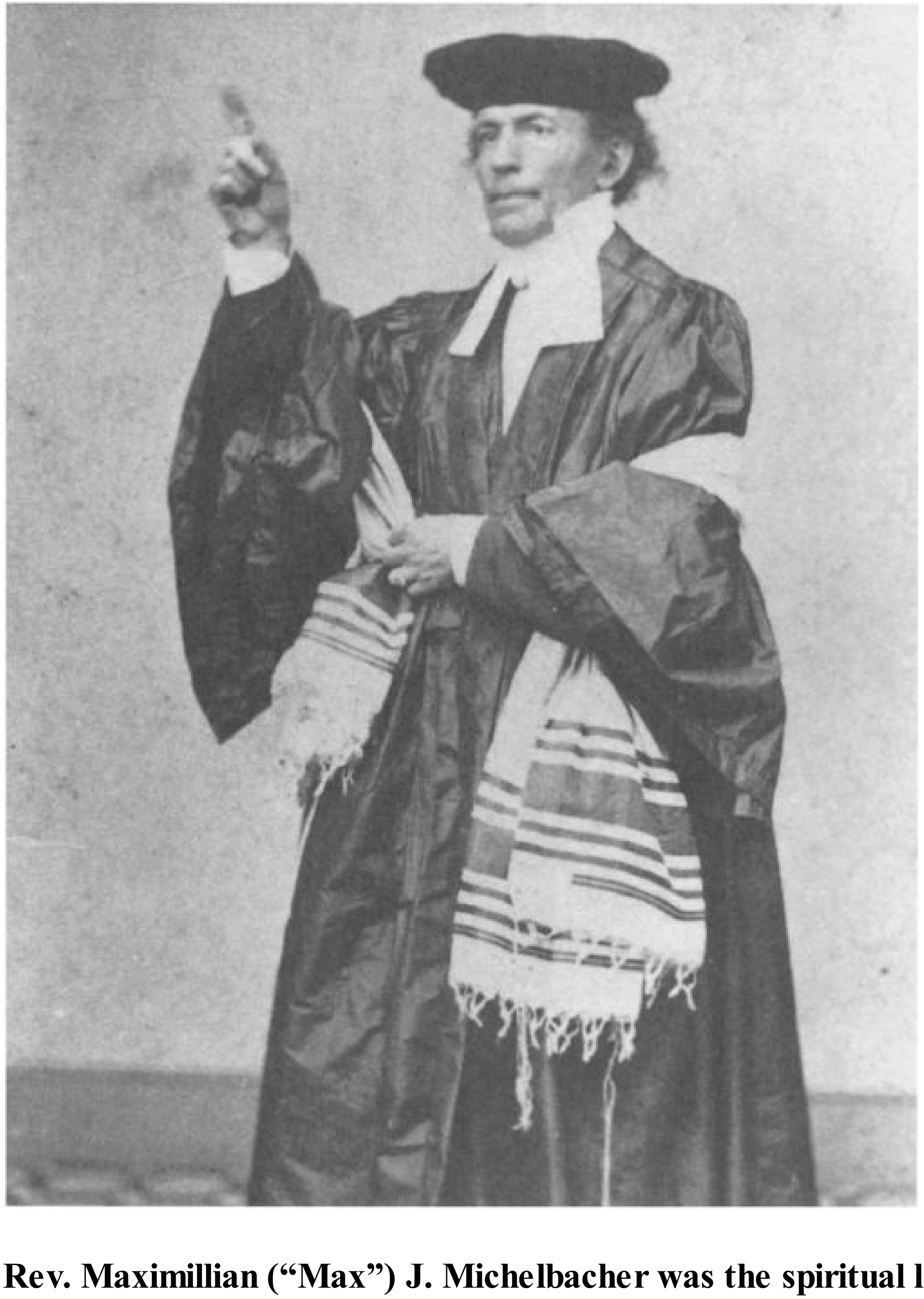
The Richmond rabbis, who referred to themselves as “reverend” and “minister,” were ardent Confederates. George Jacobs, in the early 1860s, was a tall, handsome, outgoing young man in his late twenties. Born in Jamaica and speaking with a British accent, he was a popular figure in Richmond, active in the Masons as well as Jewish fraternal organizations. Married to Adeline Hyneman Levy, Jacobs had two brothers-in-law in combat and was committed to serving the cause which now enveloped the Levy and Jacobs families, as well as the entire Richmond Jewish community. Jacobs became the eloquent champion of Richmond’s old Jewish families. Max Michelbacher ministered to the needs of Richmond’s large German Jewish population. Rabbi of Beth Ahabah, he was a tireless activist on behalf of the Jewish community and the Jewish boys serving in the Confederate army in the Richmond area. His “Prayer for the C.S. Soldier” was presumably printed by Beth Ahabah and distributed to Jewish Confederate soldiers.

Michelbacher worked throughout the war to obtain furloughs for the Jewish soldiers in the Richmond area, especially during Jewish holidays. He first wrote to Robert E. Lee on August 23, 1861, seeking furloughs for the High Holidays in September. The letter, addressed to “His Excellency R. E. Lee General of CSA,” reflects Reverend Michelbachers continuing struggle to learn the English language: “Excuse me that I intrude on you but the case is important to a class of citizens, being Israelites, who take the greatest interest in the welfare of this confederacy…. These ten days from the 5th to the 14th of September (both days inclusive) are the 10 days of Penitence & Prayer, the most sublime of the höhest days of the year.”[27]



Rev. George Jacobs was rabbi at Beth Shalome, Richmond's "Portuguese Synagogue" during the Civil War. Although a native of Jamaica, Jacobs

embraced the Confederate cause. He had the sad duty of officiating at the funeral of his own young brother-in-law, Isaac Levy. The top hat was traditional for Sephardic rabbis of the period and was worn during the service, as Orthodox Jews cover their heads in synagogue. (Courtesy of the Beth Ahabah Museum and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.)



Rev. Maximillian ("Max") J. Michelbacher was the spiritual leader of Beth Ahabah, Richmond's "German Synagogue" during the Civil War. Although not an ordained rabbi, he was a vigorous, effective leader of Richmond Jewry, supporting the Confederate effort wholeheartedly and

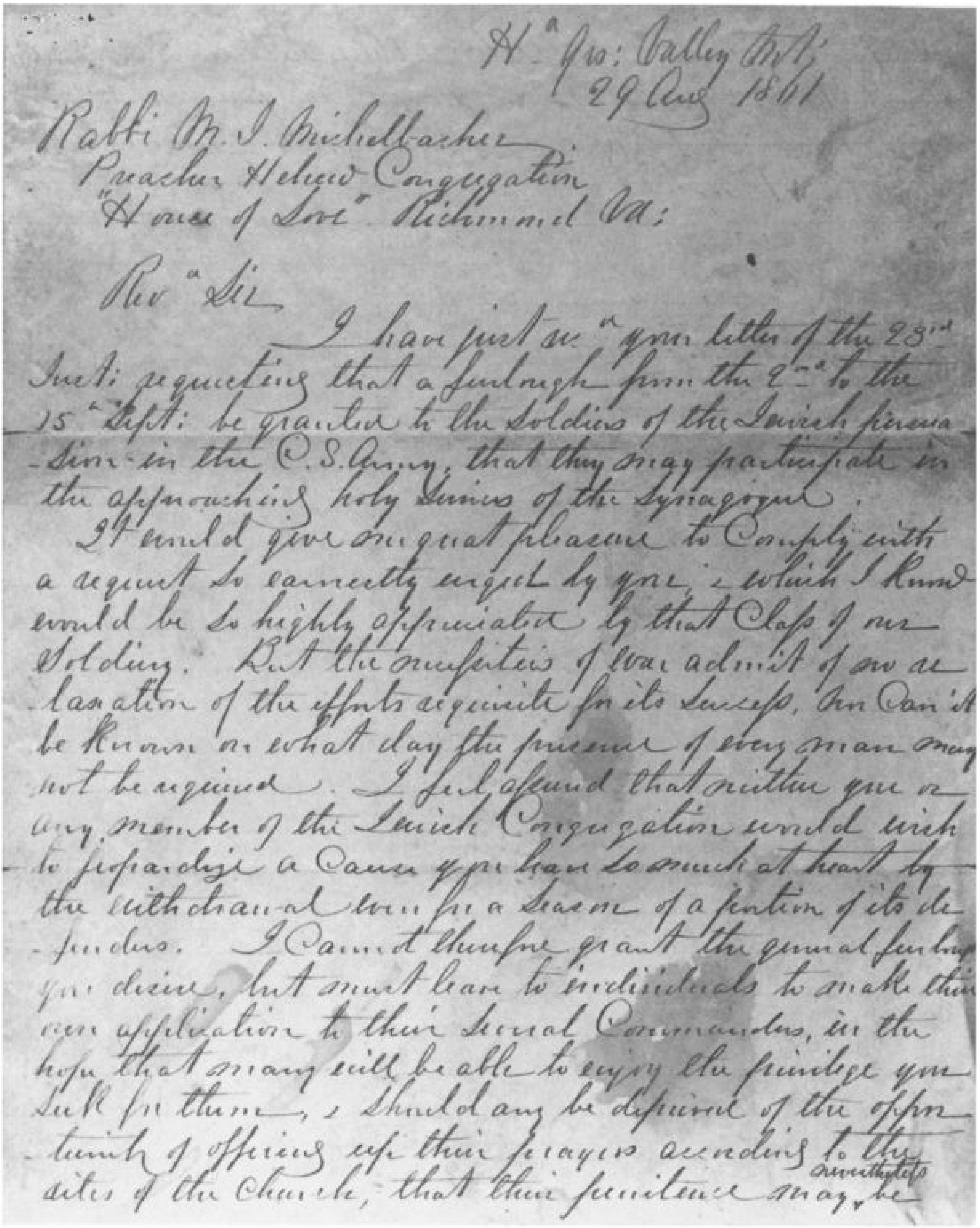
ministering to suffering Jewish soldiers from all over the South. (Courtesy of Beth Ahabah Museum and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.)

Lee, then a general in the Confederate army, replied to Michelbacher's request in a courteous letter on August 29. "It would give me great pleasure to comply with a request so earnestly urged by you, & which I know would be so highly appreciated by that class of our soldiers," Lee wrote the rabbi. "But the necessities of war admit of no relaxation of the efforts requisite for its success." Lee continued, "I feel assured that neither you or any member of the Jewish congregation would wish to jeopardize a cause you have so much at heart by the withdrawal even for a season of a portion of its defenders."[28] In March 1863 he wrote General Lee concerning Passover. Lee agreed to comply with the rabbi's requests "as far as the public interest will permit," but he thought it "more than probable that the army will be engaged in active operations, when, of course, no one would wish to be absent from the ranks." The Battle of Chancellorsville occurred a month later in May 1863.[29]

In September 1864 Reverend Michelbacher once again wrote Robert E. Lee about furloughs for the High Holidays to allow the boys to "repair to Richmond to observe the holy days appointed by the Jewish religion." Lee patiently explained that he could not grant a general furlough to one class of soldiers, but that he would do "all in my power to facilitate the observance of the duties of their religion by the Israelites in the army and will allow them every indulgence consistent with safety and discipline."[30] Lee was a deeply committed Christian and tolerant of the religious beliefs of others. On one occasion, an application of a Jewish soldier for permission to attend synagogue was denied and endorsed by his captain: "Disapproved. If such applications were granted, the whole army would turn Jews or shaking Quakers." Lee wrote out the order: "Approved and respectfully returned to Captain _____ with the advice that he should always respect the religious views and feelings of others."[31]

Jewish families in Richmond lived in constant dread of receiving news of the death of a family member. Herman J. Myers, Company G, 1st Virginia Cavalry, a cavalryman from Richmond, was wounded near Winchester, Virginia, and left for dead. According to Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, "he was carried to the residence of a fine old Virginia family nearby. There the daughter of the house nursed him back to health and strength." His family had given him up for dead and had sat *shiva*—that is, observed the seven traditional days of mourning. When Myers recovered, he set out for his home in Richmond. Stopping at a hotel in Staunton on the way, he was unable to sleep and woke up early. He went down to the office, where he happened upon his cousin, who had been sent by the family to recover the body. "The 'remains' had indeed been recovered, but in a very unusual manner," the authors concluded. Only the government could use the telegraph lines, so there was no way to inform the family, “all of whom in deep black were down at the depot [in Richmond] to meet the body when the train arrived.”[32]

Like Jewish Virginians, Charleston Jewry had rejoiced at the bombardment of Fort Sumter, but the Union naval blockade disrupted the port and worried Charlestonians. Blockade-running became big business, and Jewish merchants joined their Christian colleagues in purchasing goods in this new wartime business environment. Simon Fass, for example, purchased goods from blockade-runners. The Fass children remembered stories of their young mother: “She was at a sale carried on, when a ship would ‘smuggle in’ or ‘run the blockade’ during the war and the folk would go to the wharf to get delicacies that the South did not have during that time.”[33]



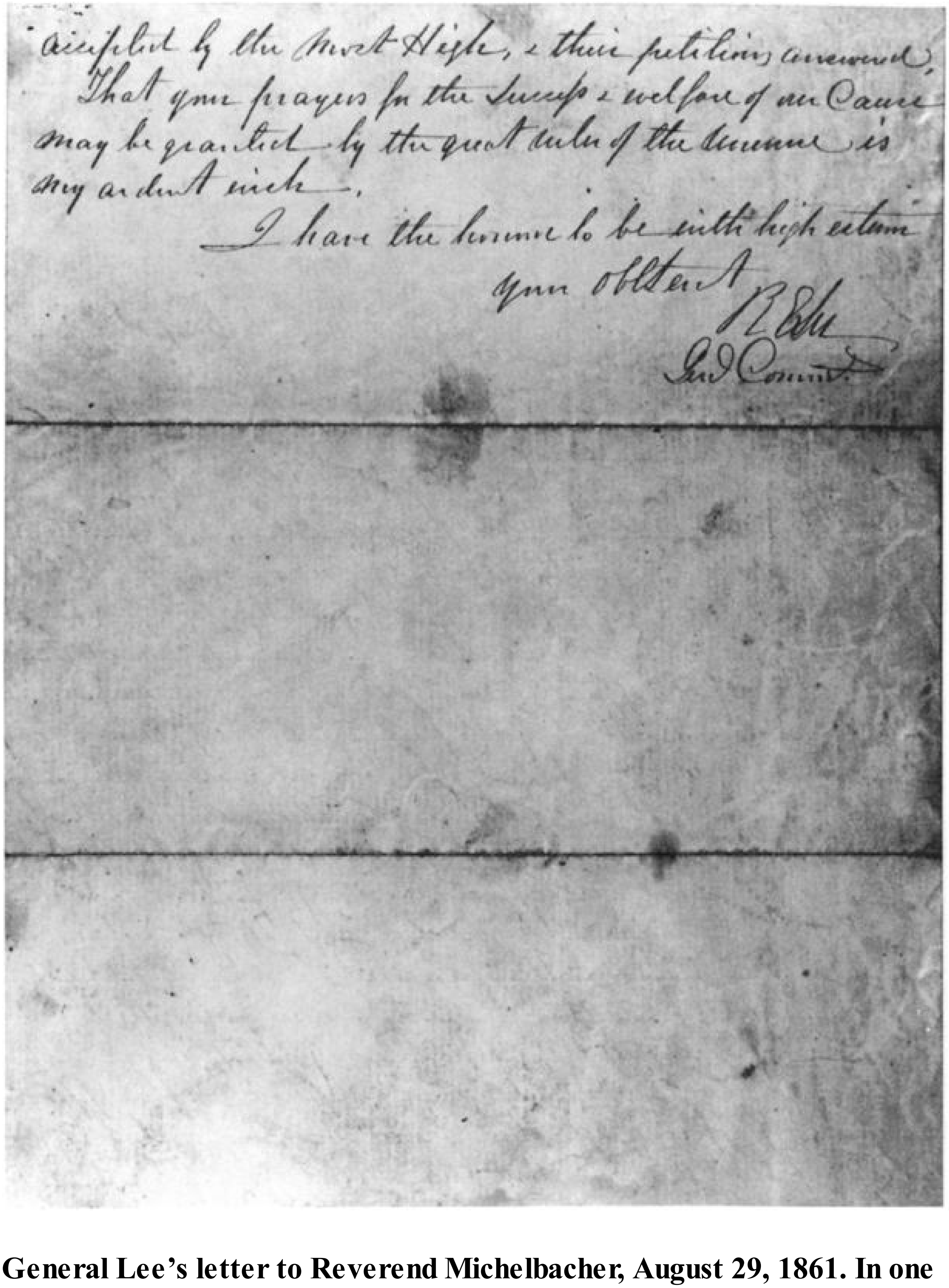
Hd Qrs: Valley Mt:
29 Aug 1861

Rabbi M. J. Michelbacher
Preacher Hebrew Congregation
"House of Love" Richmond Va:

Revd Sir

I have just recd your letter of the 23rd Inst: requesting that a furlough from the 2nd to the 15th Sept: be granted to the soldiers of the Jewish persuasion in the C. S. Army, that they may participate in the approaching holy services of the synagogue.

It would give me great pleasure to comply with a request so earnestly urged by you, & which I know would be so highly appreciated by that class of our soldiers. But the necessities of war admit of no relaxation of the efforts requisite for its success, nor can it be known on what day the presence of every man may not be required. I feel assured that neither you or any member of the Jewish Congregation would wish to jeopardize a cause you have so much at heart by the withdrawal even for a season of a portion of its defenders. I cannot therefore grant the general furlough you desire, but must leave to individuals to make their own application to their several commanders, in the hope that many will be able to enjoy the privilege you seek for them, & should any be deprived of the opportunity of offering up their prayers according to the rites of the Church, that their penitence may nevertheless be

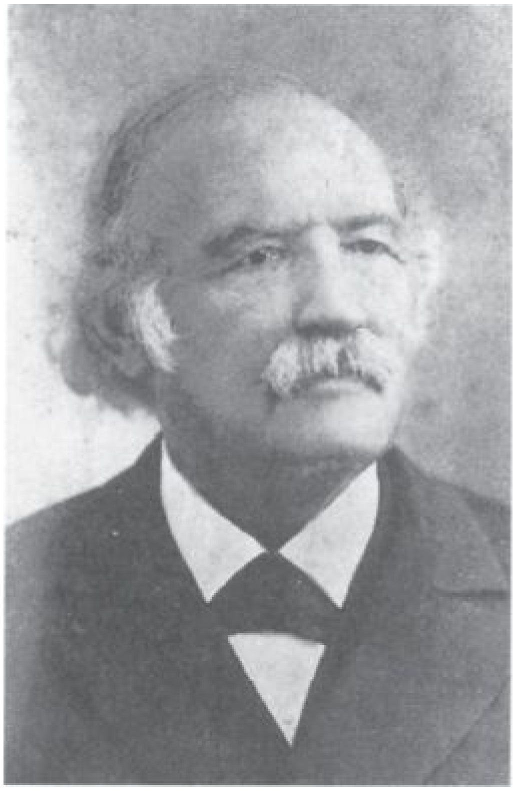


accepted by the Most High, & their petitions answered.
That your prayers for the success & welfare of our Cause
may be granted by the great ruler of the universe is
my ardent wish.

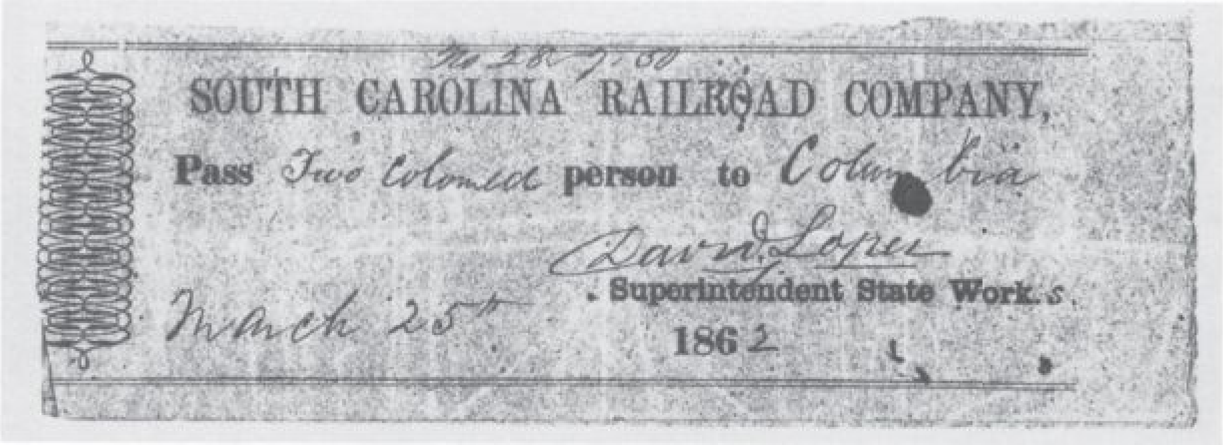
I have the honour to be with high esteem
your obt servt
R E Lee
Genl Comdg

General Lee's letter to Reverend Michelbacher, August 29, 1861. In one of his many letters to Rev. Maximillian Michelbacher, General Lee expressed his respect for "the soldiers of the Jewish persuasion in the C. S. Army," but felt he could not grant a general furlough for the High Holidays because it might "jeopardize a cause you have so much at

heart.” (Courtesy of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.)



David Lopez of Charleston was a member of Beth Elohim, the builder of Institute Hall, where the South Carolina Ordinance of Secession was signed, and the builder of the Confederate torpedo boats called the “Davids,” which were designed to do battle with the Union “Goliaths.” (Author’s collection.)



No [illegible]

SOUTH CAROLINA RAILROAD COMPANY,

Pass Two Colored person to Columbia

David Lopez

Superintendent State Works

March 25th

1862

This railroad pass, allowing “two colored persons” to travel to Columbia during the war, was signed by David Lopez as superintendent of the state

works. (Courtesy of American Jewish Historical Society, Waltham, Massachusetts, and New York City.)

The Union navy assault and the fall of Port Royal near Beaufort were of great concern to the people of Charleston, who knew that the Union army would show their city no mercy. To make matters worse, a terrible fire swept the city in December 1861, destroying much of the business and retail district. Fortunately, Beth Elohim and Shearith Israel were just north of the burned-out areas and were not damaged. By the summer of 1862, many Charlestonians had left the city for safer climes. The Middleton girls went to their summer home in Flat Rock, North Carolina; Emma Holmes moved to Sumter; and the Smythes inland. The wives and children, and in some cases the elderly men of prominent families, left for the safety of inland towns like Sumter and Columbia. Martial law was declared in order to police a city flooded with refugees, undisciplined Confederate soldiers, and restless slaves. Half of the free black population left also. Beth Elohim's trustees did not meet from 1862 to 1865.[34]

The Union army and navy combined to lay siege to Charleston in April 1863. Much of the civilian population had left the city before the siege began. Once the huge Union guns began the terrible bombardment of the city and its civilian population, most of the residents south of Calhoun Street left their homes. This included much of Charleston Jewry because many lived in and near the retail district on King Street and near their synagogues, Beth Elohim on Hasell Street and Shearith Israel on Wentworth Street. Much of the city's business stopped. The former retail district and exclusive residential area south of Broad Street became a ghost town, known to locals as the "Shell District," on account of the Federal shelling. Most churches, homes, and businesses were closed and shuttered. A rare funeral, conducted at St. Mary's Catholic Church across the street from Beth Elohim, was interrupted by an exploding shell from Union cannons. Beth Elohim was closed, boarded up, and bombarded. Federal shells damaged its roof. The Hebrew Orphan House on Broad Street also closed down.[35]

Berith Shalome apparently remained open, possibly because of its location away from the shelling. It had a functioning board in 1863. Many of its members, including Pincus Pinkussohn, Lippman Rich, Jacob Volaske, and Simon D. Jacobowsky, served in the Confederate army or local militia.[36] Many of the churches sent their valuables to Columbia. Beth Elohim sent its Torah scrolls, the controversial organ, and its magnificent chandelier.[37] Eleanor Cohen, Dr. Philip Melvin Cohen's young daughter and a direct descendent of the first Moises, recalled "how determined the enemy were to possess dear old Charleston, how they shelled the city and we were hurried away, how my home city and forts held out." Eleanor lost her journal of these events, "but thank God," she wrote in 1865, "it lives in my heart and in the heart of every fine southern man, woman, and child."[38] Like many Charlestonians, the Cohens left Charleston for the safety of Columbia. The family remained until the capital city burned in February 1865.

Life, of course, went on, even in Charleston. Before the war, Henry Timrod, a well-known Charleston poet, was obsessed with the beautiful and witty society belle, Rachel Lyons.[39] He and Rachel developed a close relationship that was somewhat flirtatious. Timrod confided in Rachel about his personal life, enjoyed her letters, and craved her compliments about his poetry. He was frustrated with both wartime Charleston and Columbia. "Both places, to be sure, are dull enough," he wrote Rachel in September 1861, "but Columbia, being little more than a country town, is at least *legitimately* so," while Charleston suffered from "its miserable metropolitan pretensions."[40] Timrod was nervous about his close relationship with a Jewish woman. His letters to Rachel contain numerous references to the Old Testament ("my spirit has become a Dead Sea into which no Jordan flows").[41] He admitted that Rachel "is rapidly conquering my old prejudices against the Hebrew."[42] Timrod, always conscious of Rachel's Jewishness, wrote a poem about her in late 1861. It was originally entitled "Rachel," and later given the title "La Belle Juive" (The Beautiful Jewess) and was published in the *Charleston Daily Courier* on January 23, 1862, and in other Southern newspapers.[43] It reads, in part:

Is it because your sable hair

Is folded o'er brows that wear

At times a too imperial air;

Or is it that the thoughts which rise

In those dark orbs, do seek disguise

Beneath the lids of Eastern eyes;

Or may it be because your soul

Looks out in features that control

The Fancy, howso'er it stroll;

That choose whatever pose or place

May chance to please, in you I trace

The noblest women of your race?

By the standards of the time it was not inappropriate for a poet to publish such a poem about an aristocratic Jewish woman, and Jewish Southerners, aware of their distinctiveness in a predominantly Christian culture, took no offense.

Timrod's health, both emotional and physical, was failing him by the fall of 1863. He could not summon up the courage to meet Rachel in Charleston while she was there on a visit in September. "I did not call upon you because I felt sure that it would be impossible for me to meet you except in the midst of the circle which you always draw around you. Once, I heard of your being in St. Michael's steeple," he admitted, but he "was not daring (God forgive me!) enough to hazard an intrusion." (During the war, the young people of Charleston would walk up the steps in the steeple of St. Michael's Church to get a look at the Union fleet and the Union army bombarding the city from the islands across the Ashley River.)[44]

Savannah's Jewish community struggled to survive. "All talk was of *war*," Rebecca Solomons Alexander of Savannah recalled years later. "It was Saturday and my nurse was putting the finishing touches to my toilet for Synagogue." When Rebecca's cousin Nellie arrived, she called to her, "Nellie, the war has begun." To which Nellie replied, "Then I am going straight back home." Rebecca recalled, "She *flew* and I felt as if war must be just around the corner." But her mother reassured her and "together she and I went to pray 'that the South would win.'"[45] Union Adm. Samuel F. Dupont vowed that he would "cork up Savannah like a bottle," and the Union army and navy did. Fort Pulaski, which guarded the mouth of the Savannah River, was captured on April 11, 1862. While the city itself was not captured until Sherman's march in December 1864, it ceased functioning as a port. Business came to a standstill. Families left. "Our commerce is perfectly prostrated," one merchant wrote. "A strange, mysterious, weird quietude reigns perpetually." A visitor wrote, "Stagnation and paralysis obstruct the channels … the whole town—every thing—seems to have halted."[46]

Abraham Alexander Solomons, his wife, Cecilia, and their children lived near Pulaski Square when the war began. Solomons was in the drug business with his younger brother Joseph, and his company, A. A. Solomons & Co., had been in business since 1845. When Fort Pulaski fell, little Rebecca Solomons recalled that it "meant the fall of Savannah. So all who could, left the city, our family amongst the refugees." The Solomons refugeed to Columbus, where Mrs. Solomons's sister Sarah Alexander and her brothers Isaac and Ezra Moses lived.[47] Joseph volunteered for Company C (Republican Blues), 1st (Olmstead's) Georgia. As an apothecary, he was appointed acting assistant surgeon.[48]

Mikve Israel continued to function. It remained Orthodox and, despite the large majority of Germans, it followed the Sephardic *Minhag*.[49] Wartime was not the best time for this small Jewish community to engage in its own civil war, but Rabbi Jacob Rosenfeld, who had served at Shearith Israel in Charleston (founded by Beth Elohim dissenters to return to orthodoxy), seceded from Mikve Israel and founded a new Ashkenazic congregation. This was preceded by a number of disagreements with the *adjunta*. When the rabbi requested a salary increase in August 1862 in the midst of the Union blockade, his timing could hardly have been worse. The adjunta told him he could earn more by instituting a Hebrew school. They quarreled over the activities of the school. The *shochet*, Mr. Zechariah, the rabbi, said, left the city and failed to provide kosher meat. The rabbi resigned, and the board locked him out of the synagogue. Rosenfeld then founded B'nai B'rith Jacob. Services were conducted during the war years by lay readers at Mikve Israel. B'nai B'rith Jacob met at Armory Hall.[50]

Jewish residents of Savannah lived and worked throughout the city, but most, according to Mark I. Greenberg, lived in an area stretching sixteen blocks from Bryan to Jones Streets and nine blocks from West Broad (now M. L. King Boulevard) to Abercorn. German immigrants lived along Bryan, Congress, and Broughton in the midst of shops and businesses. Elias Cohen, for example, lived at 150 Broughton; his store was next to his house. Third- and fourth-generation Savannah Jews moved south of the commercial district to Elbert, Jackson, and Brown wards. Many lived along Liberty Street between Drayton and Jefferson. There lived Solomon Cohen, Samuel Yates Levy, and Abraham Minis. Affluent Germans Abraham Einstein, Joseph Sichels, and Samuel H. Eckman lived nearby.[51] The Solomon Cohen home still stands at Barnard and Liberty.[52] Many Jewish residents of Savannah lived within walking distance of Mikve Israel, near Liberty and Whitaker. This Jewish elite was well connected with and married into the city's Christian elite. Jacob Florence Minis, for example, married Phoebe Pember's friend, Louisa Porter Gilmer, whose father, Maj. Gen. Jeremy F. Gilmer, served as chief of the bureau engineers of the Confederacy and for a time as second in command of the Department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. Solomon Cohen's daughter Miriam married James Troup Dent, a descendant of a governor of Georgia.[53] Octavus Cohen and his family lived on Lafayette Square (Macon and Abercorn).[54] His office was at 82 Bay Street near the riverfront.

The home of the Minis family in Savannah. Just before the war, Abraham Minis, who was named for his great-grandfather, one of the first settlers of Savannah, was a leading merchant, insurance agent and cotton factor, and an alderman in Savannah. He served as acting mayor in 1860. The Minis family had known Robert E. Lee since his service as an army engineer in the 1830s. “The family of Isaac Minis,” Douglass Southall Freeman wrote in *R. E. Lee*, “gave him cordial welcome, made the more delightful by the presence of two daughters, Sarah and Philipa.” Lee gave Sarah pen-and-ink drawings of an alligator and a terrapin he had made on Cockspur Island when he was building Fort Pulaksi. The Minises were happy to entertain Lee again when he arrived in Savannah to arrange for its defense early in the war. (Author’s collection. Photograph by Michael Levkoff.)

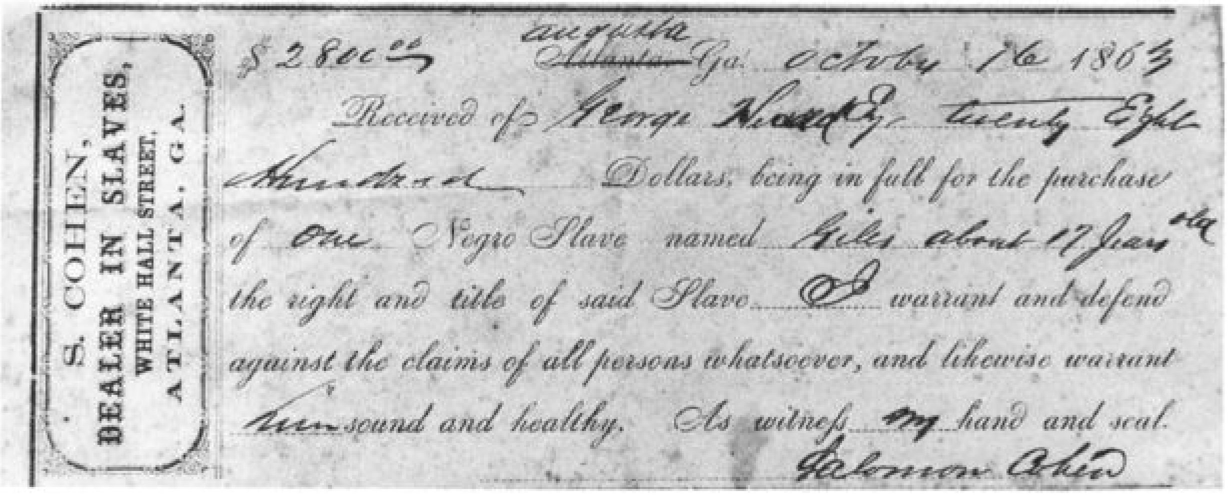
The majority of Savannah’s Jewish population, like Charleston’s, was native-born. Mark Greenberg estimates that 57.4 percent was born in the South. But those born in Germany accounted for 32.5 percent. Many, like the Lippmans, came from Bavaria. Joseph Lippman, born in Reichmandorf, came to America in 1837, married Babette Eckman in Philadelphia, and moved to Savannah in 1842. He helped organize a German military company and was a leader in the local secession assembly.[55]

An 1856 wedding photograph of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Haiman of Columbus, Georgia. (From the collection of Louis Schmier, Valdosta, Georgia.)

Some families stayed on during the war. Some who left, returned. Rebecca Solomons recalled the funerals of both Gen. Francis Bartow after Bull Run and the young Habersham brothers killed within an hour on the same day in the Battle of Atlanta. Mrs. Solomons took “such delicacies as could be had” to the sick soldiers at the Wayside Home, a Confederate hospital. The Solomons women wore calico and homespun dresses rather than the fine silk dresses Mrs. Solomons had brought back from New York just before the war began. Mr. Solomons traveled to Wilmington to purchase goods from blockade-runners and brought back “pieces of dress goods and shoes of all sizes so that the whole family, aunts and cousins, were dressed alike.” Rebecca also recalled an exchange of prisoners “and everyone went out to the Park Extension and carried food to the men, so many sick and hungry.” The officers were welcomed into private homes, including the home of the Solomonses. Rebecca’s cousins Julius and Jacob Clarence were stationed nearby, as was her uncle Joseph M. Solomons for a time.[56]

Jewish Savannahians saw many of their own fight and die for the Confederacy. Mrs. Solomon Cohen lived to see thirty-two of her descendants enlist in the armed forces of the Confederacy. One of them was Col. Abraham C. Myers, the quartermaster general.[57] Gratz Cohen, the only son of Solomon Cohen, was killed at the Battle of Bentonville and was buried at Laurel Grove Cemetery in Savannah.[58]

There were approximately forty Jewish families in Augusta, Georgia, during the war and a small community in Columbus. Jewish Georgians were involved in the war effort and in all manner of trade. Louis and Elias Haiman had emigrated from Prussia and settled in Columbus in the 1830s. Their father owned a hardware store and, when war was declared, the Haimans began manufacturing swords. Soon, they purchased the Muscogee Ironworks. Elias traveled to Europe to buy more raw material when supplies ran out. Eventually, the Haimans produced saddles, bayonets, tin cups, and mess articles.[59] Simon Rothschild, who began as a peddler, manufactured army uniforms in Columbus. He supplied 4, 000 uniforms to the Confederate army and 1,500 to the Georgia militia.[60] Henry Solomon of Augusta wrote his to brother in June 1864 that blockade-running "has been successful lately. Nine vessels arrived in one week. Business has been very dull here since November. Merchants are almost bare of goods. Very few have made or making expenses since Christmas. Confederate money buys very little of anything." Solomon blamed the economic problems on the government. "Our financial affairs," he told his brother, "are ruinously managed." He then suggested "a Yid or good merchant in the Treasury Bureau."[61] But Solomon was still optimistic that the war could be won. "'Uncle Bob,' as General Lee is called," he wrote, "becomes a greater General every day. He has the entire confidence of the people." Solomon was proud of Beauregard's "severe whipping" of Benjamin F. Butler during the Bermuda Hundred Campaign and hoped that General Johnston could stop General Sherman's march. Nevertheless Solomon believed the South "will be *macholu* [bankrupt] for many years."[62]



S. COHEN,
DEALER IN SLAVES,
WHITE HALL STREET,
ATLANTA, GA.

$2800 00 augusta ~~Atlanta~~ Ga. October 16 1863

Received of George Heard Esq. twenty Eight Hundred Dollars, being in full for the purchase of One Negro Slave named Giles about 17 years old the right and title of said Slave I warrant and defend against the claims of all persons whatsoever, and likewise warrant him sound and healthy. As witness my hand and seal.

Solomon Cohen

“S. Cohen, Dealer in Slaves, White Hall Street, Atlanta, Ga.” This title or invoice for the sale of “one Negro Slave” was signed by Solomon Cohen on October 16, 1863, in Augusta, Georgia. (Courtesy of Paul Blatner, Savannah, Georgia. Photograph by Michael Levkoff.)

The small Augusta Jewish community suffered grievous losses. At least four Jewish men from the city were killed. In April 1862, when Lt. J. Julius Jacobus, a promising young attorney, was killed at Shiloh, the Richmond County Bar placed in its minutes a lengthy resolution praising Jacobus’s “fine character, popular manners, energy and fine intellectual endowments.” The resolution praised “his useful and exemplary life and glorious death.” The members resolved “that we will all wear the usual badges of mourning for thirty days.” The court adjourned for two days.[63]

Canal Street, New Orleans, in the Civil War era. This street was home to many Jewish businesses. (Courtesy of the Louisiana State Museum.)

As the war progressed and the blockade tightened, the Jewish citizens of New Orleans felt the impact of shortages and the anxiety of war. “New Orleanians,” Chester G. Hearn wrote, “felt the squeeze on their accustomed freedom, as well as on their wallets and stomachs, and with each passing month they wondered when something would be done to drive off the Union blockade."[64] Rising prices and scarcity of money greatly affected the German immigrants. This was true of the Jews as well. "Yet, the business of the city," John Nau concluded, "was going in its normal way, to judge from the surface."[65] "Things are daily increasing in price," Clara Solomon wrote in her diary. "Soap which formerly was 20 cts. a bar, is now $1.00! Coffee $1. per pound, and Ma has notified us we must soon say 'good bye' to it. She tried the experiment of mixing it with rye, but we were dissatisfied with it… What are we coming to? The Blockade must be raised." Clara wondered how, if the war continued and the young men went off to fight, "can we have any beaus!"[66]

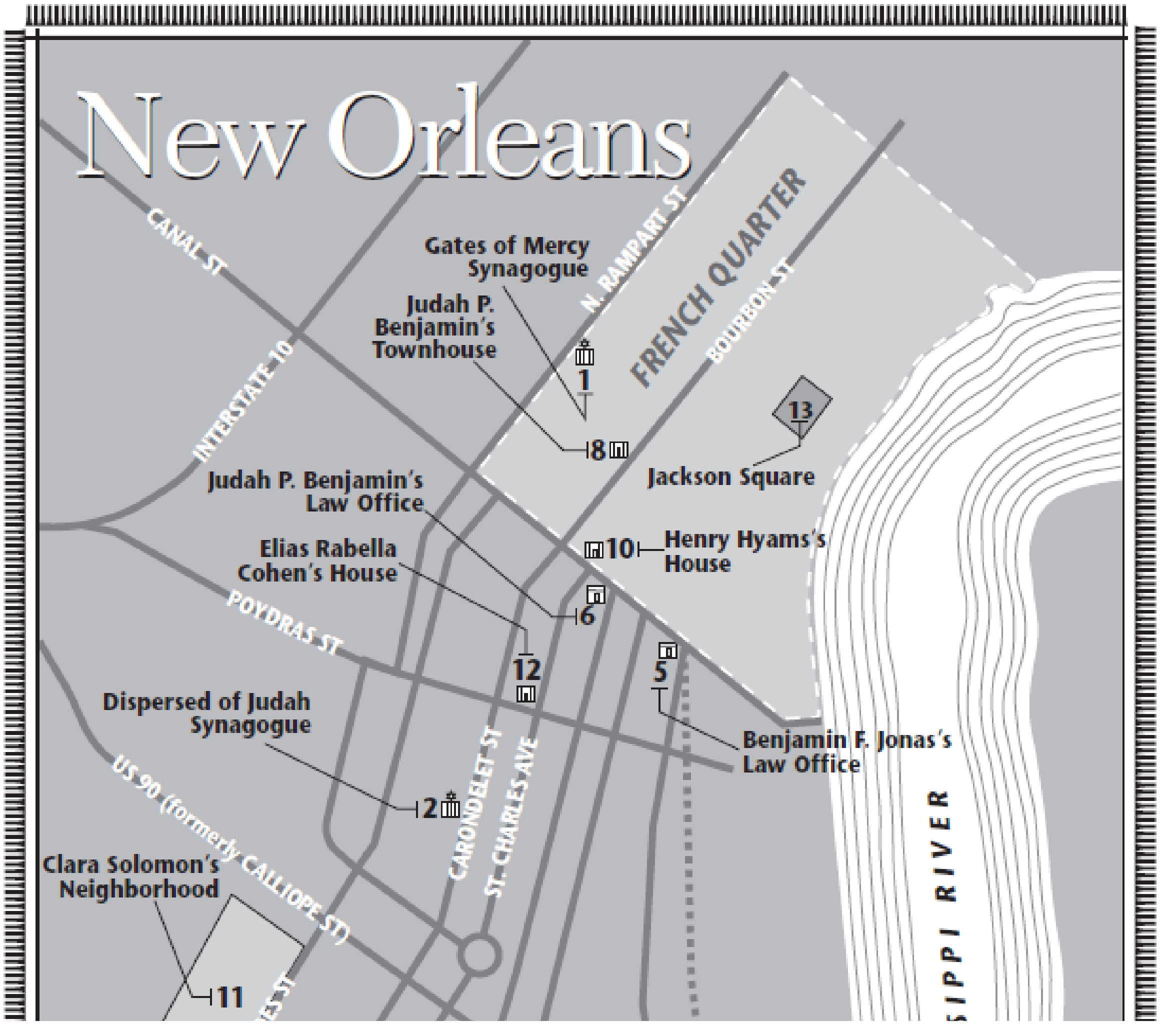
But these inconveniences did not dampen her enthusiasm for the cause. "Today one year ago," Clara wrote on November 6, 1861, "Abe Lincoln was elected President of the United States. How many changes since then have transpired. How much has been accomplished." Some things did not change. Clara and her family continued to "promenade" up Canal Street after synagogue services on Carondelet Street on Saturday, and shop and have lunch at Blineau's restaurant. On Saturday, November 16, 1861, Clara and her friends and family were among the thousands of New Orleanians who watched a "grand review" of the local troops. Clara was impressed with the number of soldiers—more than ten thousand, she recalled—to "keep the invader" from the soil of Louisiana. And she was proud to see her "noble Cousin" Samuel Myers of Company F, 4th Louisiana "at the head of his command, and screaming at the height of his voice, 'Forward March'!! It was a splendid turnout. How I would like to see them all 'pitch' into the Yankees and give them a sound thrashing." Many citizens visited Camp Benjamin, named for Judah P. Benjamin, and enjoyed picnicking there.[67]

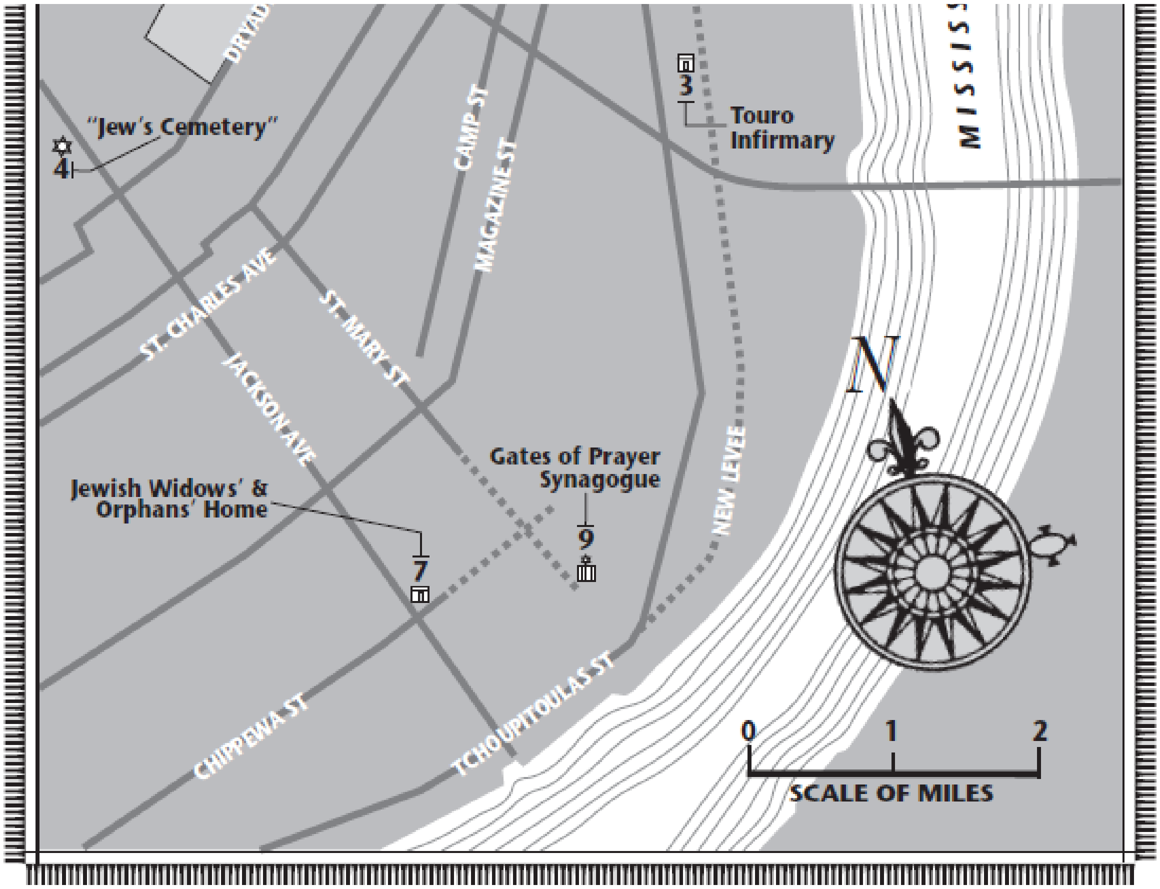
New Orleans's four congregations—Gates of Mercy, the old German synagogue on Rampart Street in the French Quarter; Dispersed of Judah, the Portuguese or Sephardic synagogue on Carondelet; Gates of Prayer, the new German synagogue in Lafayette City; and Temime Derech, the Polish congregation on Carondelet Street farther uptown—continued to hold services and minister to the needs of New Orleans Jewry during the war. The rabbis of the Crescent City all supported the Confederate cause. Even the Reverend Dr. Bernard Illowy, who later cooperated with the occupation army, said in the sixth anniversary address of the Association for the Relief of Jewish Widows and Orphans: "Liberty, fraternity and equality are the precious acquisitions of this day, and the fundamental principles of our glorious Confederacy, under whose banner every one will find protection," be they a Polander, Bavarian, Frenchman, or Hungarian.[68]

The war also brought death and grief to New Orleans Jewry. J. B. Joseph, a friend of Clara Solomon, was killed at Shiloh. A native of South Carolina, he had moved to New

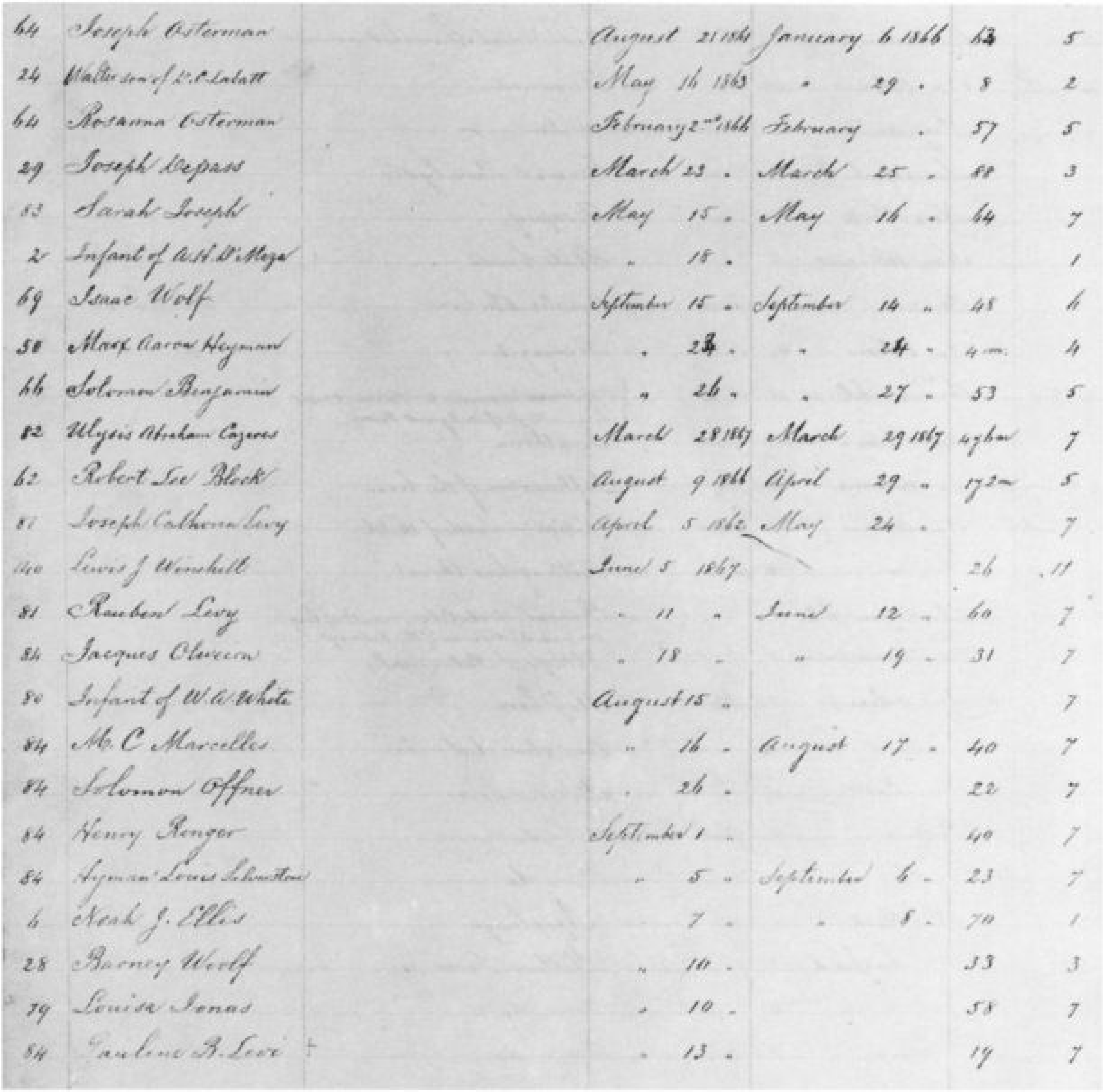
Orleans with his family six years earlier. Rabbi Gutheim “spoke quite pathetically of the deaths of our two members, & all shed the pitying tear,” Clara wrote in her diary. “My feelings were more touched,” she continued, “seeing Mr. J. [Joseph], an old man, shedding such tears of bitterness, so completely bowed down with grief.” Lt. Joseph Calhoun Levy of the 3d Louisiana, Eugene Henry Levy’s brother, was also killed in action at Shiloh. Clara noted in her diary that “his grief-stricken parents are inconsolable.”[69]

The Solomon family suffered along with their friends and relatives. Clara grieved in her diary for the loss of Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, who was also killed at Shiloh. Many went to view the funeral procession for General Johnston, which passed through Clara’s neighborhood, but Clara could not bring herself to attend. “As the sound of the sad music & muffled drums fell upon my ear, prayers for the future happiness of the great patriot, he who had died for us, ascended to the throne of the Most High.”[70] But she could not avoid grief over the deaths of young Levy and Joseph, members of her congregation. Shiloh was the bloodiest day in American history to that date. It was the first great carnage of the war, “the devil’s own day,” according to General Sherman. But the death and destruction would be far surpassed as the war continued.[71]

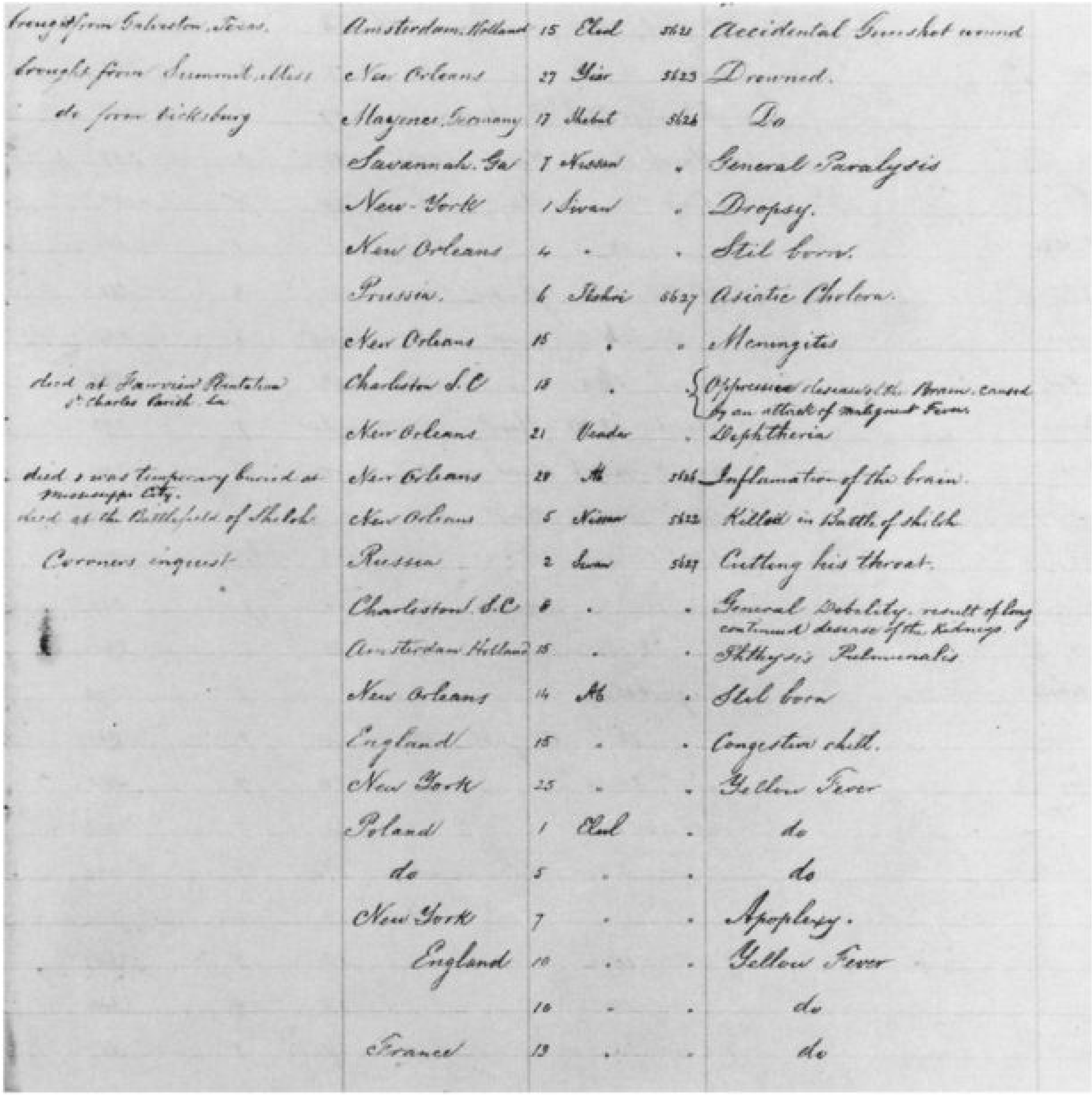

New Orleans
CANAL ST
INTERSTATE 10
Gates of Mercy Synagogue
N. RAMPART ST
FRENCH QUARTER
BOURBON ST
Judah P. Benjamin's Townhouse
1
13
8
Jackson Square
Judah P. Benjamin's Law Office
Elias Rabella Cohen's House
10
Henry Hyams's House
6
POYDRAS ST
12
5
Dispersed of Judah Synagogue
Benjamin F. Jonas's Law Office
2
US 90 (formerly CALLIOPE ST)
CARONDELET ST
ST. CHARLES AVE
SIPPI RIVER
Clara Solomon's Neighborhood
11


DRYAD
"Jew's Cemetery"
4
3
Touro Infirmary
MISSIS
CAMP ST
MAGAZINE ST
ST. CHARLES AVE
ST. MARY ST
JACKSON AVE
Gates of Prayer Synagogue
9
Jewish Widows' & Orphans' Home
7
NEW LEVEE
N
CHIPPEWA ST
TCHOUPITOULAS ST
0
1
2
SCALE OF MILES

Map of New Orleans showing key Jewish Confederate sites. (Courtesy of Tim Belshaw.)



64	Joseph Osterman		August 21 1864	January 6 1866	62	5
24	Walter son of D. C. Labatt		May 16 1863	„ 29 „	8	2
64	Rosanna Osterman		February 2nd 1866	February „	57	5
29	Joseph Depass		March 23 „	March 25 „	58	3
83	Sarah Joseph		May 15 „	May 16 „	64	7
2	Infant of A. H. DeMeza		„ 18 „			1
69	Isaac Wolf		September 15 „	September 16 „	48	6
58	Marx Aaron Heyman		„ 23 „	„ 24 „	4 m.	4
66	Solomon Benjamin		„ 26 „	„ 27 „	53	5
82	Ulysis Abraham Cazares		March 28 1867	March 29 1867	4y6m	7
62	Robert Lee Block		August 9 1866	April 29 „	1y2m	5
87	Joseph Calhoun Levy		April 5 1862	May 24 „		7
140	Lewis J. Winchell		June 5 1867		26	.11
81	Reuben Levy		„ 11 „	June 12 „	60	7
84	Jacques Olivera		„ 18 „	„ 19 „	31	7
80	Infant of W. A. White		August 15 „			7
84	M. C. Marcelles		„ 16 „	August 17 „	40	7
84	Solomon Offner		„ 26 „		22	7
84	Henry Ronger		September 1 „		40	7
84	Hyman Louis Silverston		„ 5 „	September 6 „	23	7
6	Noah J. Ellis		7 „	„ 8 „	70	1
28	Barney Wolf		„ 10 „		33	3
79	Louisa Jonas		„ 10 „		58	7
84	Pauline B. Levi +		„ 13 „		19	7



brought from Galveston, Texas.	Amsterdam, Holland	15	Elul	5621	Accidental Gunshot wound
brought from Summit, Miss	New Orleans	27	Tisri	5623	Drowned.
do from Vicksburg	Mayence, Germany	17	Shebat	5624	Do
	Savannah, Ga	7	Nissan	.	General Paralysis
	New-York	1	Sivan	.	Dropsy.
	New Orleans	4	.	.	Stil born.
	Prussia.	6	Tebet	5627	Asiatic Cholera.
	New Orleans	15	.	.	Meningitis
died at Fairview Plantation St Charles Parish La	Charleston S.C	18	.		Oppression of the Brain, caused by an attack of malignant Fever
	New Orleans	21	Veadar	.	Diphtheria
died & was temporary buried at Mississippi City.	New Orleans	28	Ab	5626	Inflamation of the brain.
died at the Battlefield of Shiloh	New Orleans	5	Nissan	5622	Killed in Battle of Shiloh
Coroners inquest	Russia	2	Iyar	5627	Cutting his throat.
	Charleston, S.C	8	.	.	General Debility, result of long continued disease of the Kidneys
	Amsterdam Holland	15	.	.	Phthysis Pulmonalis
	New Orleans	14	Ab	.	Stil born
	England	15	.	.	Congestive chill.
	New York	25	.	.	Yellow Fever
	Poland	1	Elul	.	do
	do	5	.	.	do
	New York	7	.	.	Apoplexy.
	England	10	.	.	Yellow Fever
		10	.	.	do
	France	13	.	.	do

Dispersed of Judah death record book. This New Orleans synagogue record book shows Joseph Calhoun Levy's death on April 5, 1862. He was interred on May 27, 1862, in Row 7, Grave 295. The Death Record Book, now at Tulane University, shows that Levy "died at the Battlefield of Shiloh" on "5 Nissan 5622"—that is, the fifth day of the month of "Nissan" in the Jewish year 5622. (Courtesy of Tulane University, Manuscript Department.)

The reality of the war came home to the Jews of New Orleans by the spring of 1862. "To think of soldiers, real soldiers camping in our squares, the places devoted to the gatherings of our children," Clara wrote. "Tents, real tents scattered around. Who, a few years back, would have imagined such a thing." And at the end of March, Clara wrote: "Our city is now a camp, up town and down town." New Orleans Jewry celebrated what must have been an ironic and meaningful Passover in March of 1862. Many Jewish men were in arms and away defending their country. Jewish families, like all New Orleans families, were fearful about the future and nervous about a possible Union invasion. Mrs. Solomon and many Jewish families ordered their matzo from a Mr. Da Silva, the sexton at the Dispersed of Judah synagogue. "Pasaic [Hebrew for Passover, now spelled "Pesach"] is fast approaching," Clara wrote, "and … our butter, our precious butter is almost gone, gone, gone." Shortages caused by the blockade even ruined the Passover matzo. Bread was impossible to buy. Bakers quit baking; the cost of flour had become prohibitive. "Our 'motzoes' are so miserably sour that I don't think I have eaten a whole one," Clara wrote. "But for form sake we must have them." The Solomons cleaned their home thoroughly, as was the Orthodox custom, to rid the house of leavened bread. By April 1862, it began to dawn on the people of New Orleans that the city could fall to the Union army and navy. A friend of the Solomon family advised Mrs. Solomon to put away provisions for some months, as, Clara wrote, "it is possible that N. O. will soon be in the hands of the cussed Yankees." Clara considered this possibility with alarm: "What a miserable state of existence to be governed by Yankee devils. Oh! God! It is too terrible to contemplate."[72]

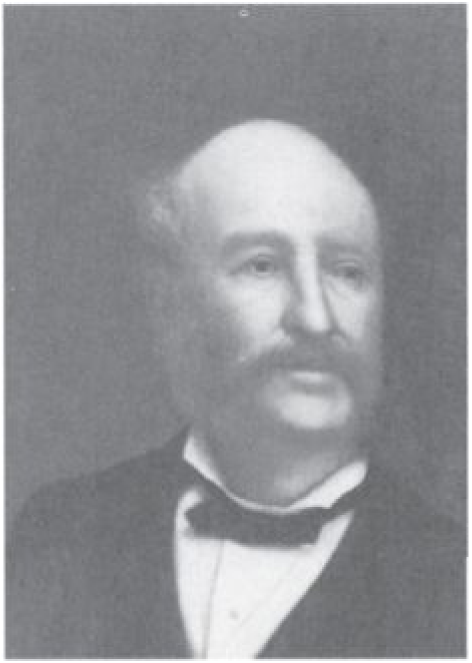
Emma Solomon (1824–1913). Solomon Solomon's wife and Clara Solomon's mother, Emma Solomon was born in Charleston. She and her husband were likely married at Beth Elohim and moved to New Orleans.

They had six daughters: Alice, Clara, Fanny, Rosa, Sallie, and Josie. (Courtesy of Alice Dale Cohan, Great Neck, New York.)

The terrible event arrived when New Orleans fell to Comdr. David G. Farragut's fleet on April 24, 1862. In a bold attack, Farragut sent a large fleet past fortified positions at the mouth of the Mississippi and conquered the South's largest and richest city. Clara Solomon called it "the most daring naval exploit ever attempted." Philip Sartorious, a young Jewish merchant from rural Louisiana, was in New Orleans when it fell. The scene was "almost indescribable," he later recalled. Bales of cotton were cut open and set on fire. Gunboats were on fire, and "hoodlums threw balls and shells overboard." The streets were packed with people fleeing. Sartorious and his friends were lucky enough to get a ride on a railroad platform car headed inland. The Jewish community reacted as other New Orleans citizens did—with shock, anger, disbelief, and disdain. Clara wrote, "a gloom has settled o'er my spirit, a gloom envelopes our dearly-beloved city. My breaking heart but aches the more…. Oh! never have I experienced such emotions…. Oh! *never* shall I forget the 25th of Apr. 1862."[73]

Rabbi James Gutheim was the spiritual leader of Dispersed of Judah Synagogue of New Orleans. When the Crescent City was captured, he refused to swear allegiance to Gen. Benjamin Butler's occupation regime

and left the city for Montgomery, Alabama. (Courtesy of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.)



Israel I. Jones of Mobile. Jones was born in London in 1810. He and his wife, Eliza, settled in Mobile in 1838. A successful merchant, Jones served as alderman and mayor pro tern. He was the president of the Mobile Musical Association and president of Gates of Heaven from 1844 to 1876. He lost a son in the Civil War. His daughter, Emilie, married Rabbi James K. Gutheim. (Portrait by Nicola Marschall. Courtesy of the Gates of Heaven Archives and Robert J. Zietz of Mobile.)

Many Jews, particularly the old Sephardic and German families, left the city. One New Orleans Jew wrote that “almost the entire Jewish population daily leave, and two-thirds of the Portuguese Congregation with their Rabbi [James K. Gutheim] have already departed.” Gutheim was married in December 1858 to Emilie Jones of Mobile. Her father was I. I. Jones, the prominent merchant and leader of the Jewish community of Mobile. When New Orleans fell to the Union forces, Gutheim, his wife, and his son left for Alabama. On May 8, he wrote to his friend, Rabbi Isaac Leeser of Philadelphia: “Day after tomorrow I shall leave N[ew] O[rleans] by order of the military authorities. All those who have refused to take the oath of allegiance to the Dictator of Washington are ordered beyond the lines—that is, into Dixie. I am of that number. Nearly the whole of my congregation are similarly situated. We can now realize what a [deportation] means. Nothing but my wearing apparel and provisions for ten days are permitted…. I trust to God, to guide my steps. If possible I shall write you from the Confederacy.”[74]

On the Sabbath before Rabbi Gutheim left, the synagogue was crowded, as many people in addition to his own congregation wanted to hear the eloquent rabbi once more. A New Orleanian wrote, “in the place which will know him no longer under the present condition of things…. When about to sail with his banished members and their families from their late home, he offered up a touching prayer to the throne of the Most Merciful, which moved the hearts of his hearers.”[75] Gutheim served as rabbi in Montgomery, Alabama, and Columbus, Georgia, for the duration of the war. He returned to New Orleans in 1865.[76]

Joseph H. Marks was another Confederate who refused to take the oath. Born in New York City but raised in South Carolina, Marks was in the grocery business with his brother, I. N. Marks. He was banished for refusing to take the oath of allegiance and left for Columbia, South Carolina, where he was “burned out by Sherman’s army.” His home in New Orleans was confiscated. After the war, Marks moved to New York City for fifteen years, then returned to New Orleans.[77]

Mary Chesnut related a story in her diary about Edwin Warren Moise’s escape from occupied New Orleans and “How Mr. Moise got his money out of New Orleans.” Moise went to a station with his two small sons. When he arrived, the carriage he expected was not there. He had no money about him because he knew he would be searched. Some friend called out, “I will lend you my horse, but then you will be obliged to leave the children.” This offer was accepted, and as Moise rode off, one of the boys called out, “Papa, here is your tobacco, which you have forgot.” Moise turned back, and his son handed him a roll of tobacco, which he had held openly in his hand all the time. Mr. Moise took it, galloped off, waving his hat to them. In that roll of tobacco was encased $25,000.[78]

Many Jews living under the military rule imposed by the Union army resented the invaders and refused to have anything to do with them. Others probably welcomed the end of hostilities and the end of the blockade, which allowed business to resume. Certainly the older families and the pro-Southern immigrants resented army rule. Clara Solomon was pleased that $2 million in cotton had been burned to keep it from the Yankees, and she agreed with the city authorities' decision to refuse to lower their flag and raise the flag of the United States.[79]

The women of New Orleans resented the invaders and showed it on a daily basis. Many wore black mourning bands, and others wore clothing with the Confederate flag as a pattern. The ladies refused to sit in the same trolley car or church pew with Union soldiers. Jewish women shared this contempt, as evidenced by Eugenia Phillips's arrest and exile and Clara Solomon's strong feelings. Benjamin "Beast" Butler reacted to these insults with his infamous General Order 28, "the Woman Order." Clara could hardly believe what she had heard. "I cannot express to you the indignation this thing awakened…. The cowardly wretches! To notice the insults of ladies!" How could any truly Southern woman come in contact with a Yankee and "allow her countenance to retain its wonted composure." She even made faces at and sarcastic remarks to Union soldiers she encountered. As time went on, the hatred of Butler grew. By late June 1862, Clara wished that "Old Butler" could have as many ropes around his neck as there were "ladies in the city & each have a pull! Or if we could fry him! Or give him many salt things to eat, & have water in sight, & he unable to obtain it!"[80]

Judah Benjamin's sisters Mrs. Levy, Mrs. Kruttschnitt, and Harriet Benjamin were living in New Orleans when the Federal fleet arrived. Pierce Butler wrote in his 1907 biography of Benjamin, "immunity on the part of women known to be related to the hated Confederate Secretary of State could not long be expected under the rule of such heroes as the North bestowed upon New Orleans." One night in the summer of 1862, about nine o'clock, there came a knock on the door of the Levy home. It startled the family. Riley, the black servant ("dining-room man") went to answer it and returned agitated to announce that "there's a Yankee right at the door." Mrs. Levy and Harriet fled, leaving Mrs. Levy's young daughter to face the Federal lieutenant, who told her that he had been sent to warn her family that the house was needed by the military authorities and would be taken possession of in the morning and used as a hospital for General Weitzel's men. "This will do," he said, after inspecting the rooms with a candle while Miss Levy followed, protesting vainly. "If you wish to leave at once," the officer told her, "you may take away such things as you absolutely need; a squad of men will be sent to protect you to-night." The family began packing up at once. Fortunately, when the soldiers came, the men proved to be Germans who had known Mr. Popham, Benjamin's German brother-in-law. By humoring them and plying them with what was left of Judah Benjamin's rare old bourbon and cognac, the Benjamin family prevailed on the Union soldiers to move nearly all of the furniture as well as a cow to the practically empty house of a neighbor.

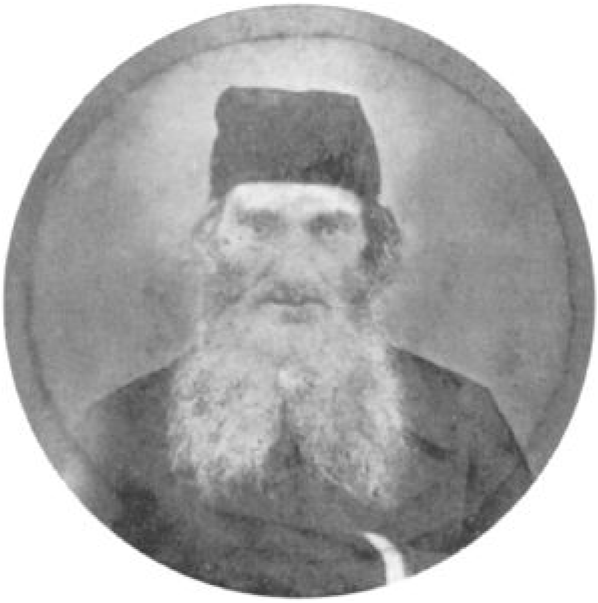
All through the night they worked, packing and moving. In the morning, as Mrs. Levy was sitting on a bundle of the family's belongings on the front porch, another squad of soldiers, with an insolent young officer in command, came to relieve the complaisant guard of the past night. "Madam," said the officer, "are you the sister of the arch rebel, Benjamin?" Mrs. Levy admitted that she was. "Then you are not to remove anything from this house. It is a military necessity." Fortunately, this individual was relieved later in the day by a more reasonable officer, who permitted the Benjamin clan to remove the few remaining things. After a few days of discomfort and uncertainty, they rented two rooms in the French Quarter, where they lived for some weeks. A letter came from Mr. Benjamin advising them to make their way "out into the Confederacy, where we could be in communication with him." Mrs. Levy and her family made their way to LaGrange, Georgia, where they remained for the rest of the war. Benjamin sent them money, "as much as he could spare, and provisions, denying himself, we feared, to promote our comfort," his niece recalled.[81]

Joseph Benjamin, one of Judah P. Benjamin's brothers, served for a time with the 1st Louisiana Cavalry. His military record was uneven. For reasons which are not clear, he and most of the junior officers of Col. J. S. Scott's Calvary Regiment were placed under arrest in May 1862 and later resigned. Arrests as a result of disagreements with a prickly superior officer were not uncommon during the Civil War. Joseph later formed his own cavalry company in December 1863. His company was likely a headquarters escort for Maj. Gen. Richard Taylor. In October 1864, Judah Benjamin wrote that Joseph was "still in the trans-Mississippi, and was unable to accompany Dick Taylor when he crossed to this side, in consequence of his ill health." Joseph Benjamin and his company must have remained as an escort for Taylor's successors in the District of Louisiana.[82]

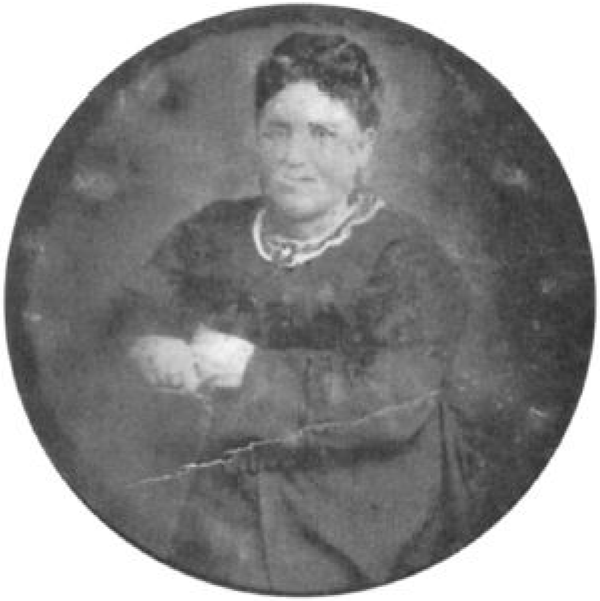
Judah Benjamin's other brother, Solomon Benjamin, was clearly an embarrassment to the secretary of war. When Baton Rouge was captured, Solomon apparently took the oath of allegiance to the Union. At least this is what Gen. Benjamin Butler wrote to the secretary of war in 1862: "I brought before me some of the most violent of the rebels, and after calling their attention to the present state of things, I proposed to them the oath of allegiance, and after consideration over night, two of them, Mr. Benjamin, brother of the Rebel secretary of war, and Byam, mayor of the city, took the oath."[83] Butler later wrote that a Confederate presidential proclamation denouncing Butler "was written by Benjamin, who has an enormous grudge at me for doing a thing which he did not mention to the proclamation, i.e., so thoroughly preaching Unionism to his brother at Baton Rouge in July, that he took the oath of allegiance, declaring himself a Union man."[84] As neither Judah Benjamin nor his many biographers mention Solomon as an adult, it is likely that he was disowned by his illustrious brother, or at least they were estranged. He died shortly after the war. Joseph Benjamin, on the other hand, fled to Mexico after the war and later settled in Spanish Honduras. When asked why he would not return to the country, he is said to have answered: "I wouldn't take the oath of allegiance to the United States."[85]

In the summer of 1862, after the fall of New Orleans, Mrs. Henry Hyams, the lieutenant governor's non-Jewish wife, was walking down the street when she was accosted by Union soldiers. According to the story in the *Mobile Register* and reprinted in the *Charleston Daily Courier*, Mrs. Hyams had the misfortune to pass by a number of Union officers sitting in a doorway. One followed her and, blocking her path, told her she had not bowed to him as she passed, as required by Gen. Benjamin "Beast" Butler's infamous order. She attempted to avoid the officer, but he put his arms around her waist and, according to the news reports, "pressed his foul lips upon her face. As the villain released her from his embrace, the Southern lady coolly drew a pistol and shot him through the body, so that he fell dead at her feet." Mrs. Hyams, the story went, was spirited away by a sympathetic Union officer who helped her reach the Southern lines.[86]

Typical of the immigrant Jews of Civil War New Orleans were the Cohen and Goldstein families. Solomon Cohen and his father, Elias Rabella Cohen, emigrated from Russian Poland in the 1840s. Elias had been a rabbi in his Polish village and retained his Old World appearance well into the 1870s. By 1860, Elias was living at the corner of Poydras and St. Charles Streets in New Orleans; Solomon enlisted in March 1862 as a private "for the war." He served in Company B, 28th (Thomas's) Louisiana. In August 1862 he was in the camp hospital. He was wounded at Vicksburg. (Solomon Cohen's family tells the story that while he *was* wounded at Vicksburg, he was shot while stealing a chicken.)[87]



Elias Cohen, Solomon Cohen's father. Elias emigrated to New Orleans in the late 1840s or early 1850s from Russian Poland. He lived at St. Charles and Poydras and died in 1874 at the age of 100. This photograph was taken circa 1870. (Courtesy of Cecile Levine, New Orleans.)



Fanny Goldstein Cohen, the wife of Solomon Cohen and widow of Jacob Goldstein. An immigrant from Russia, Fanny lived in New Orleans and Mississippi. (Courtesy of Cecile Levine, New Orleans.)

During the war Fanny Goldstein married Jacob Goldstein, a merchant. They lived in Liberty, Mississippi, where Fanny's father had a store. Jacob enlisted and was wounded at Shiloh. Fanny, worried about her husband, determined to bring him medicine and set out for the hospital. According to her daughter's recollection, Jacob Goldstein must have been a prisoner because the whole area was in Union hands. The "buxom and beautiful Fanny" went through Union lines, her daughter recalled, "dressed as a nun, hiding her auburn tresses, and she sewed medicines into the seams of her voluminous skirts."[88] Despite the ministrations of his devoted wife, Jacob died. Fanny took the oath of allegiance in November 1862. When Solomon Cohen, who was described by his descendants as a "scholarly and poetic gentleman" with red hair, was wounded at Vicksburg, he returned to Fanny for care and attention. They were married in 1864.

Ferdinand Goldsmith's story was also typical. He was born in Mobile in 1841. His family moved to New Orleans in 1846 and lived first on Gravier near Canal, then uptown in the 1850s to Nayades (now St. Charles). Ferdinand attended Louisiana College and worked in his father's store, Goldsmith, Haber & Co. He joined the Creole Guards but had been in camp only sixty days when New Orleans was captured. When the Confederate troops left the city, Goldsmith's unit disbanded. Goldsmith then went to Baton Rouge, where he met up with four or five comrades from his regiment, including Morris Abrams and Josh Henriquez. Apparently, the boys decided to go back to New Orleans for a little adventure. Goldsmith got involved in buying and selling sugar, which he stored in his uncle's store on Magazine Street at Poydras, a few blocks from Canal and the Levee. He prospered by shipping sugar to New York City.[89]

George Jonas, a prominent Jewish leader of New Orleans and a member of the large and influential Jonas family. He served as an officer of both

the Jewish Orphan's Home and Touro Infirmary. (Courtesy of the Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans.)

New Orleans continued to attract Jewish immigrants while the war was in progress and the city was occupied by Federal troops. Jewish settlers came from many directions, including the North. Salomon Marx, for example, was a German immigrant from Mainz who came to New York with his parents and then to New Orleans in 1864. He operated a riverboat company between New Orleans and Shreveport. Salomon soon married eighteen-year-old Clara Marx, who had just arrived from Germany to live with her uncle and aunt, Adolph and Sophie Marx, who had come to Louisiana from France. Their children worked as "drummers," selling goods at the countryside. (Their son, David Marx, was later the well-known rabbi at the Temple in Atlanta.)[90]

The Jewish Orphan's Home continued in operation despite the departure of a number of prominent Jewish leaders, including Reverend Gutheim, who was the home's treasurer, and Joseph Magner, a board member, both of them "having come under the decree of banishment." The home's president, George Jonas, later recalled that "the evil day had come. The effect of the war between the states showed its traces everywhere. But a kind Providence watched over our Home."[91]

New Orleans Jewry, unlike Charleston and Richmond back east, was divided by the war. Rabbi Max Heller summarized the division—which came down to old families versus newer immigrants—as follows:

> One rabbi, the minister of the German congregation, Rev. Dr. Bernard Illowy, is on terms of friendship with Gen. N. P. Banks, the commander of the troops of occupation, and delivers a sermon on Abraham Lincoln (as does Col. P. J. Joachimsen of New York, at the Polish synagogue); the minister of the Portuguese synagogue, Rabbi Gutheim, refusing to take the oath of allegiance, retreats with his family to the privations of "the Confederacy" …
>
> A similar story could be told of the financial sacrifices that were offered. Especially to many of the Portuguese families of New Orleans the collapse of Confederate bond and Confederate money spelled utter ruin, as they had staked their all upon the fortunes of the Confederacy.[92]

The division of New Orleans Jewry in 1861—the old families enthusiastically supporting the cause and some of the more recent immigrants being less committed—continued during the Federal occupation. Eugenia Phillips, a third-generation Southerner, defied General Butler and was banished to Ship Island, while acquaintances of the Solomons such as Jacob Eisner cooperated with the occupying army. "Oh!" Clara wrote, “he is a foreigner [that is, a recent immigrant from Europe] & cannot sympathize with us.”[93]

Mobile, like New Orleans, was blockaded and attacked. In the early years of the war, Jewish civilians pitched in to support the Confederate cause. Three Mobile Jewish musicians, Sigmund and Jacob Schlesinger and Joseph Bloch, all from the German states, contributed to the Confederate cause. Music teachers and composers, Sigmund and Jacob Schlesinger published “Southern Flowers,” dedicated to “the Young Ladies of the Sunny South,” which contained a selection of waltzes, polkas, and other dances. The “Martha Quickstep” was “a spirited march, especially in military quick time, and popular in those days,” according to William Tuckman. Also included was the “Manassas Polka,” written by Sigmund Schlesinger to commemorate the First Confederate Victory at Manassas. Other pieces were the “Camp Moore Polka,” referring to a Confederate military post near New Orleans; “Fort Morgan Gallopade,” in honor of Gen. John Hunt Morgan (the gallopade was a lively round dance popular at the time); and “Harry Macarthy’s Bonnie Blue Flag,” containing variations of this favorite Civil War tune. Joseph Bloch from Bingen on the Rhine came to Mobile in 1848 at the age of twenty-two. Descended from a long line of musicians, Bloch gave guitar lessons and could play almost every orchestral instrument. According to Tuckman, Bloch became a bugler with an artillery unit, blew the bugle at the Battle of Mobile Bay, and published a great amount of Civil War music.[94]

The fine hand of Israel I. Jones was probably behind the Schlesingers’ and Bloch’s coming to Mobile, as he was president of the Mobile Music Association, an organization which provided Mobile with concerts and sophisticated musical entertainment. And Jones’s hand was also behind his daughter Emilie’s and her famous husband, Reverend Gutheim’s, leaving New Orleans. Jones was president of the Mobile congregation, and when the Gutheims arrived in Mobile there was quite a welcome.

In Montgomery, Mayer Lehman traded cotton as best he could and actively supported the Confederacy. In 1864, when reports reached Montgomery that Alabama soldiers were suffering from exposure and hunger at Elmira Prison in New York, the governor asked Lehman to negotiate with the Federal authorities to aid the Alabama prisoners. “He is a business man of established character and one of the best Southern patriots,” the governor wrote Jefferson Davis. “He is a foreigner, but has been here fifteen years and is thoroughly identified with us.” Lehman arrived in Richmond ready to go up North with supplies for his fellow Alabamaians, but General Grant would not allow it. Mayer stayed in Richmond for a month in the dead of winter, aided by a Protestant clergyman, but failed in his mission. The Lehman warehouse in Montgomery was burned as the war drew to a close.[95]

Jacob and Alexander Kohn, who had come from Bavaria in 1848, were now successful shoemakers in Montgomery. They offered their services to the Confederacy, and local tradition holds that Jacob was made the superintendent of the Confederate shoe factory on Tallapoosa Street between Coos and Commerce, which turned out tens of thousands of shoes.[96]

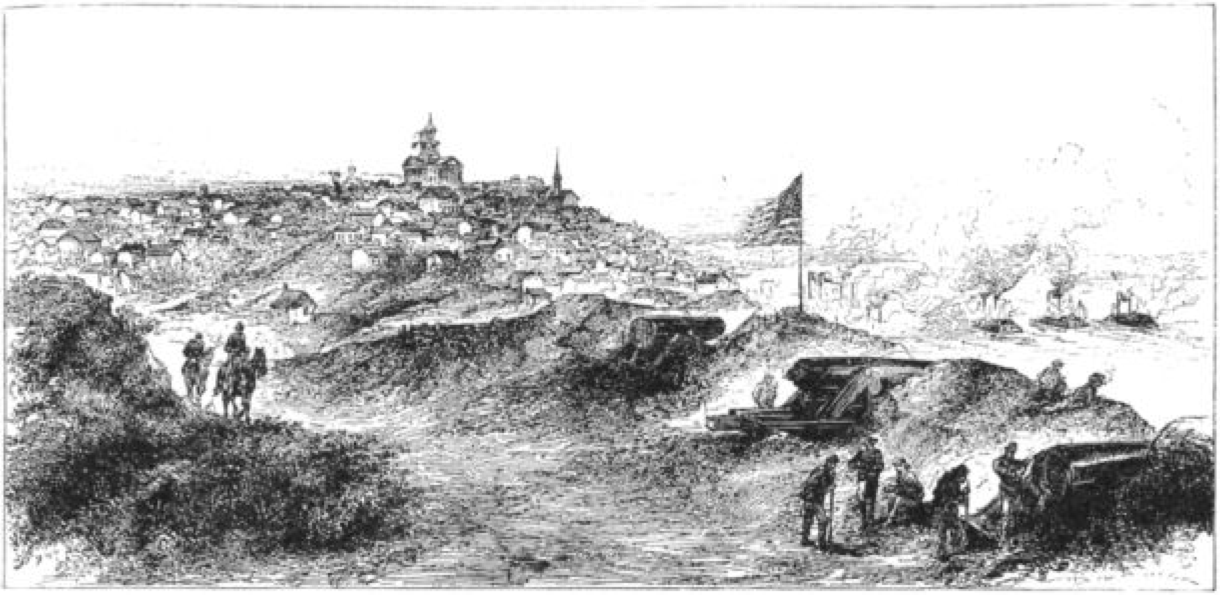
The Moses family of Montgomery traced its roots to Charleston. Isaiah Moses came to Charleston from Germany in 1790. A successful merchant, he eventually became a cotton planter as well. His son, Levy Moses, was not so successful, but he put his son, Alfred Huger Moses (named for the famous South Carolina Unionist, Alfred Huger), through the College of Charleston. Soon the entire Moses family moved to Montgomery, perhaps to escape the wartime conditions in Charleston. This included Alfred's mother and father, brothers Mordecai, Joseph, Judah, and Henry, and sisters Emily, Sarah, Rosannah, and Grace. (There were nine children all together.) Alfred was exempt from military service, as he served as a clerk of court, but Mordecai Moses enlisted in Company E, 46th Alabama, as a private.[97]

On May 16, 1862, Kahl Montgomery dedicated its new synagogue. Rabbi Gutheim came from New Orleans and delivered a "memorable sermon." Thomas Owen wrote in his *History of Alabama* that the dedication ceremonies were impressive, "constituting the most remarkable event up to that time in the history of Judaism in Montgomery. The congregation on that occasion felt like Solomon at the dedication of the great Temple in Jerusalem."[98] The fall of New Orleans one month later redounded to Montgomery's benefit. Rabbi Gutheim, one of the most beloved rabbis in the South, accepted the position as rabbi at Kahl Montgomery in June 1863. The B'nai Israel Congregation in Columbus, Georgia, also sought Gutheim to minister to their small congregation. He agreed to "ride circuit" and led the services in Columbus every sixth Sabbath.[99] His support for the Confederacy never wavered. He prayed from the pulpit of Kahl Montgomery:

> Regard, O Father, in Thine abundant favor and benevolence, our beloved country, the Confederate States of America. May our young Republic increase in strength, prosperity and renown; … Behold, O God, and judge between us and our enemies, who have forced upon us this unholy and unnatural war—who hurl against us their poisoned arrows steeped in ambition and revenge.
>
> Bless, O Father, our efforts in a cause which we conceive to be just; the defense of our liberties and rights and independence, under just and equitable laws. May harmony of sentiment and purity of motive, unfaltering courage, immovable trust in our leaders, both in national council and in the field, animate all the people of our

> beloved Confederate States, so as to be equal to all emergencies—ready for every sacrifice, until our cause be vindicated as the light of day.
>
> May harmony of sentiment and purity of motive, unfaltering courage, immovable trust in our leaders, both in national council and in the field, animate all the people of our beloved Confederate States, so as to be equal to all emergencies—ready for every sacrifice, until our cause be vindicated as the light of day.
>
> And we pray Thee, O God, to bless and protect the armed hosts that now stand forth in the defense of our sacred cause.[100]

Natchez, Mississippi, was home to a small Jewish community during the war. The Mayers, who met on the ship crossing the Atlantic to New Orleans, were an integral part of Natchez society. Their son, Simon Mayer, and Oscar Levy, a nephew who had recently come to live with the Mayers from Landau, enlisted in a local militia company, the Natchez Light Infantry, in the summer of 1861. When the company was called into ninety days' active service in December, these men went with it to Kentucky. After their active service was over, the two, joined by another cousin, Simon Lehman, enlisted in the Natchez Southrons, which soon became Company B, 10th Mississippi.[101] The Mayers continued to live in wartime Natchez. On September 2, 1862, the Federal gunboat *Essex* arrived, and the older men, including John Mayer, who had organized a home guard, rallied to defend the town. Believing, erroneously, that the Union army was attacking the town, the home guard fired on the *Essex* crew when some of the men came ashore for supplies. The gunboat returned fire, and after an hour of shelling and with many houses on fire, the mayor surrendered the town. The sole victim of this assault was Rosalie Beekman, a Jewish girl, aged seven. She was struck by a piece of bursting shell while she and her family fled. She died at the Mayer home on Main Street, where she had been brought for medical attention by her cousin, Miriam Wexler.[102]



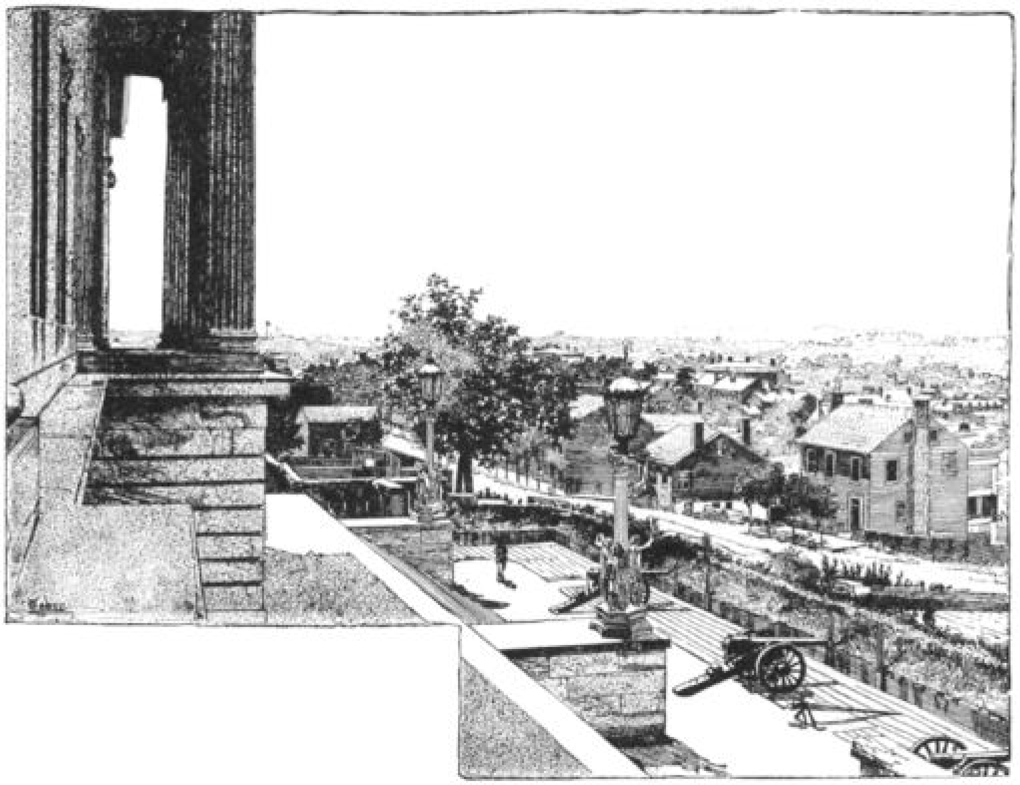
Vicksburg from the North after the surrender. (*Battles and Leaders of the Civil War.*)

The Mayers, like their neighbors, took the Union military at their word when they threatened to burn Natchez to the ground. John Mayer bought a home in nearby Washington, five miles from Natchez, and moved his family there. The family's household was packed up and moved. The threatened destruction of Natchez did not occur, but Mayer continued to live in town and operate his business while his family lived in Washington.[103]

After the fall of Vicksburg in July 1863, the Union army occupied Natchez. Some of the Jewish families lived resentfully under Federal occupation. Mrs. Mayer and two of the younger daughters, Emma and Carrie, hid much-needed clothing and supplies in their hoop skirts in order to deliver these goods to friends, who would forward the supplies to Confederate soldiers. "With fear and trembling, Emma handed the guard the papers," one of the Mayer girls recalled years later. "Imagine her delight when she noticed that he was trying to read them upside down! 'Any contraband goods?' and all being fair in love and war, they answered 'No.' 'Drive on then and have a nice day with your friends,' was the pleasant rejoinder of the ignorant unsuspecting guard." One of the daughters, Ophelia Mayer, wrote a letter describing the occupying general as "a miserable tyrant," for which offense she was arrested and placed in confinement in the city hall along with twenty other women. The Mayer home was surrounded by guards and no one was permitted to leave the house for three days. The store was closed and the family threatened with confiscation of all its goods.[104]

Simon Mayer, away with his command in Dalton, Georgia, was outraged by his sister's arrest. He was concerned for his family's safety but wrote, "don't let the scoundrels intimidate you. Afraid to come out and meet us on the battlefield like men, they, like brutes, make war upon defenseless woman & children." He urged the Mayer clan to show the invaders that they were "still free and knowing your rights, dare to maintain them." Many people in Natchez had lost hope in the cause, including members of the Mayer family. But Simon urged his brother Henry to join the army "now battling for our rights and independence."[105]

Life in occupied Natchez went on. The Mayer family continued in business. With a son and nephews in the Confederate army and resentful of the occupying army, they nevertheless accepted the situation and hoped for a reversal of Southern fortunes. The occupying Union army brought with it young Jewish men from the North, including Henry Frank and Isaac Lowenburg. Frank and Lowenburg visited John Mayer in his store, and Mayer, the president of Natchez's small Chevra Kadusha (Holy Society) congregation, invited them to attend services during the High Holy Days in the fall of 1863. Isaac Lowenburg was infatuated with Ophelia Mayer, and he was helpful in convincing the Union authorities to dismiss the charges against the family and Ophelia. In January of 1865, Isaac married Ophelia in the Mayer home. Sister Melanie married Henry Frank. In fraternizing with Union soldiers, the Mayer family was a typical Natchez family. The old families of Natchez also fraternized with the enemy during the occupation. "Only people of the highest culture and dignity," Annie Harper of Natchez wrote, "can sustain themselves honorably in such an anomalous position, and Natchez was the place to find such people."[106]



View of Nashville, southwest front of the capitol looking toward the battlefield. (*Battles and Leaders of the Civil War.*)

As in New Orleans, the Jewish communities of Nashville and Memphis were divided over the war. Neither city had a particularly old Jewish community nor an acculturated or assimilated Jewish elite as did Charleston, Savannah, and Richmond. Both were frontier towns with large immigrant populations, including a substantial number of pro-Union Germans. But when war came, Jewish Tennesseans, like their neighbors, supported the Confederacy. Once Nashville and Memphis were occupied by Union troops, some left, many remained neutral, and a few joined the Union cause.

There were Jews in Nashville as early as 1795, but in 1860 there were 105 heads of household, 42 percent of whom were single men, virtually all of whom were immigrants. Few Nashville Jews were native-born. The demography of Memphis's Jewry was similar. Twenty Jewish volunteers from Nashville had joined the rebel army in May 1861, a month before Tennessee voted to secede. At High Holiday services in September 1861, both Nashville congregations, Mogen David and Ohava Emes, prayed for Jefferson Davis and the success of the Southern cause.[107] The Young Men's Hebrew Benevolent Society and the Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society donated clothing and raised money. Jewish women in Nashville, like their sisters in Richmond and Savannah, knitted socks and made uniforms for the Confederacy. Jewish boys from Nashville—Solomon Frankland, Herman Ehrenberg, and George Cohen, all of the 30th Tennessee—were captured when Fort Donelson surrendered in 1862. They were sent to a military prison, exchanged, and saw further service. Fedora Frank wrote that "Jewish men from Nashville served in all the Tennessee battles—Shiloh, Stones River (Murfreesboro), Chickamauga and Chattanooga, Franklin, and Nashville." Many served throughout the war. Solomon Frankland was finally released from a Union prisoner of war prison in May 1865. The 2d Lt. Joseph Lepsheets, Company G, 8th Tennessee, who enlisted in May 1861 with his brother Jacob, was killed at the Battle of Franklin on November 30, 1864.[108]

In Memphis, where the immigrant population also predominated, Rabbi Tuska introduced patriotic services, Thanksgiving, and Fast Day. At one Sabbath service at B'nai Israel (Children of Israel), a dozen Jewish Confederates in uniform, led by 2d Lt. Abraham S. Levy and Maurice A. Freeman, marched into the synagogue. "Standing round the scrolls of the law," A. E. Frankland recalled, "they recited the blessing, in chorus … after which they received the ancient priestly benediction from the minister [rabbi] and returned to the camps of their several commanders."[109]

Both Nashville and Memphis were captured early in the war. Nashville was occupied by the Union army from February 1862 to April 1865. The military governor, Andrew

Johnson, detested secessionists. He governed the state of Tennessee with an iron fist; dissent was not tolerated. The pro-Southern Jewish men were in the army or lived in this police state run by the Federal army. Those suspected of pro-Confederate sympathies were hounded, harassed, and arrested. Indeed, when city council members refused to take the loyalty oath, they were arrested for treason.[110] This harassment, of course, included Nashville Jews who remained when the city surrendered. Some fled their homes rather than live under Yankee rule.

Many Tennesseans were involved in smuggling supplies, especially medicine and quinine, to Confederate forces. Union officials saw this as treason and profiteering. Southerners saw it as a patriotic godsend some of the time and as profiteering at other times. Bertha Ochs, for example, was considered a heroine for smuggling quinine. Jacob Bloomstein, who after the war served as president of Ohava Shalom, was arrested in May 1863 as a spy and for smuggling goods through the lines to the Confederate army. He was later released by Governor Johnson. Maier Salzkotter was arrested for smuggling and later divorced his wife, Cecelia, who turned to prostitution while he was in prison. Many other Jewish merchants were arrested for smuggling and illegally selling goods in the area. Some were acting for patriotic reasons, others for profit. Nashville was inundated with refugees, vagrants, and criminals. In 1865 three Jewish stores were looted and a Jewish peddler murdered.[111]

Rabbi Simon Tuska, rabbi of B’nai Israel in Memphis. Although an immigrant himself, Rabbi Tuska supported the Confederate war effort, and, like Max Michelbacher in Richmond, he was an ardent defender of the Jews of his community. (Courtesy of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.)

The Jewish tradition of firing rabbis, dissenters seceding, and the founding of new congregations did not abate during the war. Memphis Jewry did all three, before and during the war. Unhappy with Jacob J. Peres, B’nai Israel fired him in April 1860. Peres sued the congregation for breach of contract and libel. Peres won his contract case and was awarded his salary. The congregation won the libel case. Simon Tuska was then asked to serve as rabbi in July 1860. Born in Hungary, Tuska was twenty-five years old when he came to Memphis. He was the first American sent to Europe to study at the Jewish Theological Seminary at Breslau. The congregation shifted to Reform, and Tuska became an ardent supporter of the Confederate cause.[112]

Both Nashville and Memphis experienced an influx of Northern Jews during the war years. Jewish soldiers in the Union occupation army had light duty. They could enjoy the town, meet local Jewish people, attend religious services, and become a part of the community. The local people, Jews included, had no choice but to live under military rule. Jewish immigrants who had ties, not only of religion but of national background, language, and customs, felt a natural kinship with Jews like themselves who had settled north of the Mason-Dixon line. In some instances, as in the Mayer family in Natchez, romance blossomed between local girls and Union soldiers. Capt. Adolph Loventhal of the 39th Indiana, Louis Lerman of the 4th Ohio Cavalry, and William Wolfson of the 10th Illinois all settled in Nashville after the war. Southern Jews, for their part, felt a solemn duty to bury fellow Jews—even those killed fighting for the Union army—according to Jewish law. There was, therefore, a significant amount of fraternization between Southern and Northern Jews.[113]

Marcus M. Spiegel, a Jewish Union officer in occupied Memphis. (Courtesy of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.)

Lt. Col. Marcus M. Spiegel of the 120th Ohio, a German immigrant from a hamlet near Worms on the Rhine River, was stationed in occupied Memphis during Hanukkah in December 1862. "Memphis is a beautyful City," he wrote his wife, "full at present of trading Yehudim, Women and Contrabands [freed slaves]; the Cotton buying attracts many men here and often large fortunes are made in a short time." As he walked along the riverbank, Spiegel saw "a Yehudah and his wife," and, as it was the Sabbath, he decided to have a kosher lunch. Spiegel approached the Jewish couple and said, "Happy Sabbath, dear people," frightening them both. Who was this stranger offering

“Happy Sabbath” while dressed in a Yankee uniform, sword, and spurs? The couple, recognizing a fellow Jew, told Spiegel he could eat a kosher lunch with them or he could go to Mr. Levy’s boardinghouse. When Spiegel arrived at Levy’s, he found thirty very surprised Jewish Tennesseans. He requested a Hanukkah lunch. The proprietor stared at the young officer, and believing he recognized him, asked Spiegel his name. “Dear God,” Levy exclaimed, “a son of Rabbi Mosche of Abenheim, a lieutenant colonel.” It turned out that Spiegel knew a number of the German immigrants who had settled in Memphis, including Levy, who had known his family in the Old Country. Spiegel was later killed in a Confederate ambush on the Red River near Alexandria, Louisiana. His brother Joseph Spiegel founded the Spiegel Catalog Company.[114]

B’nai B’rith, the Jewish fraternal order, flourished in occupied Memphis. By 1865 it had 167 members. The Southern Club, a Jewish social club, changed its name to the Memphis Club to suit the occupying army and held theatrical performances in English and German. Jewish businessmen, mainly shopkeepers, clothiers, grocers, and auctioneers, accommodated themselves to the situation. New arrivals from the North opened more Jewish businesses during the occupation. Many catered to the Union soldiers. M. Simon at 194 Main Street advertised that he “has a large lot of military goods for uniforms including brass buttons.” By 1863 there were fifteen Jewish merchants selling military clothing and a number in the grocery business. Others sold liquor, tobacco, cigars, and cotton. H. Koninsky on Beale Street advertised tents: “Father Abraham of old once pitched his tent on the plains of Mamre, and the children of Abraham have pitched their tents on the hills of Vicksburg.” Still others ran boardinghouses, sold jewelry, and engaged in manufacturing. “The large Jewish element of Memphis was made manifest yesterday,” the *Daily Bulletin* noted on September 24, 1863, “by the number of closed stores on Main Street. The Day of Atonement was very generally observed by those of Jewish faith.”[115]

Between 1860 and 1864, the Children of Israel congregation retired its debt. It had eighty-seven members in 1863. In 1862 a Polish congregation, Beth El Emeth (House of the True God) was founded and followed the *Minhag Polen*. Peres, the rabbi who sued Children of Israel, became the rabbi of the Polish congregation, and the service was “strictly Orthodox,” an advertisement noted. (The name, House of the True God, obviously made a statement about Peres’s former more liberal congregation.) Even the Civil War could not stop Memphis Jewry’s own civil war.[116]

The Ochs family was typical, in many respects, of Tennessee’s Jewry. Both Julius and Bertha Ochs had come from Bavaria, Julius from Fürth near Nürnberg, where his family had lived for hundreds of years, and Bertha from Rhenish Bavaria in the Palatinate.[117] Julius was a well-educated young man who spoke seven languages, played the guitar, was an amateur actor, and even composed light operas. He studied at a military academy in Cologne, but when his father died his older brother apprenticed him to a bookbinding firm. Julius rebelled, and in 1845 left for America to seek his fortune. He changed his name from Ochsenhorn to Ochs; settled in Louisville, where his two sisters lived; and became a peddler. When war with Mexico was declared he enlisted and, because of his military education, was made a drill sergeant. After the war he worked in a variety of jobs—as a road salesman for a jewelry company, as a small dry goods store owner, in municipal government, and even as a rabbi—in Mississippi, Kentucky, and Louisiana. He settled briefly in Natchez and ran a small store. An honest, likable, and intellectual man, he sometimes played his guitar at plantation parties.[118]

In Natchez he met Bertha Levy, an attractive and opinionated young lady who had left Bavaria for very different reasons. Bertha had been involved in the liberal politics of the 1848 revolution, and as a student in Heidelberg she had participated in antigovernment demonstrations. Her family feared she might be arrested, so she came to live with her uncle in Natchez.[119] Bertha Levy met Julius Ochs at his store in Natchez in 1851. However, they did not become involved until years later, when they met again at a reception in Nashville, where Bertha's parents had recently arrived from Bavaria. They were married in 1856.[120]

The Ochses lived in Tennessee for a time, but Julius abhorred slavery. "These sights sickened me," he wrote in a memoir for his children. "Once I saw a poor wretch so horribly beaten that tears of pity gushed from my eyes."[121] Julius and Bertha moved to Cincinnati, and Julius went back out on the road as a traveling salesman. He was evidently a failure as a businessman; at times he barely provided for his family. In 1858 Bertha gave birth to Adolph Ochs, the future publisher of the *New York Times*.

When the Civil War began, Julius joined the Union army and served as a captain. Bertha and her family remained loyal to the South. Her brother served in the Confederate army. In fact, this pro-Southern wife of a Federal officer smuggled quinine across the river from Cincinnati to Kentucky to help the beleaguered Confederates. There is a family story that Bertha pushed her baby carriage, which contained contraband material hidden under one of the little Ochs boys, across the river to the Confederates. Adolph Ochs recalled in later years that "mother gave father a lot of trouble in those days." According to their granddaughter, Bertha's smuggling drugs to the Confederates came to the attention of the Union authorities and a warrant was issued for her arrest. As a loyal Union officer, Julius was able to have the charges dismissed. In 1928, *The Confederate Veteran* wrote, "for a mother in Israel to defy her husband and an entire army was no mean assertion of militant feminism in those days."[122]

In 1864 Julius and Bertha and their young family moved to Knoxville, which was then occupied by the Union army. Adolph Ochs began his newspaper career as a paperboy in Knoxville. Julius became active in the Knoxville Jewish community and served as unofficial rabbi.[123]

Because Memphis was a large port on the Mississippi River and a center of cotton trading and illegal speculation, and because many Northern Jews flocked to Memphis, Tennessee became the flash point of the most infamous anti-Semitic event of the Civil War. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant issued Order Number 11 expelling all the Jews from the military district. This order, issued by Grant on December 17, 1862, stated: "The Jews, as a class violating every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Department and also department orders, are hereby expelled from the department of Tennessee [which included parts of Tennessee, Mississippi, and Kentucky] within twenty-four hours from the receipt of this order." Post commanders were ordered to see that "all of this class of people" be furnished with passes and made to leave the state. Jews were forced out of Paducah, Kentucky, and Holly Springs and Oxford, Mississippi, and some were imprisoned.[124] A Union colonel told one victim that he was forced to flee because "You are Jews, and are neither a benefit to the Union or Confederacy." The Jews of Paducah protested this "inhuman order" directly to Lincoln, and their leaders met with the president in Washington. Lincoln is said to have asked, "And so the children of Israel were driven from the happy land of Canaan?" Cesar Kaskel of Paducah told Lincoln, "Yes, and that is why we have come unto Father Abraham's bosom, asking protection." Lincoln replied, "And this protection they shall have at once."[125]

Henry Halleck, the Union general in chief, could not have cared less about the Jews. He wired Grant that neither he nor the president had any objection "to your expelling traitors and Jew peddlers." Atty. Gen. Edward Bates told the president he was indifferent to Jewish protests. Lincoln disagreed, stating that "to condemn a class is, to say the least, to wrong the good with the bad," and he countermanded an order which would never have been issued by Robert E. Lee or Jefferson Davis.[126]

Thus, Jewish Southerners faced all of the same perils as their fellow Confederates during the war—the death of loved ones, the collapse of the economy, want, hunger, privation, and the loss of a cause they held dear—and one unique peril their fellow Southerners did not face: anti-Semitism. When the Civil War began, many Southerners had never met a Jew. There were fewer than 25, 000 Jews in the entire South, and the great majority lived in the larger cities. The average Southerner's ideas about Jews were formed by images learned in Gentile churches, or from their contact with Jewish peddlers or storekeepers. For the most part, these images and impressions were positive. Jewish merchants lived in the communities where they conducted business. Their customers knew them. Peddlers were a welcome treat in isolated Southern hamlets, farms, and plantations. They brought goods which were unavailable and they brought news of the outside world. The peddlers were unusual, interesting, and often entertaining. Thus, the image of the Jewish businessman, merchant, and peddler before the war was positive. And, of course, the few highly visible Jewish members of the Southern elite were generally accorded great respect in a hierarchical society which deferred to those of wealth and privilege.

In the first year of the war, when the South was optimistic of victory and food and goods were still available, there were no recorded anti-Semitic incidents in the South. As the war entered its second year, however, the Union blockade, inflation, hoarding, counterfeit money, the limitations on trade, the inability of planters and ordinary farmers to sell cotton and produce, the appearance of more German, foreign, and Jewish traders, and the general disruption of the Southern economy began to have an effect on the Southern people. Goods became scarce. The South was an agricultural country heavily dependent on imports for the necessities of life—clothing, coffee, tea, manufactured goods of all kinds, and, in some parts of the South, even food. Jewish merchants supplied many of these items. And most of these merchants were immigrant German Jews who spoke with a German accent. Of course, there were many merchants who were not Jews. Ironically, many merchants in the South were Christian German immigrants who also spoke with German accents and were indistinguishable from Jewish Germans in the eyes of Southerners.

German immigrants, both Jew and Gentile, were oddities in the antebellum South, and in much of the North as well. It is an irony of history that the first significant outbreak of anti-Semitism in Southern history was directed at German Jews as much because they were Germans as Jews. In many instances the dislike for German immigrants exceeded anti-Jewish discrimination. According to Daniel O'Flaherty, the German immigrants' harsh pronunciation of English, their drinking habits, differences in their observation of the Sabbath, "their heel-clicking reverence for authority, and, above all, their Teutonic industry," earned the enmity of their neighbors. E. Merton Coulter wrote that in Texas, "the Germans … formed nests of Unionism, which gave the Confederate authorities much trouble."[127] Some German Jews tried to distance themselves from their German roots. Lewis Leon, the dry goods clerk from Charlotte, which hardly had a Jewish population in the 1860s, gave Confederate authorities Sheffield, England, as his birthplace. As a prisoner of war at Elmira Prison, he admitted to Union authorities that he was born in Germany.[128]

To many Southerners beset by growing problems of scarcity and deprivation, these foreign-sounding people loomed much larger in their lives than they had before Fort Sumter. In August 1862, a group of disgruntled citizens met at the courthouse in Thomasville, Georgia, to protest against Jewish traders. The Union army was on the Florida Gulf Coast only fifty miles away, and the townspeople knew that Georgia's weak defenses might fail. Col. J. L. Seward, a former Congressman, warned of the military threat and of the danger of rapidly rising prices and scarcity of food and supplies. Necessities like salt, which was essential for preserving meat, were already difficult to obtain, and prices had soared. Ignoring the Union naval blockade, inflation, invasion, and the disruption of transportation caused by the war, the colonel blamed the town's woes on foreign counterfeiters and profiteers who were hoarding goods and "demanding exorbitant and ruinous prices by which the families of soldiers are likely to suffer, and be reduced to intolerable want." These villains were, according to Seward, Thomasville's German Jews conspiring with itinerant Jewish peddlers. The crowd was enraged and could have become an unruly mob but for the cool head of the meeting's chairman, W. G. Ponder, who insisted that any action taken be legal and deliberate.[129]

A committee of five, headed by Seward, drew up resolutions that condemned "German Jews traveling to and fro" in this part of the state who were "putting in circulation spurious Confederate currency" and local German Jews "engaged in extortions in trade, and in seeming complicity with the itinerant German Jews." They charged "that these Jews were 'buying up particular localities, articles of prime necessity, thereby producing a scarcity, and transferring such articles to other localities and demanding exorbitant and ruinous prices.'" The resolutions called on "every good citizen to aid in arresting their evils," and "that no German Jews be allowed to settle among us," that the local German Jews be given ten days to leave "and if they do not leave then, that we assemble and take such steps in the premises as may be deemed advisable." A Committee of Vigilance was created to enforce the resolutions.[130]

The resolutions were published in the Thomasville newspaper, and other Georgia newspapers reprinted them. In September a town meeting in Macon was called to address inflated prices and scarcity of goods. The *Macon Journal and Messenger* felt that the Thomasville resolutions were "well worthy of attention—and perhaps, of action in other communities." But, as Louis Schmier wrote, Macon was not Thomasville. Whereas Thomasville had few Jewish residents, Macon had had a sizable Jewish community for more than ten years and "the long-standing respectability of its members, acted as mitigating factors. Any lingering accusations were quickly stilled by the willingness of Macon's Jews to stand up and vouch for their peddling brothers." Moreover, no one could question the Macon Jews' devotion to the Confederacy. Their company had so many local Jews that it was nick-named the "Macon Jewish Company."[131]

When the resolutions were reprinted in the *Savannah Daily Morning News*, the Jews of Savannah were outraged. Some of the Thomasville Jews arrived in Savannah, and the Jewish community called a meeting to protest against the "wholesale slander, persecution and denunciation of a people." Savannah Jews, many of whom were themselves German, issued a resolution condemning the Thomasville resolutions as being "at war with the spirit of the age—the letter of the constitution—and the principles of religion—and can find no parallel except in the barbarism of the Inquisition and the persecution of the Dark Ages." The resolution defended the honor of Southern Jews as honest and faithful and condemned the citizens of Thomas County as "enemies of human liberty and freedom of conscience." The Savannah Jewish committee also took the local newspaper to task for "giving currency to this slander and intolerance," for participating in this "foul wrong," and called on Savannah Jews to boycott the newspaper. The editor of the *Daily Morning News* defended his having reprinted the story as only presenting a news story, and his failure to condemn the resolution as the result of his lack of knowledge of the facts of the case.[132]

Next, Jewish Confederate soldiers joined the fray. Members of the Tattnall Guards wrote a letter, published in the *Savannah Republican*, in which they defended the loyalty and patriotism of "the multitude who have already sacrificed the comforts and ease of civil life" and taken their places among "the heroic defenders of the South." The letter concluded in typical loquacious Southern style: "Go review the mighty hosts who are struggling to achieve our independence—recount the regiments, battalions and companies who compose the noble armies of the South—and wherever, throughout the limits of our territory, you find them arrayed, there you will behold the representatives of our sect, standing side by side with the gallant sons of the soil, enduring the privations of the camp, the hardships and toils of the march, and the dangers and perils of the battle field, to win victory for our arms."

Not to be outdone, the Jewish Confederates of the 32d Georgia Volunteers met on September 16 to protest the Thomasville incident. Pvt. Charles Wessolowsky lambasted the residents of Thomasville: “Let us look at the gentlemen from Thomasville who claim nativity to Thomas County,” he proclaimed, “and see if they themselves don’t partake of this extortion. Behold them coming to market, the one with fowls and the other with eggs; ask their price and ‘two dollars for a pair of chickens and seventy cents for a dozen eggs,’ will be the reply.”

Wessolowsky pointed to the blockade, lack of labor, and the dislocation caused by the war as the problem, not the Jews. The Jews were being made scapegoats, he said, because they had far less influence than their well-connected, non-Jewish competitors. He went for the jugular of the real Thomasville extortionists, who will “push the whole of the crime upon the German Jews, including two who were present at the notorious August 1862 meeting, and clear their own skirts asserting their nativity.” Wessolowsky was a charismatic speaker, and at least one soldier “sat awed, thinking for a moment that he had just heard Moses thundering down from the height of Sinai with admonishments to the Gentiles.” The Jews of the 32d denounced the Thomasville resolutions, in true Southern style, as “unbecoming and unworthy of gentlemen.”[133]

In retrospect, nothing much happened at Thomasville. No Jew was harmed or even personally insulted. No one was hurt. No store was ransacked. Indeed, the great majority of the Jews of Thomasville did not leave the town. The incident did not disturb Yates Levy of Savannah. He, too, looked with disdain at the peddling practices of the newly arrived German Jews. “Of course there is nothing new: there has been a battle royal between some blockheads in Thomasville and the German Jews, a struggle between the fools and the knaves, who are not, however, I believe, worse than their neighbors.”[134] According to Mark Greenberg, the Jews stayed, operated their stores, purchased land, participated in social events, and fought in the Confederate army.[135] After the war, in 1866, there were five Jewish-owned dry goods stores in town. Presumably, they were all German Jews who had started out as peddlers in the area. Their being Jewish was certainly no secret. In July 1860 Benjamin F. Hubert had run an advertisement in the local newspaper announcing: “New Goods! New Goods! Cheaper than the Cheapest! Great Excitement at Receiving Better Bargains Than Jews or Gentiles Offer.”[136]

When the war came, three of the seven eligible Jewish men of Thomasville joined the army: Michael Rosenfeld joined the Ochlockonee Light Infantry, Philip Schiff was a corporal in Company A/F (Thomasville Guards), 29th Georgia, and his brother Tomas served in the same unit.[137] Ironically, Tomas was discharged in 1864 when sixty-three Thomasville residents, including two who were present at the August 1862 meeting, petitioned the governor because Tomas’s skills as a tanner were needed at home.[138] Certainly by the standards of nineteenth-century Europe, which were part of the experience of all German Jewish immigrants, the Thomasville incident was not dangerous. The Jews of Thomasville, or at least the local Jews who had roots in the town, did not live in fear and ignored the whole incident.

The Jews of Macon survived the war alongside their Christian neighbors. Life was difficult for the small merchants who had little to sell. There were tense moments during the war when hungry women marched on the town demanding food and goods from local storekeepers. The Macon Jewish community was well aware that a few Jews were engaged in improper activities, and when Reverend Sternheimer, who had resigned his position as *hazan*, sought to return in June 1864, he was questioned extensively by E. Einstein, the former president of the congregation, about allegations that Sternheimer had been involved in "passing spurious and counterfeit confederate States treasury notes." Einstein asked Sternheimer directly, "upon the honor of a gentleman," whether he had been involved with one Stern and Rosenberg of Columbus, who had been charged with such activities and with whom Sternheimer had boarded. The hazan had heard that Stern and Rosenberg had been arrested, and he immediately returned to Columbus from Mobile to face his accusers rather than flee the country, as he was advised to do by some. No charges were ever brought. Sternheimer cleared his name and returned to Macon to serve the Beth Israel congregation.[139]

Lazarus Straus of Talbotton, Georgia, was not as sanguine as the Jews of Thomasville. When in 1862 the grand jury issued a presentment against "evil and unpatriotic conduct of the representatives of Jewish houses," Straus decided to leave Talbotton.[140] Isidor Straus later recalled that when Jewish merchants, who were engaged in perfectly legitimate business enterprises, were called extortionists, his father immediately let it be known that he would move away from a community which "had cast such a reflection on him, as the only Jew living in their midst." Straus promptly took steps to leave Talbotton, construing the grand jury's action as a personal affront. "Father's action caused such a sensation in the whole county that he was waited upon by every member of the grand jury," Isidor recalled, "also by all the ministers of the different denominations, who assured him that nothing was further from the minds of those who drew the presentment than to reflect on father, and that had anyone had the least suspicion that their action could be construed as they now saw it clearly might be construed, it never would have been permitted to be so worded." The elder Straus was not persuaded. He moved his business and family to Columbus, Georgia. "The loyalty and good will of the people towards him was made manifest to him, as he often stated, by the customers from Talbotton who visited his store in Columbus, not a few of them never having traded with him while in Talbotton, but who became regular clients in Columbus," Isidor later recounted.[141]

Wartime Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy, was packed with soldiers, government and war workers, refugees, prostitutes, vagrants, criminals, and con artists. Goods became scarce. Prices and inflation soared. “Richmond was, by far, the most expensive, corrupt, overcrowded and crime-ridden city in the Confederacy,” Ernest B. Furgurson concluded.[142] A gallon of cane syrup was one dollar in rural Georgia but fifty dollars in Richmond. To make matters worse, foreign traders, peddlers, and merchants, many of whom were German immigrants, had come to Richmond, a fertile field for small businessmen, the scrupulous and unscrupulous alike. “Temptations of profiteering were too strong for the flesh to bear,” Charles P. Roland wrote, “innumerable Southerners ignored the strictures of press and public, the exhortations of the government, and the pangs of conscience and yielded themselves to the seduction of easy gain.” Richmonders, in particular, were sensitive to foreigners who could be, and frequently were, spies for the Union army. And many in Richmond believed that the Union army was made up of German and Irish mercenaries.[143] Richmond was also home to the Confederate Congress, which gave vent to all of the frustrations of the entire South and contained a substantial number of demagogues and bigots, such as Congressman Henry S. Foote of Tennessee.[144]

Foote, bald, small, and of “colicky delivery,” was by far the most obnoxious anti-Semitic Confederate Congressman. He was widely perceived as hotheaded, irresponsible, and foolish, although tenacious as an opponent. He detested Jefferson Davis and attacked Judah Benjamin, whom he called “Judas Iscariot Benjamin,” and Jews in general, in order to strike at the president. In January 1863, in a debate on drafting foreigners, Foote loosed a torrent of criticism against the Jews. He claimed Jews had flooded the Confederacy and controlled nine-tenths of the business, all “by official permission” and the protection of the government, an allusion to Benjamin. If “the present state of things were to continue,” he said, “the end of the war would probably find nearly all the property of the Confederacy in the hands of Jewish Shylocks.” The Jews of Richmond, however, did not fear Foote. “That a man like Foote should habitually denounce the Jews is to be expected,” a Jewish reader wrote the *Richmond Sentinel* in January 1865. “He denounces everybody and every thing; his mouth is a ‘well-spring’ of slander.”[145] Pvt. Eugene Henry Levy was a spectator of the Confederate Congress in December 1864. He listened “with disgust to the badinage of Foote and other buncome orators.”[146]

Foote was not the only Confederate Congressman to attack the Jews. A few other members expressed anti-Semitic sentiments arising out of scarcity of supplies, inflation, speculating, and profiteering, but no legislation was ever passed directed at Jews, and no action ever undertaken against the Jews. Foote, in fact, had no following and was expelled from the Confederate Congress for fleeing to the North in February 1865.[147]

The Richmond press gave vent to the public's war-weariness and insecurity. One writer to the *Richmond Enquirer* contended that it was blasphemous for Benjamin to serve as secretary of state.[148] *Southern Punch*, published in Richmond, mocked Jews and foreigners, calling merchants "Jew and Yankee extortioners," "dirty, greasy Jew peddler," "Shylocks," and the like.[149] Alluding to the well-known fact that Jewish merchants and peddlers cheerfully sold goods to blacks, *Southern Punch* wrote: "Who are our capitalists at the present time? …. The dirty, greasy Jew peddler, who might be seen with a pack on his back a year or two since, bowing and cringing even to Negro servants, now struts by with the air of a millionaire."[150] The *Richmond Examiner* printed a letter in December 1862 tided "The Jews' Harvest," complaining about clothing merchants: "Specimens" of the "accursed race … fatten upon the calamities of the very people who are giving them a home," and claiming that Jews "are few indeed in the army, unless as camp followers, where they can follow their natural occupation." In a tirade laced with anti-Semitic clichés, this writer also charged that Jews were not productive citizens: "Did anyone ever see a Jew mechanic, a Jew farmer, or a Jew producer of any kind?" They were, in short, "the extortioners of the world." The editor agreed, describing Jews as disloyal and unpatriotic and denouncing "unkempt Israelites in our marts…. Every auction room is packed with greasy Jews."[151] Many a Richmonder believed the Jews dominated the retail trade, and some resented it. Sallie B. Putnam, a prominent society belle, wrote in her memoir, *Richmond During the War*, that one could "almost have imagined being in a strange city, from the signs over the doors of the shops … Israel and David, and Moses and Jacobs, and Hyman and Levy, and Guggenheimer and Rosenheimer, and other names innumerable of the Ancient People, were prominent, instead of the old Anglo-Saxon which had designated the most important business firms of Richmond…. The war was a harvest to that class of our population."[152] (In all fairness, Mrs. Putnam concluded that while the Jews were "much abused for extortion," they were "quite equaled" by "our own people," who should have set a better example.[153])

John Beauchamp Jones, a government clerk, an author, and a pathological anti-Semite, was obsessed about Jews and denounced them regularly in the safety of his private diary.[154] "Having no nationality, all wars are harvests for them," he wrote in September, 1861. Jones believed that illicit trade had depleted the country of gold "and placed us at the feet of the Jew extortioners…. These Jews have the adroitness to carry their points. They have injured the cause more than the armies of Lincoln. Well, if we gain our independence, instead of being the vassals of the Yankees, we shall find all our wealth in the hands of the Jews." Neither he nor his private observations had any effect on actual events, but he has been extensively quoted by historians as reflecting the prejudice against Jews in wartime Richmond.[155]

Some Richmonders believed that Jews were afraid and unwilling to fight. Coulter writes that the Jews "were especially charged with evading military service" and that "Jewish traders made desperate efforts to secure passports for the North from Judah P. Benjamin, the Jewish Secretary of State …. It was not unusual for them to pay as high as $10, 000.00 for conveyances and bribery of frontier guards to get across the Potomac."[156] Coulter's own old-fashioned prejudice aside, the fact is that many Southerners had no desire to serve in the army, and "Jewish traders" accounted for an infinitesimal percentage of slackers. Anti-Semitism, exacerbated by fear, want, and desperation, exaggerated the failings of a few Jews. Anti-Semitic stereotypes filled many a Southerner's need to believe that looming defeat was not their fault, but that of foreigners and aliens. Thus, Jews got caught up in a general hysteria against merchants, traders, Yankees, foreigners, and Germans (often mistakenly referred to as "Dutch," a corruption of "Deutsche").

Neither the Jews of Richmond nor their Gentile friends and neighbors allowed the anti-Semitic vilification to go unanswered. The editor of the *Richmond Sentinel* criticized the "intolerant and illiberal views and prejudices" against the Jews. These allegations, he felt, "in no way [affected] their individual and personal merits and character." The *Sentinel* responded positively to Jewish pleas for fair play: 'We consider it a duty to hail every good citizen as a brother. We ask him not where he was born or what his faith." The editor of the *Richmond Dispatch* agreed. While some Jews may have speculated in dry goods, Jews were not among those profiteering in food.[157]

Reverend Michelbacher publicly answered the wave of anti-Jewish invective. In Fredericksburg on May 27, 1863, a Confederate Fast Day, he gave a sermon in which he denied that Israelites were speculators or extortioners. If the Jews were guilty, he would say so, as "I always speak of your faults without fear, favor, or affection." But Jewish merchants did not hoard goods. They sold them quickly. And Jews did not sell flour, meal, wheat, corn, bacon, beer, coal, or wood, the basic commodities of speculation. Besides, if the Jews were hoarding, customers would obviously have bought supplies from honest Gentile traders. Michelbacher argued that the real speculators blamed the Jews in order to take the spotlight off their "moonshine" and evil activities.[158]

On October 18, 1863, Beth Ahabah held a congregational meeting to address the looting of merchants' shops and an incident of a rock being thrown through a synagogue window.[159] The congregation urged the Jews of Richmond to hold a mass meeting to consider raising money for the poor and the causes of the recent looting, as well as "such other matters as may be brought before the meeting to vindicate our character as Jews and good citizens."[160] Beth Shalome opposed this plan. "Beth Shalome replied to the overt pressure in a dignified and haughty manner, adumbrating the distinguished heritage of their Sephardic forebearers," Berman wrote. The quiet voice and fine hand of Gustavus A. Myers was undoubtedly at work behind the scenes when the old synagogue resolved that as citizens of Richmond they would "cheerfully" join in any endeavor to relieve the poor so long as all congregations of all religions did so. And they further resolved: "That while this meeting denounces the unfounded aspersions made against the Israelites of this city, and feels satisfied that the acts of our co-religionists can well bear the test of comparison with those of any other denomination in this community for patriotism, charity, or freedom from selfishness; yet think the best and most dignified course to be adopted, will be to treat them with silent contempt, confident that the enlightened and unprejudiced do not join in this crusade against our people."[161]

In the end, like the incident in Thomasville, the sound and fury in Richmond signified nothing. No Jew was molested, no storekeeper injured. Certainly no harm came to any Richmond Jew from the army of Robert E. Lee, the government of Jefferson Davis, or the state of Virginia, or the City Council of Richmond. It was a lot of bombast from a few demagogues and journalists and a minority of a sorely tried and increasingly frustrated populace. The Sephardic tradition of suffering in silence and working closely with those in authority prevailed over the German notion of protests. There is a local Richmond tradition that Adolphus H. Adler, said to be a colonel in the Confederate army, challenged the editor of the *Examiner* to a duel.[162] There is no record of the episode, and Adler was not a Confederate officer, but Jewish Richmonders long cherished the idea.

A few Jews may have felt threatened. Some lost faith in the cause. Philip Whitlock's brother took his family and went up North. The most embarrassing incident of the war for the Richmond Jewish community was the decision by Lewis Hyman, a jeweler and treasurer of Beth Shalome, to sell his assets, convert them to gold and precious stones, and leave for the North with his family. In February 1864, Hyman, his wife, and his party were robbed, and all of their possessions were taken while they were passing Confederate pickets. The anti-Semitic Richmond press gave the story a great deal of coverage to the consternation of the great majority of the Jews of Richmond, who remained loyal to the Confederacy to the end. Even men like Philip Whitlock, a Polish Jew who had served in the Richmond Grays and fought in the war, felt by 1862 that "there was no chance as we were getting weak and the other side were getting stronger."[163]

Other cities and towns of the South were not immune from anti-Jewish outbursts during the Civil War. Richmond was the worst, but there is evidence of other scattered incidents, such as raids on Jewish stores in Georgia by wives of soldiers away with the army and private expressions of anti-Semitism. Emma Holmes of Charleston wrote that "silver cannot be procured, as the Jews have bought up all."[164] And others wrote of Jews extorting high prices, speculating in goods, and engaging in passing counterfeit money.[165] A visitor to Charleston reported that one could "meet more Jews in Charleston than … in Jerusalem," there to buy goods brought in by blockade-runners.[166] Later writers romanticized blockade-running and war profiteering. Margaret Mitchell made an international hero out of Rhett Butler, who, after all, engaged in the sale of scarce goods at a very handsome profit. But Emma Holmes complained in August 1862 that when the blockade-runners arrived, the Jews outbid all others and were "setting up a quantity of little shops."[167] In Memphis, Polish Jews were accused of being involved in stealing, and Rabbi Tuska vigorously defended his co-religionists in the press. "The name of the 'Jew' has been so wantonly and unceremoniously dragged into the several reports," he wrote in the *Memphis Daily Appeal*. Before "the least particle of evidence is obtained … it is at once heralded abroad that Jews 'are to blame.'" 'Why," he asked the editor, "were people identified as Polish Jews when Jews were, like Irish Catholics or German Protestants, citizens of their country and Jewish only in their religious beliefs."[168]

Most Southerners and particularly those in positions of authority and influence were keenly aware of the loyalty of Southern Jews. The *Charleston Courier*, for example, would have no part in anti-Jewish demagoguery:

> We have said, and shall say, and urge our opinions against extortioners and bloodsuckers and prowling beastly bipeds of prey under whatever guise they come, but we protest earnestly and emphatically against any wholesale denunciation of Germans or Jews, or of German Jews. We have no more and no less opposition to an extortioner who happens to be a German or a Jew, than one who is an Englishman, or a Frenchman, or a Welchman, or a Yankee, and a so-called Christian. If there is such an animal as a Christian extortioner, we hate and abhor it, and would gladly exterminate it. Let the offenders and all who trouble our political Israel, and devour people, be rebuked, denounced, execrated, imprisoned, or expelled, if it can be done, but let us hear of no more abuse of a class as a class.[169]

A Confederate army chaplain wrote the *Savannah Daily Morning News* in February 1863 to express his opposition to the "many unfair, and, to my mind, very unjust, as well as injudicious *flings* at this part, no unimportant part, of our fellow citizens."[170] He wrote that there were plenty of Jews in the Confederate army and they were "good, enduring, hard-fighting soldiers" who shared in the danger, privations, battles and marches of all the other soldiers. He even suggested that the Jews of Macon establish the "first Israelite Battalion of the Confederate army. Let them take for the battle flag —'*The Lion of the tribe of Judah*,' and the God of Moses, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will fight their battles for them, and tread our enemies beneath His feet."[171]

Gratz Cohen, a Jewish student at the University of Virginia and scion of the prominent Cohen family of Savannah, wrote his father, Solomon Cohen, on January 9, 1864, "It is a mournful fact that in these troubled times when intolerance & prejudice cast their baneful seed throughout the land, which from one quarter of it to another rings with abuse of God's people, that we have done nothing for our religion & are so blind to our own interests." Jewish wealth had been generously given to all manner of charities, Cohen told his father, but the Jews had not looked after their own interests. The newspapers lifted up their "lying tongues against them & no defending voice has been heard…. Why have we no Jewish newspaper to justify us before the world & explain to us our position, to remind Israel that it is not a race of shopkeepers, but a peculiar people set apart by *Jehovah* for His service & glorification." He suggested the publication of a newspaper in the South devoted to Jewish interests.[172]

Southern Jews were frequently treated worse than other Southerners by the occupying Union army and the Northern press. New Orleans Jewry was subjected to anti-Semitic outbursts from "Beast" Butler. In 1862 he accused New Orleans "army contractors, principally Jews" of making "fortunes by the war."[173] He swore that Jews "deserve to receive at the hands of this government what is due to the Jew Benjamin."[174] All Jews, according to this Massachusetts anti-Semite, were smugglers, and he called Benjamin's brother-in-law "a Jew famed for a bargain." Later in the war, the *Jewish Record*, a partisan newspaper in New York, reported that Butler had said "he could suck the blood of every Jew, and he will detain every Jew as long as he can." Taking their cue from Butler, Northerners who came to occupied New Orleans in 1862 to run the newspapers singled out the Jews for vitriolic treatment. "The Jews in New Orleans and all the South ought to be exterminated," one Associated Press reporter wrote. "They run the blockade, and are always to be found at the bottom of every new villainy."[175] Not to be outdone, the *Chicago Times* reported in July 1862, "The Israelites have come down upon the city [of Memphis] like locusts…. Every boat brings in a load of the hooked-nosed fraternity."[176]

Anti-Semitism, like all prejudice, is irrational. Many nineteenth-century Americans and Europeans used the word "Jew" to denote a cheap, corrupt merchant without necessarily believing all Jews were bad. For example, the British colonel, Arthur J. L. Fremantle, in his memoir, *Three Months in the Southern States*, described Matamores, a town on the border of Texas and Mexico, as "infested with numbers of Jews whose industry spoils the trade of established merchants," and yet this same officer slept in Maj. Raphael J. Moses's tent and described Moses as "a jovial Hebrew."[177]

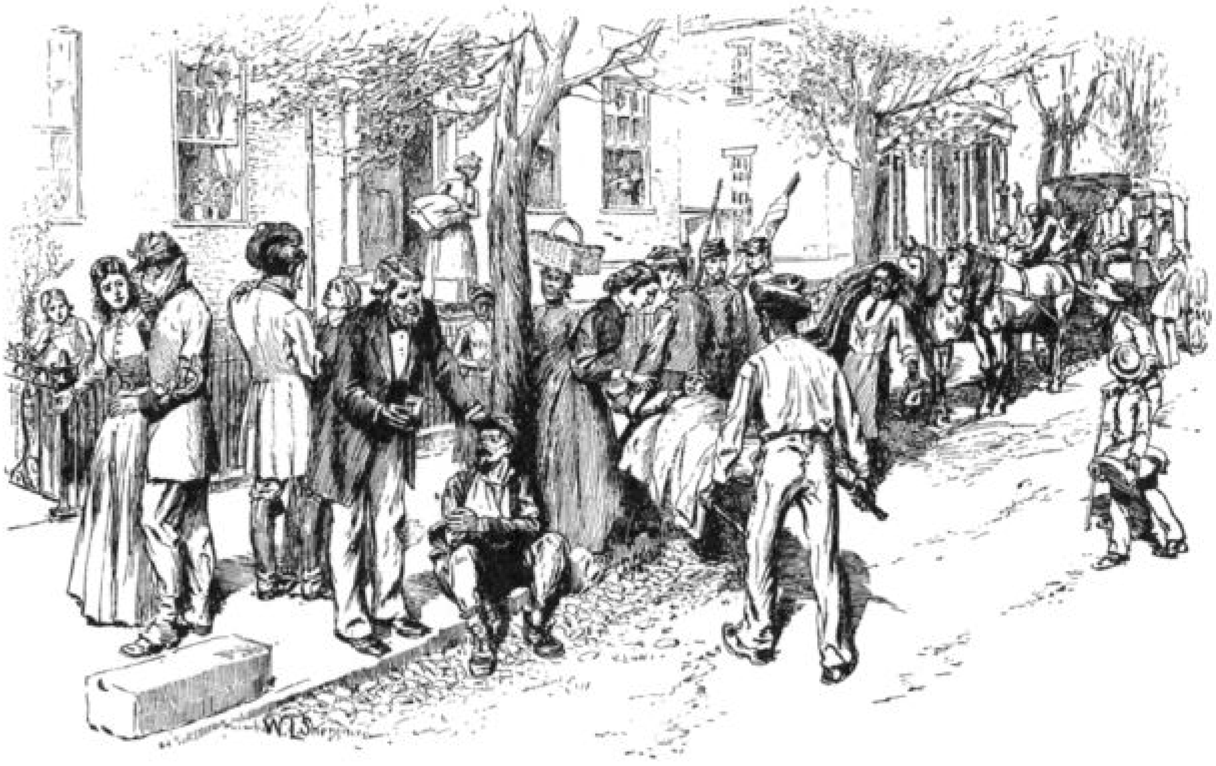
One of the most momentous issues of the Civil War for Northern Jews was the controversy over whether or not Jews could serve as chaplains in the Union army. Prior to the war it was not an issue, but thousands of Jews flocked to the army in 1861, and it therefore became an issue. The Volunteer Bill required that Union chaplains be "regularly ordained minister[s] of some Christian denomination," despite opposition on the floor of the House calling attention to the exclusion of "men … of the Hebrew faith." A controversy arose in the fall of 1861 when a YMCA worker discovered, to his horror, that one Michael Allen, a Jew, was serving as regimental chaplain for men of all faiths with the 5th Pennsylvania Cavalry.[178] Allen was not an ordained rabbi, but he was a student of theology and a competent and well-respected layman. He was forced to resign. This issue, which received widespread publicity in the Northern Jewish and religious press, precipitated a political controversy. The Jewish communities of the North petitioned Congress and the White House until, in July 1862, the law was amended to allow Jews to serve as chaplains.

In contrast to the controversy in the North, the right of Jews to serve as chaplains was never an issue for the Confederacy. Its laws referred to "clergymen," not to specific denominations. While there is no evidence that there ever was an official commissioned Confederate Jewish chaplain, there was never a legal impediment to such service. Two Confederate privates, Uriah Feibelman of Petersburg, Virginia, and B. Nordlinger of Macon, Georgia, apparently officiated as chaplains although not commissioned to do so. Feibelman, who was later ordained, served with the Petersburg Grays, Company C, 12th Virginia. Nordlinger, a bugler with the Macon German Artillery, conducted services for Temple Beth Israel in Macon in 1862.[179] In September 1862, the Confederate Congress debated the Exemption Bill, which excused "every minister of the Gospel" performing such duties from military service. The *Richmond Dispatch* editorialized against the bill if it did not include "Jewish ministers," and the final version referred to "every minister of religion." Without any debate or controversy, the Confederacy treated rabbis as equals of ministers of the Gospel.[180]

The Jews of the North and the South were bound together by ancient ethnic and religious ties, whether they were recent immigrant or third-generation Americans. Thus, while some of the Protestant churches—notably the Baptists and Methodists—divided into Southern and Northern branches, the Jews did not. Of course, American Jewry had no national religious body to divide and few national organizations of any kind. The Jewish boys in the Union army at times elicited the sympathy of Southern Jews and their hospitality, and at other times did not. As Jews, they were keenly aware of how important it was to these young men, in foreign surroundings, to attend Jewish services and celebrate the Jewish holidays. Lt. Simon S. Brucker of the 39th Illinois attended the High Holy Day services in occupied Norfolk, Virginia, and wrote his parents, “Oh! It made me feel as though I were at home among friends once more.” Except that “All the Yehudin in Norfolk are so embittered against the Northern soldiers. I had several little arguments with some of them and find most of them pretty reasonable excepting the young *ladies, they* can outargue the smartest statesman in the world according to their own way.” The men treated him courteously. Myer Levy, a Union soldier in another occupied Virginia town, saw a little boy eating matzo during Passover and asked him for a piece. The child ran inside and shouted “Mother! There’s a ‘damnyankee’ Jew outside!” The mother emerged and, to his relief, invited Levy to the family Seder.[181]

For their part, Northern Jews disagreed with Southern Jews about the war, and, indeed, there were battles which pitted Jewish Confederates against Jewish Yankees. At Gettysburg, for example, the Alabama 12th, led by Major Proskauer, may have met the Illinois 82d, commanded by Lt. Col. Edward S. Salomon. But it does not appear that these feelings prevented that natural tendency of Jews of that era to come to the aid of one of their own. When Jewish Confederates were captured, for example, members of the Jewish community did what they could to relieve their suffering. The Jews of Chicago visited Jewish boys held as prisoners at Camp Douglas. Rabbi Wise attempted on a number of occasions to secure the release of Jewish Confederates from Fort Delaware. He asked the readership of his newspaper to send packages of food and published their names so that relatives in the North could assist.[182]

As the war drew to a close, the dispirited Jewish communities of Savannah, Charleston, Columbia, and Richmond reached out to Northern Jewry for desperately needed aid. They wrote appeals to national Jewish journals and newspapers such as the *Jewish Messenger*, published in New York by Samuel M. Isaacs; the *Israelite*, published in Cincinnati by Rabbi Wise; and the *Occident*, published by Rabbi Leeser in Philadelphia. Leeser, who had lived in Richmond as a young man and who had many friends and relatives in the South, was very supportive of Southern Jewry during and after the war. Indeed, upon his death in 1868, Charleston’s Beth Elohim honored him in a memorial resolution: “As Southerners, we grieve over the loss of a bold defender of our rights, a true and consistent friend to constitutional liberty, who, through great personal peril, remained unshaken in our vindication, undismayed by our reverses, unconquered by our defeat.”[183]



View of Richmond streets, the wounded from the Battle of Seven Pines, 1862. (*Batties and Leaders of the Civil War*.)

In February 1865, the Jews of Savannah wrote to these Jewish periodicals seeking matzo: “Many of the inhabitants, formerly wealthy, are now in extremely straitened circumstances; and besides have entirely lost the means of baking for the ensuing Passover.” Isaacs of the *Messenger* recalled the generosity of Savannah’s Jewish community in its heyday and asked his readers to lay aside any enmity they might harbor and come to their co-religionists’ aid. The response was overwhelming: three thousand pounds of matzo was sent from New York and two thousand pounds from Philadelphia. There was even a proposal in New York to establish a charitable organization to assist Southern Jewry. “This is no time to look back upon petty differences that may have arisen between communities,” the *Jewish Record* urged. “Nor can any one now allude to political discussions or angry passions…. Let all of us join in tendering to our brethren a part of that wealth with which the God of Israel has blessed us.[184]

“By the latter part of 1863,” William M. Robinson Jr. wrote, “Richmond in some respects resembled Chicago at the height of its gangster days.” Crime was rampant. The city was full of criminals, shysters, and cheats.[185] Goods were in short supply. Philip Rosenheim wrote his sister Amelia and brother-in-law Isaac Meinnart that “check muslin could not be found at any price.”[186] The population of Richmond began to suffer terribly from poverty, sickness, and war-weariness. Rev. George Jacobs of Beth

Shalome could not support his family on a rabbi’s salary. He engaged in business to earn additional income. In February 1863, the Jacobs’s five-year-old daughter, Martha, died of scarlet fever. To make matters worse, Jacobs officiated at the funerals of six Richmond Jewish soldiers killed in the war, including that of his young brother-in-law, Pvt. Isaac J. Levy. In his funeral address, Jacobs lamented the loss of “a young man cut down in the springtime of existence, one in the plentitude of health and vigor of manhood.” He spoke of faith in adversity and sorrow. “It is good for me that I have been afflicted,” he quoted the words of David, “that I might better learn Thy ways.” The days of darkness must come, Jacobs told the mourners, and “those whose faith is well founded” will be prepared to meet adversity.[187]

Samuel Yates Levy, writing in Savannah in November 1863, prayed for peace, victory, and humility:

And as Thou led’st Thy chosen people forth

From Egypt’s sullen wrath, oh King of Kings!

So smite the armies of the cruel North

And bear us to our hopes “on eagle’s wings.”

But should Thy wisdom still defer the day—

The wish’d for day our freedom shall be won—

Oh grant us the humility to say,

Not human will but Thine, oh Lord, be done.[188]

Henry Timrod, the author of “La Belle Juive,” died in poverty and sickness in 1867. He was later honored, more in death than in life, as the poet laureate of the Confederacy. A bust of Timrod now graces the entrance to Washington Park next to City Hall in Charleston. There for all time Henry Timrod stares at St. Michael’s Church across Broad Street, where in September 1863 he dared not intrude on the Jewish beauty, Rachel Lyons.

CHAPTER 6

★

Two Jewish Confederate Sisters

My only wish was to live and die among them, growing each day better from contact with their gentle, kindly sympathies and heroic hearts.

—Phoebe Pember, *A Southern Woman's Story* (1879)

To the *women of the South* I look for approval.

—Eugenia Phillips, on her return from Union imprisonment, 1862

IF IT CAN BE SAID that there were Jewish aristocrats in the Old South, then the Levy sisters exemplified the Southern Jewish elite. Eugenia and Phoebe Levy were born and grew up in Charleston, South Carolina, in its heyday in the early 1800s. T. C. DeLeon described Eugenia as "one of the most picturesque personages in Confederate history … a most potent and popular one in Washington society … she had great goodness of heart, and was ever loyal in her friendships [which] included some of the most notable women." Of Phoebe he wrote: "A belle and early a widow, she made herself loved in the army camps by that good work of her Chimborazo Hospital." Eugenia's 1902 obituary linked the two famous Confederate sisters: "Two more brilliant women than Mrs. Phillips and her sister, Mrs. Pember, of Savannah, who frequently visited her, were not to be found in Washington, and in those days many famous wits and beauties were gathered here." Another recalled the sisters as "the toasts of the day." They were, without a doubt, two of the Confederacy's most interesting women.[1]

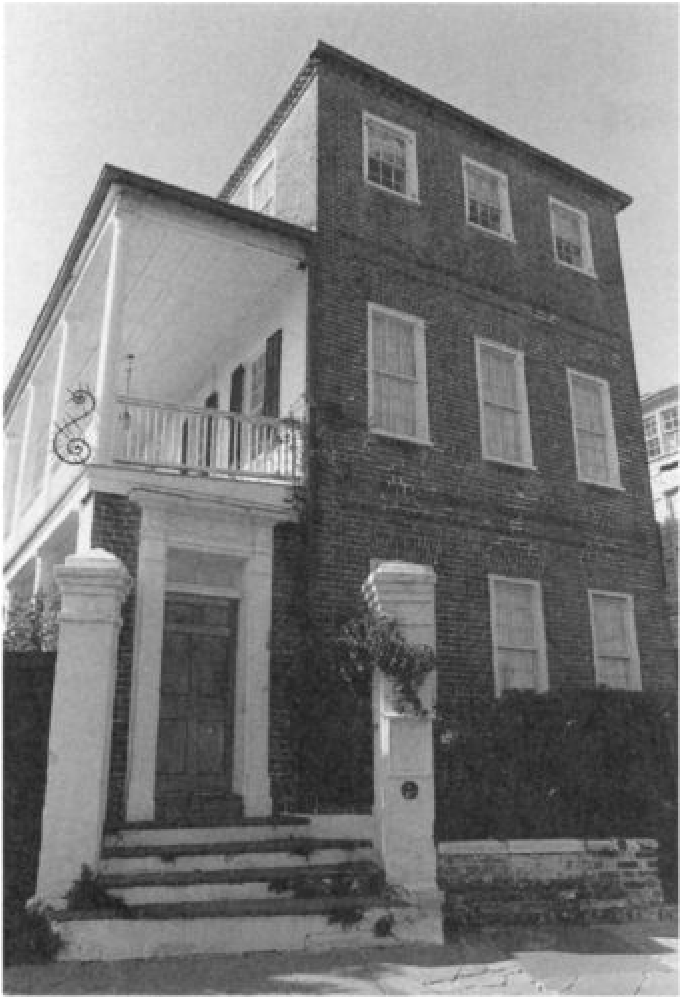
Their parents, Jacob Clavius Levy and Fanny Yates Levy, were educated, cultured, and wealthy Charlestonians. Jacob, a Charleston native, met Fanny on a visit to Liverpool while on a European tour. His foreign bride was, according to Charleston Jewish tradition, the admiration of the whole city. It was said that, at her first appearance in the dress circle of the old Charleston Theatre in Broad Street "the whole house rose in tribute to her matchless beauty." Judging from her portrait painted by Thomas Sully in 1842, Mrs. Levy was indeed a beautiful and sophisticated lady.[2]

Phoebe Yates Pember was born in Charleston in 1823 into a well-to-do Jewish family. Her father, Jacob Clavius Levy, was active in Beth Elohim. She married Thomas Pember, a Gentile, who died prior to the war. A widow and feeling restless, Mrs. Pember left her parents' home in Marietta, Georgia, in December 1862 and went to wartime Richmond to become the first matron of the Chimborazo Hospital. (Courtesy of *Civil War Times*.)

Jacob Levy was prominent in the business affairs of Charleston. He was a director of the Union Insurance Company, a delegate to the Knoxville Railroad Convention in 1836, a member of the Charleston Chamber of Commerce, and was affiliated with the Union Party in the Nullification crisis. He was a pioneer in the insurance and railroad industries in the 1830s, and he pursued other interests as well. He was a member of the Charleston Library Society and, according to a great-granddaughter, was "quite literary." The soirées he gave were among the events of Charleston's social season.[3]

Levy was also a devout and practicing Jew. His father, Moses Levy, had served as president of Beth Elohim and, in 1838, in his nineties, he had rushed to the synagogue to save the sacred Torah scrolls from loss in a fire. The Jacob Levy family worshiped at Beth Elohim, a short walk from their home on East Bay Street. During a four-year period when there was no regular rabbi at Beth Elohim, he and two other members of the congregation took turns officiating. He served as treasurer of the congregation; wrote one of the hymns used in the consecration of the Temple in 1841; and wrote a book entitled *Vindicae Judearum, A History of the Jewish People*. “That history,” he held, “has been the moral and religious teaching of the world; it has been the source of the national life of the most remarkable people on the face of the earth.” This book apparently was never published, but Levy did publish a scholarly article on “The Reformed Israelites” in the *Southern Quarterly Review* in 1844.[4]

Eugenia Phillips was born in Charleston in 1819. A high-spirited woman, she married a successful lawyer, Philip Phillips, who was also active in Beth Elohim as a young man. The couple moved to Mobile, where they had nine children. They moved to Washington when Mr. Phillips was elected to Congress. Mrs. Phillips was arrested twice by Union authorities, first in Washington for spying and then in New Orleans for mocking Union soldiers. Mary Chesnut referred to her and fellow spy Rose Greenhow as "saints and martyrs and patriots." (Author's collection.)



The East Bay Street home of Jacob and Fanny Levy in Charleston. (Author's collection. Photograph taken by Michael Levkoff.)

Jacob and Fanny Levy lived at 301 East Bay Street in a grand mansion built between 1811 and 1816 by his father, Moses Levy, a native of Krakow, Poland. Situated in Ansonborough, the house still stands. Their neighbors were the Gadsdens, the Heywards, and the Laurenses. The Levys soon filled their spacious house with seven children: the eldest was Henrietta (1818); then Eugenia (1819); Martha Sarah (1821);

Phoebe (1823); Samuel Yates (1827); Emma (1832); and Fanny (1840). The children were undoubtedly raised in the Jewish religion and attended services at Beth Elohim. In 1848 the family moved to Savannah, Georgia, where Jacob Levy died in 1875. Fanny lived into her late eighties. Martha never married but was a "gifted and popular woman," according to DeLeon. Henrietta married the prominent Savannah lawyer Octavus Cohen. Emma married Samuel Prioleau Hamilton, whose father was a former governor of South Carolina. Yates Levy became a lawyer, newspaper editor, and accomplished equestrian, serving for a time as an officer in the Savannah Jockey Club.[5]

By all accounts, the youthful Eugenia Levy was the quintessential Southern belle. Given her beauty and background, Eugenia had her choice of suitors. She chose Philip Phillips, a bright, young Jewish Charlestonian from a modest background. She chose well.

Phillips was born in Charleston in 1807, the son of a German Jewish immigrant, Aaron Phillips, and a native-born mother, Caroline Lazarus, whose father had fought in the American Revolution. He studied under Isaac Harby, read law under the tutelage of the eminent Charleston lawyer John Gadsden (formerly the U.S. district attorney) and, at age twenty-two, became a successful lawyer. When he was twenty-one, he served as secretary of the Reformed Society of Israelites. His father, like Eugenia's, served as president of Beth Elohim. When Phillips joined the bar, he relocated to Cheraw, South Carolina, where he rode the circuit, as Abraham Lincoln did about the same time. In the 1830 Nullification crisis, Phillips was a staunch Unionist, a stance he maintained up to and through the Civil War. He was one of four Jewish South Carolinians who attended the Nullification Convention in Columbia, where he distinguished himself as a brave and vigorous defender of the Union. (Phillips and Chapman Levy were Unionists; Philip Cohen and Myer Jacobs favored nullification.)[6]

Many South Carolinians moved west in the 1830s, and Phillips decided to seek his fortune in Mobile, Alabama, where he lived until 1853. In 1836 Phillips returned to Charleston and, on September 7 of that year, married Eugenia Levy, aged sixteen. Phillips was then 29. Eugenia described herself as a "delicate" woman, but, as we shall see, this was hardly the case. She raised nine children, was incarcerated twice for her pro-Southern sympathies, and lived to the age of eighty-three.[7]

Phillips was a successful attorney in Mobile, where, among other clients, he represented the Bank of Mobile and numerous commercial interests. Eugenia's time was devoted to their growing family. During the eighteen years they lived in Mobile, she bore seven children: Clavius, Fanny, Caroline (Lina), Salvadora, Eugene, John Walker and John Randolph. Three more, Emma, William Hallett, and Philip, were born in Washington in the 1850s. The family first resided in the Somerville area in the western suburbs of Mobile and then on Mobile Bay. One house was destroyed by fire, and the family lost nearly every possession. Mrs. Phillips later recalled, “The picture of my two oldest children, Clavius and Fanny, was rescued from the flames by their faithful colored nurse, and now adorns our parlor at Washington.” Active in Mobile society, the Phillipses entertained the Hungarian liberator, Lajos Kossuth, on his visit to their city.[8]

Phillips continued his active interest in politics and published a digest of the decisions of the Alabama Supreme Court. He was elected to the Alabama legislature in 1844, served as chairman of that body’s committee on Federal relations, was reelected in 1852, and served as chairman of the committee on internal improvements. Like Judah Benjamin and David Yulee, he was a proponent of a modern railroad system. Chairman of the Alabama Democratic Party, Phillips was a delegate to the 1852 Democratic Party Convention, where he made a speech in support of Franklin Pierce’s bid for the presidency. He and President Pierce later became close friends.

Philip Phillips, Eugenia Phillips’s husband, was a moderate and opposed secession. The author of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, he was a brilliant lawyer. This photograph shows him as an older man, after the war. (Courtesy of American Jewish Historical Society, Waltham, Mass., and New York City.)

In 1853 Phillips was elected to the U.S. Congress from Alabama. He was intimately involved in the negotiations and debate over the Kansas-Nebraska Act, apparently being the only Southern Representative who understood that the technical language of the Compromise of 1820 barred slavery perpetually in the territories at issue. Phillips, a moderate Democrat, was sought out by Stephen A. Douglas and John C. Breckinridge, who "begged [him] to find the least inflammatory language to accomplish modification of the Missouri Compromise." Phillips was then to clear the wording with the key Southern leaders of the Congress. They met the next day in a smoke-filled room at the Patent Office near the Phillipses' home, where all agreed on Phillips's amendments. Phillips's language, which did not repeal the Compromise of 1820, nevertheless made it "inoperative and void" in Kansas-Nebraska. "Not since the cotton gin," William Freehling has written, "had the Patent Office observed a southern invention so fateful as Phillips' phraseology."[9] It was obvious that Phillips possessed an extraordinary legal mind. His legal ability and his talent for consensus-building earned the instant respect of his colleagues and the Washington legal establishment. By 1860 he was described by Mary Chesnut and others as "a celebrated lawyer."[10]

Phillips decided not to run for reelection to the House but to stay in Washington. His law practice had suffered, and he needed to provide for his family. The family was also now part of the Washington establishment. They were close friends of President and Mrs. Pierce and socialized with them frequently During his days in Congress, Phillips had developed personal relationships with Jefferson Davis, the senator from Mississippi; Edwin M. Stanton, the former attorney general of the United States and future secretary of war under Lincoln; as well as William H. Seward, Lincoln's future secretary of state. Seward, a neighbor, was a frequent visitor in the Phillipses' home and, as Caroline Phillips Myers recalled later, "many were the sharp and witty encounters between my Mother and this distinguished man, who afterwards became her enemy on the ever agitating question of slavery."[11] Mrs. Phillips had many friends, among them Rose O'Neal Greenhow, Washington's most notable hostess, the daughter of a prominent planter family from Maryland and the aunt of Mrs. Stephen A. Douglas. She also appeared to carry on extended flirtations with Joseph Holt, then a member of the cabinet, and Sen. Stephen R. Mallory of Florida.[12]

It is impossible for historians to know about the private lives of people, but Mary Chesnut thought Eugenia Phillips, who was after all a married woman, was more than a flirt. "I wish Mr. Mallory would not tell me so much of his flirtation with Mrs. Phillips," she wrote in her dairy in March 1861. "I do not think it as innocent as he pretends, but it's none of my business." When the Yankees seized Mrs. Phillips's correspondence, "Mallory & Holt may *tremble*," she wrote, "from what I know of the scandals."[13]

The Phillipses did not forget their Jewish roots. Mr. Phillips led the Jewish delegation to President Buchanan to seek relief for Jews from the American-Swiss Treaty of 1855, and he spoke at the laying of the cornerstone at Temime Derech, a New Orleans synagogue, in 1866.[14] Clara Solomon mentions seeing one of the Phillips daughters, whom she calls "Beauty" (probably Fanny), at Yom Kippur services at the Dispersed of Judah synagogue in September 1861 and two of the Phillips girls at Passover in April 1862. Indeed, it appears that one or both of the Phillips girls attended regularly. Clearly, the Jewish community of New Orleans perceived the Phillipses as Jews.[15]

The three Phillips girls inherited their mother's beauty and graces, "but not … her satiric turn." Fanny, Caroline, and Emma became popular belles and were all considered beauties in a society where plain women were exceptional. When Buchanan became president, the Phillipses visited his daughter Harriet Lane, the president's hostess at the White House. 'We were present," one of the daughters recalled, "at her private entertainment given to the Prince of Wales." Mrs. Clement Clay remembered a musical performance at the White House during the Buchanan presidency. "Among the guests on that occasion," she wrote, "were Miss Phillips of Alabama and her cousin, Miss Cohen of South Carolina, who were brilliant amateur players with a local reputation. They were the daughter and niece, respectively, of Mrs. Eugenia Phillips… At the invitation of Miss Lane, the Misses Phillips and Cohen took their places at the piano and performed a brilliant and intricate duet."[16]

Not since Andrew Jackson arrived in Washington had a change in administrations been so dramatic as in 1860, when Abraham Lincoln replaced James Buchanan. Southerners had held prominent places in the Buchanan cabinet, and Southern senators dominated the Senate. Indeed, Southerners dominated Washington itself in the antebellum era. Ladies like Eugenia Phillips felt that they were the leaders of "polite society" in the nation's capital. With the arrival of the Lincoln administration, however, the residents of Washington realized that the Republican political revolution was a social revolution as well. The city, Mrs. Phillips said, was "disgraced with Lincoln's low soldiery." As the Southern states began to secede and the Southern congressmen withdrew, those Southerners remaining in Washington considered themselves to be citizens of another country and no longer loyal to the old Federal Union. In response to the crises, Eugenia and Rose Greenhow organized a committee to aid Confederate prisoners and took relief packages to the Old Capital Prison.[17] Some of these Southerners began to engage in what can only be described as espionage activities—providing information to the newly established Confederate government about military affairs, troop movements, politicians, and the general activities of the Federal government. Eugenia Phillips engaged in exacdy the same kind of espionage. Strictly speaking, these activities were treasonous, and the Federal government was in no mood for them, even if carried on by witty, attractive, socially prominent Southern belles. Greenhow knew what she was doing in recruiting beautiful women to extract information from gullible officers.[18]

Eugenia and Philip could not have had a greater divergence of opinion on slavery and secession. As in many marriages, the partners differed markedly in their temperament. Philip was a person of calm and moderate disposition, not inclined to radical ideas, a conservative who believed deeply in the status quo and the American legal system. Eugenia, the daughter and friend of Southern aristocrats and an enthusiastic participant in the Southern social scene, was an ardent Southern partisan who was a vociferous supporter of the Southern cause. In this, she was not alone. The entire Levy family—all of the generations—supported the war. Sister Phoebe waxed eloquent on the topic of the patriotism of Southern women. The Levy men enlisted[19]; but Philip thought secession foolhardy and had little use for the institution of slavery. He even attempted to stem the tide of secession.[20]

The Phillipses' political activities were immediately suspect because of Eugenia's vocal public support for the Southern cause, despite Philip's antisecession views. By late July 1861, despondency spread over the North when the defeat at First Manassas, or Bull Run, became known. Southern sympathizers were arrested. The most famous Southern belle to be detained was Eugenia's good friend Rose O'Neal Greenhow. She had provided the Confederates with Gen. Irvin McDowell's plans for the First Manassas campaign using a secret code provided by General Beauregard's staff. She was arrested on August 23, 1861, and on August 24, Eugenia and Philip Phillips were also arrested.[21]

Mr. Phillips's office was upstairs in their house on I Street. While he was working at his desk, a Federal officer entered the house and told Phillips that he was under arrest. Detectives searched the house, and an officer seized Phillips's papers. When the officers were finished, Eugenia and daughters Fanny and Caroline, as well as Eugenia's sister Martha Levy, were imprisoned in two dirty rooms in the attic story of Mrs. Greenhow's residence on Sixteenth Street, where officials could conveniently guard the women together. They had a broken stove, a punch bowl which could be used for a washbasin, and two filthy straw mattresses. It was later dubbed "Fort Greenhow" and "Greenhow Prison."[22]

Eugenia's innocent husband was under house arrest for a week. Mrs. Phillips and her daughters were able to receive letters and baskets of fruit from her husband and occasional visits, but Union authorities placed a guard with a musket at their table to listen to their conversation. "It is but justice to this man [the guard] to say he appeared much ashamed of the ignoble part assigned to him. Our rebel hearts, however, enabled us to rise superior to the devices of our enemies. Our conversation, which was one of the merriest, was conducted in French." She celebrated her twenty-fifth wedding anniversary while imprisoned.[23] But, she was nevertheless unrepentant: "Again I ask myself what is my crime? If an ardent attachment to the land of my birth and expression of deepest sympathy with my relatives and friends in the South constitute treason—then I am indeed a traitor! If hostility towards Black Republicanism, its sentiments and policy—is a crime—I am self-condemned … !"[24]

The Federal authorities could find no evidence with which to charge Eugenia, but they would not release her. Southerners were outraged at the treatment accorded Eugenia Phillips and Rose Greenhow. Mary Chesnut said: "These poor souls are jealously guarded night and day. It is a hideous tale, what they tell of their suffering. Mrs. [Robert E.] Lee punned upon the odd expression, 'Ladies of their age being confined.' These old Washington habituées say Mrs. Greenhow had herself confined and persecuted, that we might trust her the more. She sees we distrust her after all. The Manassas men swear she was our good angel."[25]

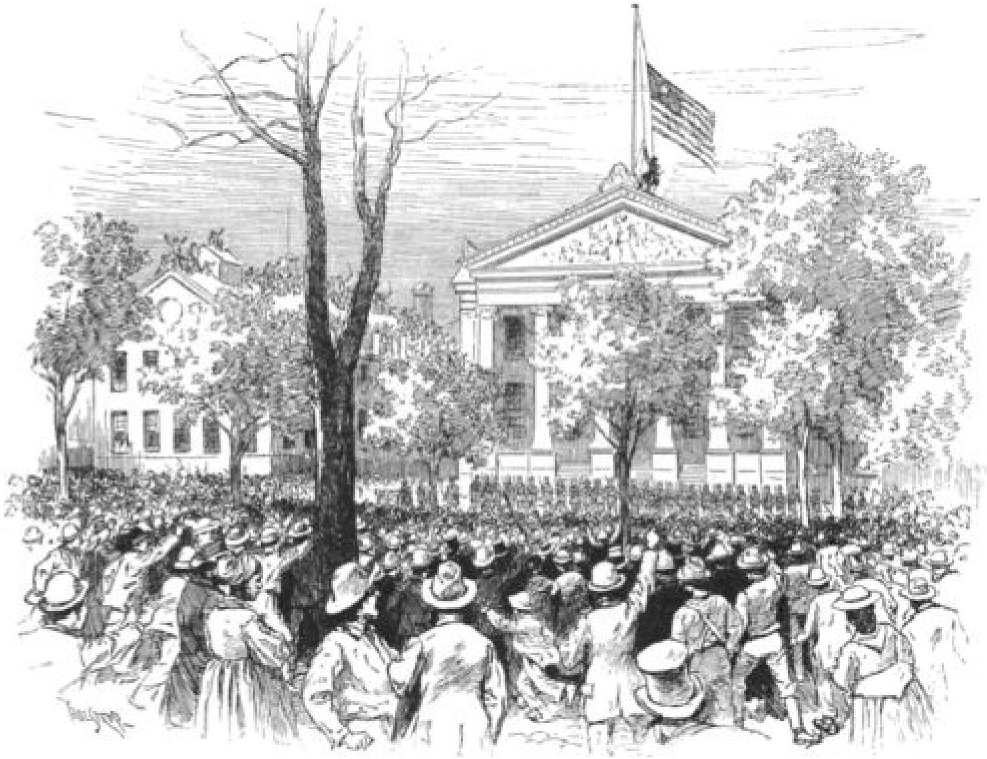
Mrs. Chesnut did blame Greenhow and Phillips, however obliquely, for causing difficulties for all Southern women. Federal authorities now began searching women's hair and clothing for contraband. Bustles, she wrote, are now "suspect…. Not legs but arms are looked for under hoops." Public opinion favored the prisoners. Phillip Clayton thought Mrs. Phillips's children ought not to have been hostages to fortune. "How can a motherly soul with nine children be suspected of mischief?" he wondered. But Mrs. Chesnut recounted, "She is caged up, all the same!"[26]

Philip Phillips's relationships with Edwin Stanton; Reverdy Johnson, the senator from Maryland; and Supreme Court Justice James M. Wayne, formerly mayor of Savannah, proved helpful in the crisis. The Phillips ladies were released on September 18, 1861, after three weeks of imprisonment. The family left Washington as quickly as possible. Each signed a parole agreement pledging not to take disloyal actions against the government. The document, daughter Caroline recalled, was big "with seals formidable enough to shield Federal soldiers from Southern bullets."[27]

By coincidence, the Phillips family happened to meet the secretary of state, Henry Seward, while en route to the train station. They gave him a loud "hurra for Dixie!" They then sailed for Fort Monroe in a fearful storm, which delayed their trip. Trying to decide whether to transfer to a smaller boat, Mr. Phillips consulted with the officer in charge. "But the sight of the Confederate flag was enough to inspire the enthusiastic bosoms of the women with a feeling that knows no fear, and counts no consequence." Mr. Phillips and her daughters jumped into a frail bark and sailed away. Gen. Benjamin Huger sent a steamer to bring the Phillips family ashore. Mr. Phillips caught up with them later. They were received at Norfolk, Virginia, with deep respect and emotion by Confederate officers. The next day they traveled to Richmond.[28]

The story was later widely circulated that Eugenia brought a message in code from Rose Greenhow in a ball of yarn and delivered it to Jefferson Davis.[29] After Mrs. Phillips and her daughters were freed from Greenhow prison, they were sitting at the parlor window when Rose, still a prisoner, was out walking with an officer on each side. She passed by and threw a ball of wool, saying: “You dropped your worsted, Mrs. Phillips, when you left my house.” Rose went on her way, laughing and chatting with her guard. Four days later, although she had been carefully searched at Fortress Monroe, Mrs. Phillips gave Jefferson Davis the cipher letter contained in the ball. “This was,” Caroline Myers recalled later, “the only treasonable act of which our Mother was guilty and of which conscientious Father never knew.”[30]

From Richmond, the Phillipses traveled to Savannah and then decided to relocate to New Orleans. They arrived in the Crescent City in the winter of 1861 only to find that wartime conditions made it impossible for Mr. Phillips to open a law practice. Like others in New Orleans, the Phillipses believed that they were safe from the Yankee invasion. They were lulled into “a charming condition of safety, and our hopes buoyed up by recent victories,” Eugenia recalled, “while all letters from Richmond conveyed hints of our speedy recognition by England, the surface of society seemed unruffled, and we were but little prepared for the bitter fate which was in store.”[31] In April the Union fleet appeared at the mouth of the Mississippi River. Rear Adm. David G. Farragut commanded a fleet of twenty-four vessels, which boasted two hundred guns and mortars and nineteen mortar boats. He captured New Orleans in April, and on May 1 Union Maj. Gen. Benjamin F. “Beast” Butler took command of the city.



The scene at City Hall in New Orleans when the flag was hauled down. (*Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*.)

Butler immediately began an efficient and extremely controversial military administration of New Orleans. “Beast” Butler was the worst the Union army had to offer. He was nicknamed “Spoons” for thievery of spoons and silverware imputed to him and to his soldiers. Eugenia said Butler became “our master; *he*, intent on getting our money; *we* as determined to keep it.” One of his most notorious acts was General Order No. 28, which became known as “The Woman Order.” “As the officers and soldiers of the United States have been subjected to repeated insults from the women (calling themselves ladies) of New Orleans,” this order read, “it is ordered, that hereafter, when any female shall, by word, gesture or movement insult or show contempt for any officer or soldier of the United States, she shall be regarded and held liable to be treated as a woman of the town plying her avocation.” When the mayor of New Orleans, John T. Monroe, protested the order, he was arrested. Prime Minister Palmerston in the British House of Commons said, “An Englishman must blush to think that such an act has been committed by one belonging to the Anglo-Saxon race.”[32]

Butler deliberately chose to humiliate the New Orleans aristocracy. Eugenia claimed to have kept herself as secluded as possible in order to escape any notice from Butler’s henchmen. But on June 29, 1862, she unwisely showed her contempt of the occupying forces. The Phillips home, located next to City Hall, overlooked the funeral procession of Lieutenant DeKay, a Union officer. Eugenia, standing on the balcony, appeared to burst into laughter and cheers at the procession. According to her daughter Caroline, she was only reacting to the news of a Confederate victory.[33] Butler immediately ordered her to appear at his headquarters at the Customs House. Eugenia, active in raising money for the widow of a man executed by Butler for having hauled down the flag from the Federal mint, believed she was being persecuted for her pro-Southern beliefs.

Butler screamed at her, "You are *seen* laughing and mocking at the remains of a Federal officer." Eugenia replied, "I was in good spirits and felt like laughing." Butler replied, "I do not call you a common woman of the town, but an uncommonly vulgar one, and I sentence you to Ship Island for the War."[34] Mr. Phillips could not reason with the general, who threatened to have her gagged. "After making all allowance for his position as commander," Mr. Phillips recalled years later in his characteristically modest way, "I must now characterize his conduct as coarse and brutal."[35] Butler took some time writing out Mrs. Phillips's sentence. He hoped she would throw herself on his mercy. But begging pardon never occurred to Eugenia. She quietly folded her arms and looked on him contemptuously while he wrote her arrest order.[36] In truth, T. C. DeLeon later recounted, "it was Mrs. Phillips's contempt of the general and her cool sarcasm that caused her imprisonment." "If such women as you and Mrs. Greenhow are let loose, our lives are in jeopardy," General Butier said. When told she would be exiled to an island sixty-five miles from New Orleans, Eugenia retorted, "It has one advantage over the city, Sir; *you* will not be there."[37] When informed that her new home was also a Yellow Fever station, Eugenia replied, "It is fortunate that neither the fever nor General Butler is contagious!"[38]

Butler's Special Order #150, which he wrote in his own hand, reads as follows:

> Mrs. Phillips, wife of Philip Phillips, having been once imprisoned for her traitorous proclivities and acts at Washington, and released by the clemency of the Government; and having been found training her children to spit upon officers of the United States, for which act of one of those children both her husband and herself apologized and were again forgiven, is now found on the balcony of her house during the passage of the funeral procession of Lieut. De Kay, laughing and mocking at his remains, and upon being inquired of by the commanding general if this fact were so, contemptuously replies—"I was in good spirits that day:"
>
> It is therefore ordered that she be not "regarded and treated as a common woman," of whom no officer or soldier is bound to take notice, but as an uncommon, bad and dangerous woman, stirring up strife and inciting to riot.
>
> And that therefore she be confined at Ship Island, in the State of Mississippi, within the proper limits there, till further orders, and that she be allowed one

female servant and no more, if she so choose. That one of the houses for hospital purpose be assigned her as quarters, and a soldier's ration each day be served out to her with the means of cooking the same, and that no verbal or written communication be allowed with her, except through this office, and that she be kept in close confinement until removed to Ship Island.[39]

Ship Island, a former quarantine station, was a mosquito-infested sandbar without amenities of any kind.[40] The summer heat in the Delta could be fatal, and the poor hygiene on the island was well known. Healthy food was hard to obtain, but Butler allowed Mr. Phillips to send some.[41] Had it not been for Phebe, her loyal servant, Eugenia may have died. Her fellow inhabitants of the island were “negroes, soldiers, contractors, sutlers, piddlars, black republicans, sailors and Officers.” She was offended by everything from their manner of dress to their language. The familiarity between whites and blacks made her indignant. She described the soldiers and officers as “a crowd of drunken, low, filthy soldiers and officers.” “I put the officers last as the soldiers were much more respectable. Their conversation, evidently to insult me, was of the basest and foullest character.” She lived at first in a railroad boxcar, then in the former post office. Her letters were inspected by Union soldiers and were dated “From my Palace on the lake of Como.” They were, her daughter recalled, “more for General Butlers edification than loving messages home.”[42]

Eugenia and Phebe subsisted on beans, spoiled beef, and such food as her husband was allowed to send her, drinking saltwater made drinkable by filtering it through sand. “Entire hogshead of ice melting,” she recalled, “but none for the vile Rebels.” There was no place to wash. Eugenia suffered from brain fever, which was undoubtedly nervous exhaustion. She was at times very ill and even delirious. At one point, Phebe’s health also broke down. Every week, General Butier inquired after Mrs. Phillips’s health, hoping she would beg for mercy, a weakness she considered to be a stain on her reputation. Her family and friends wrote her often and sent her packages and books. “Send me some of Dickens’ works,” she wrote. “I don’t care which, as I find something original whenever I read them over.” She wrote copious letters. In one touching letter to her youngest children, Mrs. Phillips wrote, “You must all be satisfied with this and believe that Dear Mother never allows a day to pass without thinking of all her … little ones, and a night to arrive without praying to God to keep you all well and make good, obedient children of you all.”[43]

The civilian population of the South, generally, and New Orleans, in particular, was outraged at Butier’s treatment of Eugenia Phillips. Mary Chesnut wrote: “Mrs. Phillips, another beautiful and clever Jewess, has been put in prison again by Beast Butler, for laughing as a Yankee funeral procession went by.”[44] Newspapers all over the country were filled with particulars of her suffering. Amanda Levy wrote her, “Future historians will vie with each other for the honor of writing your biography.” She reported that loyal citizens of New Orleans made pilgrimages to the Phillips home and that sympathy for her was “widespread and real.” Clara Solomon was infuriated that Mrs. Phillips, "Beauty's Ma," had been mistreated. "This is one of *the outrages* of But[ler]… and what anyway could a woman's taunts do to them!"[45]

Mrs. Phillips's father, Mr. Levy, referred to Butler as a "Vile beast, imprisoning her body & seeking to destroy her moral character." Her husband concluded years later, "If the imprudence of my wife brought on her these difficulties she endured the consequences of them with a heroic spirit that could not be excelled."[46] William Garrett noted that "her proud Southern spirit never quailed, and she remained firm to the last in the opinions she had expressed." The newspapers at the time were filled with the story and with comments on the harsh proceedings against Mrs. Phillips. She became quite a heroine, Garrett recalled, "and to this day [1872] is remembered with admiration by all generous minds, as one of the first victims which rendered a certain *administration* in New Orleans immortal for—*eccentricity*."[47]

How Mrs. Phillips came to be released from Ship Island after three and a half months is not known. Her daughter Caroline Myers believed that Reverdy Johnson, the family friend who came to her aid in Washington, intervened on her behalf while he was in New Orleans investigating Butler for the U.S. government.[48] As she emerged from her prison at the end of September, the Union officer in charge, Lt. Col. Charles Ruff, attempted to make amends. Mrs. Phillips was furious at this belated apology and replied: "Sir, do not imagine that my conduct during my imprisonment had for its guide any other motive than a holy and sacred respect for the cause for which I have suffered. To the *women of the South* I look for approval, while my own self-respect sustained me thro' all your persecutions. I cannot accept *your* tardy sympathy. I only hope God will forgive you for all you have done to me."[49]

Eugenia and Phebe arrived in New Orleans early in the morning and reached the Phillips home to find that her family, "true to Yankee cruelty," had been kept in ignorance of her release. "Immediately I was embraced, kissed, cried over, while Mr. Phillips, stunned by the news, not knowing whether I was dead or alive, remained in his room, overwhelmed and alarmed. I rushed upstairs. When he saw me, tears came to his release and the reaction was painful to witness."[50]

After Eugenia had been released by General Butler, her eldest son, Clavius, a Confederate soldier, wrote his mother, "I could not imagine a human being calling himself a man, could resort to so harsh treatment upon a lady. Your heart must gladden with the idea of being once more in the land of safety, where you can express your thought freely without fear of being condemned to prison. If anyone has occasion to entertain eternal enmity to the whole Yankee nation, it is our family, and I hope the time is not far distant when I may have an opportunity to avenge the insults you have undergone."[51]

Mrs. Phillips remained an unreconstructed rebel. After her release, she and her husband were summoned to take the loyalty oath or declare themselves enemies of the United States. They refused to take the oath, preferring to flee from New Orleans to LaGrange, Georgia, where they settled for the duration of the war. They stopped on the way in Mobile, where Eugenia received an ovation from the leaders of society.[52] Once in LaGrange with several other refugee families, they formed "a pleasant social circle which served to wile away the time." The men had their card club, and the ladies, musical parties. Of course, the Phillipses, like all parents with children in time of war, worried about their sons.[53]

Clavius Phillips, Eugenia and Philip's eldest child, enlisted with his cousin Octavus S. Cohen in Gallie's (Savannah Artillery) Company of the 1st (Olmstead's) Georgia on May 31, 1861, as a corporal. He was described as five feet eight inches tall, with blue eyes, brown hair, and a dark complexion. He then served in the Chatham Artillery and was detailed on special service in the Quartermaster Department of Georgia State Service. By September 1862, the twenty-four-year-old Clavius was "occupying his time in the culture of a… pair of Russian whiskers: a kind of cross between a civil and military beard," his Uncle Yates Levy wrote.[54] Clavius served with this artillery unit, now known as Weaton's Battery, near Savannah until July 1863. He had been detailed to the Engineering Department in Savannah in March and by August 1864 was transferred to that department. Clavius was anxious to defend his native city and undoubtedly was involved in the works defending Savannah. In January 1864, Phillips and a comrade sent a letter through military channels to the secretary of war seeking authorization "to raise a Company of heavy artillery" from the men serving in the Georgia State Guards and others whose terms were about to expire. The idea was approved by Maj. Gen. Jeremy F. Gilmer, but nothing came of it. In November 1864, young Phillips was serving as first sergeant of Company E, 2d Regiment Engineer Troops, in the Confederate army. He was promoted to second lieutenant in March 1865 and was paroled with his unit at Chester, South Carolina, on May 5, 1865.[55]

Another son, Eugene Phillips, served as a cadet in the Confederate navy. He was in Richmond at the same time as his aunt Phoebe Pember and was assigned to the *Patrick Henry*, a training vessel anchored in the James River, fourteen miles from the city, opposite Drewey's Bluff. In Richmond he had the luxury of having his laundry done by his aunt Phoebe. Yet another son, John Walker, while only about fifteen years of age, served in battle.[56]

Eugenia's family moved about during the war. A July 1862 letter from her father, Jacob Clavius Levy, finds Emma and Martha in Greenville, South Carolina; Henrietta and grandson Clavius Phillips in Savannah; Lina Phillips in New Orleans; and the elder Levys in Marietta.[57] Things were not well in Marietta. "The privations and endurance," Mr. Levy wrote, "felt around here made us no exception for we are at present cut off from the means formerly relied on." The letter also relates that the Levys, like many elderly Southerners, left their home in Savannah in the possession of their servants and Clavius, their young grandson, "sleeping there." Henrietta's only son, Octavus Cohen, was serving as an aide to a general and was "under fire on James Island, So.Ca." This was a reference to the Battle of Secessionville on James Island across the Ashley River from Charleston. Jacob and Fanny Levy, it appears, remained firm in their Jewish faith. Jacob's letter closes with this allusion to the Scriptures, "Trusting that the time is not far distant when each may sit under his own fig tree with none to make him afraid."[58]

Mr. Phillips resumed the practice of law. He went to Mobile on one occasion and argued the question of the power of the Confederate government to tax the bonds of the Confederate states before a Confederate judge. (He argued that the Confederate government had no such power and the court agreed with him.)[59] In another case, he represented English owners of three steamers seized by the Confederate government. He successfully argued for their release. During one business trip to Richmond, it was apparent to Phillips that the Confederacy would soon collapse. He recalled, "The treasury was empty, the army worn out, the Confederate commissioners were dispirited. I saw the end approaching with rapidity, as I had long anticipated. I did not therefore, tarry. My journey homeward was embarrassed by the movements of the armies. [Confederate Vice President] Alexander H. Stephens traveled with me, and owing to his ill health, we only journeyed in the daytime.… We finally arrived at Washington, Georgia, where I left Mr. Stephens at the residence of Mr. [Robert A.] Toombs."[60]

Lee surrendered in April 1865. On May 10, 1865, Philip Phillips was at the depot in LaGrange waiting for the train from Atlanta. There he read a reward notice that Federal officials offered $100,000 for the apprehension of Jefferson Davis, Clement Clay, and others on the charge of being accomplices in the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. Phillips, a friend of the Clays, noticed that Mrs. Clay was at the depot at that moment. He immediately took her aside and told her of the accusation. "The distress of this good woman," Phillips recalled, "was painful to behold." Clay was innocent of any wrongdoing, and Phillips advised him to surrender to the appropriate Federal officials. Clay immediately wrote to Gen. James H. Wilson in command at Macon, Georgia, offering to turn himself in. Phillips delivered the letter himself.[61]

The Phillips family had endured a scare as the war was coming to an end. A cavalry force of fewer than three thousand Federal troops attacked West Point, Georgia, on April 16, 1865. They burned the depots, a tannery, a gristmill, and a large quantity of railroad rolling stock and engines, and looted the citizens. The Union troops were held off for about eight hours by a ragtag command of boys, old men, convalescents from the hospital, and citizens who fought from a substantial but little fort constructed about eighteen months before. Among the captives after the battle was the Phillips's son, John, a member of the home guard. The anxious parents were relieved to receive a message from a Union colonel that John was safe but that he could not obtain a parole for ten days. The colonel added that "the boys had displayed the utmost gallantry." After ten days, John reached home, a richer if not wiser youth, the owner of the mule upon which he rode.[62]

"A few days subsequendy," Phillips wrote in his understated way, "we learned the surrender of Lee's Army. This terminated a struggle in which the South lost all but honor. So far as the loss of property in slaves was involved, I regard it as the greatest blessing."[63]

* * *

The war began with a great deal less fanfare for Eugenia's younger sister, Phoebe Yates Pember. A widow, Phoebe had refugeed with her parents, Jacob and Fanny Levy, to Marietta, Georgia. But she was about to embark on the adventure of a lifetime.

In 1856 Phoebe Levy, age thirty-three, married Thomas Pember, a Christian. He was two years her junior. They removed to Boston, Massachusetts. Her letters and memoirs indicate that she was well educated. She likely had private tutors and may have attended a Northern finishing school like other daughters of her social class. Shortly after their marriage, Thomas Pember contracted tuberculosis and the couple moved South. He died in Aiken, South Carolina, in July of 1861 at the age of thirty-six.[64]

At age thirty-eight, Phoebe was unhappy living in Marietta. "You know," she wrote to Eugenia, "how unpleasantly I have been situated at Papa's house…. I see no chance of bettering my position while here." There were obviously some serious divisions in the Levy family, for she also wrote Eugenia that she thanked God "every night for the courage He gave me to leave those who never cared for me and I believe disliked me for the gifts [presumably, her ability to write] He had given me."[65]

One of Phoebe Pember's acquaintances was Mrs. George Randolph (whose husband served as Confederate secretary of war for eight months in 1862), according to Pember, "Foremost among Virginia women." Mrs. Randolph had been active in caring for the sick and wounded in wartime Richmond and convinced Mrs. Pember to come to Richmond and accept a position at the hospital—“rather a startling proposition to a woman used to all the comforts of luxurious life.” She could hardly deny the importuning of such a lady, particularly when told of the need for “a good and determined woman’s rule.” She was appointed as matron of one of the divisions of Chimborazo Hospital in Richmond. The role of women in the medical profession and as nurses was just emerging at the time of the Civil War, and it was novel that a woman of Phoebe Pember’s social standing would be involved in hospital management. Many thought, she wrote, that “such a life would be injurious to the delicacy and refinement of a lady.” She was to become the first female administrator appointed at Chimborazo.[66]

Mrs. Pember arrived in Richmond in December 1862. She came to serve the Confederate cause in which she believed, although not quite as noisily as her fiery older sister, Eugenia. Writing years later about the women of the South, she described herself when she said the women felt “a passion of interest in every man in the gray uniform of the Confederate service; they were doubly anxious to give comfort and assistance to the sick and wounded.” She began her service at Chimborazo Hospital, a sprawling series of buildings on a high hill outside of Richmond. It was to become one of the largest hospitals in the world before the Civil War ended, housing 150 wards and treating a total of 76,000 patients. Needless to say, being a woman she encountered opposition: “*one of them had come*,” a male surgeon told a friend in a tone of ill-concealed disgust on her first day.[67]

On her arrival in Richmond, she had no place to live and was forced to reside at the hospital. For a time, she lived with her friends the Randolphs, and at the home of her close friends Col. Jeremy F. and Louisa (“Lou”) Gilmer. She also kept a room on Church Hill a while and boarded with the Skinner family for a time. This, of course, necessitated her making arrangements to travel back and forth to the hospital by a horse-drawn “ambulance.”[68]

Chimborazo Hospital, located on Chimborazo Hill some distance from the city. This Confederate hospital, where Phoebe Pember worked, became the largest in the world during the war. (Courtesy of National Archives.)

Pember went to work for the surgeon-in-charge, Dr. James B. McCaw, and had to contend with a bureaucracy consisting of surgeons and doctors, most well-meaning but many corrupt, who knew little medicine; male nurses who were nothing more than convalescing soldiers; stewards, slaves, clerks, commissaries, quartermasters, apothecaries, baggage-masters, wagon-masters, forage-masters, cooks, carpenters, shoemakers, ambulance-drivers; "and many more forgotten hangers-on," including malingerers whom the soldiers called "hospital rats." Medical care was poor by modern standards. The huge hospital could house 8,000 patients. It was self-sufficient in some ways, containing its own dairy, bakery, brewery, ice houses, soap factory, farm, and herd of livestock.[69]

Not knowing exactly what was required of her, and on being told she was to tend to the diet of some six hundred men, her "mind could hardly grope through the darkness that clouded it, as to what were my special duties but one mental spectrum always presented itself—*chicken soup*." She ordered the chickens and, for the first time in her life, killed the live birds and made the soup, which was a success. "Nature may not have intended me for a Florence Nightingale, but a kitchen proved my worth."[70]

Mrs. Pember went from organizing a proper diet for her patients to trying to control the dispensing of whiskey, the chief painkiller available in wartime Richmond. Confederate law provided that liquor and other luxuries used in hospitals be entrusted to the matrons. (Ladies, presumably, were less likely to drink alcohol and steal luxuries.) When she tried to take over the control of the whiskey barrels, Mrs. Pember was thwarted at every turn by those in authority, including the surgeon-in-charge. At one point, she went around the hospital with a printed copy of the law in her hand and demanded the whiskey. "So, the printed law being at hand for reference, I nailed my colors to the mast, and that evening all the liquor was in my pantry and the key in my pocket." She kept up a running battle trying to prevent the pilferage and stealing of coffee, meats, and foods of all kind in a city where inflation was horrendous and supplies could not be had at times even for those who could afford to pay inflated prices. People begged her for supplies, but she protected "every pound of coffee, every ounce of whisky, bushel of flour or vegetables."[71] "Hers was a will of steel," DeLeon recalled, "under a suave refinement, and her pretty, almost Creole accent covered the power to ring in *defi* on occasion. The friction of these attributes against bumptiousness, or young authority, made the hospital the field of many 'fusses' and more fun."[72]

The care of the wounded, of course, was her primary responsibility. She immersed herself in the daily routine of caring for wounded and dying men. By January 1863 she wrote Eugenia, "I sometimes wonder if I am the same person who was afraid to look at a dead person, for I have no timidity and hardly any sensibility left." She was involved in all hospital activities, from dressing wounds to writing letters home for the poor and illiterate common soldiers who made up the great bulk of the Chimborazo population. On one occasion, she finished writing a letter for an upcountry Georgian who had a "lean, yellow, attenuated" look with very long hair and fingernails like claws. The soldier turned to her and asked if she were married. "I am not. At least, I am a widow," she replied. "He rose higher in bed," she later recalled. "He pushed away desperately the tangled hay on his brow. A faint color fluttered over the hollow cheek, and stretching out a long piece of bone with a talon attached, he gently touched my arm and with constrained voice whispered mysteriously: 'You wait!' And readers, I am waiting still," she wrote years later.[73]

There was precious little humor in Phoebe Pember's daily life. Scenes of pathos occurred daily, "scenes," she wrote, "that wrung the heart and forced the dew of pity from the eyes; but feeling that enervated the mind and relaxed the body was a sentimental luxury that was not to be indulged in. There was too much work to be done." In her memoir, *A Southern Woman's Story*, published in 1879, Mrs. Pember relates one especially moving incident about a young Confederate soldier named Fisher.

Mrs. Pember was awakened by a nurse one very cold night in 1863 and told that something was wrong with a favorite patient of hers named Fisher. A doctor was summoned, and she hurried to the scene where the young man—he was about twenty—lay wounded. With a great deal of "hard nursing, good food and plenty of stimulant," he had had a “fair chance for recovery.” A contraption had been rigged up to try and hold the bones of his broken leg together, but he had suffered a severe wound and now it appeared that the sharp edge of a splintered bone had severed his artery. Fisher “had remained,” Mrs. Pember recalled, “through all his trials, stout, fresh, and hearty, interesting in appearance, and so gentlemannered and uncomplaining that we all loved him.” But Fisher was now bleeding, and

> I instantly put my finger on the little orifice and awaited the surgeon. He soon came—took a long look and shook his head. The explanation was easy; the artery was imbedded in the fleshy part of the thigh and could not be taken up. No earthly power could save him. There was no object in detaining Dr. —. He required his time and strength, and long I sat by the boy, unconscious himself that any serious trouble was apprehended. The hardest trial of my duty was laid upon me; the necessity of telling a man in the prime of his life, and fullness of strength that there was no hope for him.
>
> It was done at last, and the verdict received patiently and courageously, some directions given by which his mother would be informed of his death, and then he turned his questioning eyes upon my face. “How long can I live?” “Only as long as I keep my finger upon this artery.” A pause ensued. God alone knew what thoughts hurried through that heart and brain, called so unexpectedly from all earthly hopes and ties. He broke the silence at last. “You can let go—” But I could not. Not if my own life had trembled in the balance. Hot tears rushed to my eyes, a surging sound to my ears, and a deathly coldness to my lips. The pang of obeying him was spared me, and for the first and last time during the trials that surrounded me for four years, I fainted away.[74]

Mrs. Pember does not discuss her religion in *A Southern Woman’s Story*, but, like most nineteenth-century writers relating their memories of the Civil War or even in routine letters, she makes frequent references to the Bible and to God. In a letter to her sister she wrote: “If as I was told the children of these men [her patients] will ‘rise up and call me blessed’ I shall have many blessings.”[75] This, of course, is a reference, common in Jewish conversation and worship, to Proverbs 31 (“A woman of valour who can find? / For her price is far above rubies,” 31:10-31), an ideal to which Jewish women should aspire. When once she comforted a dying soldier, she knew he would die. “What comfort could I give,” she recalled. “Only silently open the Bible, and read to him without comment the ever-living promises of his Maker. Glimpses too of that abode where the ‘weary are at rest.’”[76] In a letter to her sister Eugenia, however, she relates a conversation she participated in as follows:

> The feelings here against the Yankees exceeds anything I could imagine, particularly among the good Christians. I spent an evening among a particularly pious set. One lady said she had a pile of Yankee bones lying around her pump so that the first glance on evening her eyes would rest upon them. Another begged me to get her a Yankee Skull to keep her toilet trinkets in. All had something of the kind to say—at last I lifted my voice and congratulated myself at being born of a nation, and religion that did not enjoin forgiveness on its enemies, that enjoyed the blessed privilege of praying for an eye for an eye, and a life for a life, and was not one of those for whom Christ died in vain, considering the present state of feelings. I proposed that till the war was over they should all join the Jewish Church, let forgiveness and peace and good will alone and put their trust in the sword of the Lord and Gideon. It was a very agreeable evening, and all was taken in good part. I certainly had the best of the argument, and the gentlemen seconded me ably.[77]

This letter demonstrates that Mrs. Pember considered herself to be Jewish and that her friends saw her as Jewish, although there is no mention in either her published memoir or her Civil War era letters of her attending a synagogue or celebrating Jewish holidays. Of course, given her social position and acculturated background, she may well have felt out of place among the Jewish population of Richmond, most of whom were immigrants or, unlike her family, descended from recent German immigrants. She did not become a Christian. She certainly had no fear of expressing herself on the subject of the differences between Jews and Christians. Her letters show a woman quick to rise to the defense of the Jewish people.[78] In a letter to Lou Gilmer, one of her closest friends, she refers in a light-hearted way to her friend and co-religionist Thomas Cooper DeLeon's discussion of marriage with Miss Truxey Johnson's father. "Papa questioned him on his belief in the Trinity and he not responding reasonably according to Mr. Johnson's belief the old gentleman objected. It will be a new feature introduced in love affairs if the final 'parient' [*sic*] puts the lover through the catechism."[79]

Mrs. Pember's life in Richmond was not entirely dominated by her hospital duties. She had an active social life outside of Chimborazo. Indeed, her reasons for going to Richmond were to escape some unpleasantness in her family situation in Marietta and to enjoy the hospital with "half a dozen ladies who would be companionable perhaps."[80] (It certainly was not to find a man. She rejected service at another hospital because a male friend, Dr. Foster, was "very pleasant, handsome and intelligent, and as we would be comparatively alone and eat together, *that* would not do."[81]) Even though it appears that she lived at Chimborazo much of the time, Mrs. Pember had many close female friends in Richmond whom she remembered very affectionately. She not only attended but gave parties at the large hospital grounds. "I had quite a party here," she wrote Eugenia, "some of the prettiest girls in Richmond…. They all came at six o'clock, eat strawberries and ice cream, walked all around the Bluff and at eleven were driven home by their respective cavaliers.” She participated in charades, which was a common form of entertainment.[82]

Mrs. Pember also socialized with Mary Chesnut, who recounts in her diary in January 1864 a charade with Frank Vizetelly, war correspondent for the *Illustrated London News*, and Mrs. Pember. “Mr. Vizetelly and Mrs. Pember were fun enough for one day. His part is to dandle and stifle the cries of a screaming baby while the strong-minded mother writes and dashes aside sheet after sheet of MSS…. Next day, they were all hoarse. When Mr. Vizetelly had exhausted all known methods of quieting an infant (in vain), his despair was comic. He threw the baby on a chair and sat on it.”[83]

Life in Confederate Richmond had its dismal moments later, but before Gettysburg, in July 1863, Mrs. Pember had no hesitation in inviting her young niece, Fanny Phillips, Eugenia’s daughter, to “come up during the fall and spend a couple of months with me. If she would come as my assistant I could send her a transportation ticket. All the girls here are in the different departments they make a frolic of it.” She even offered to find “a sweetheart for her, though I am not much of a matchmaker.” The beau she had in mind was a nephew of Robert E. Lee’s, one of the well-known Virginia Carters of Shirley Plantation fame.[84]

After Gettysburg, life was not as cheerful. Mrs. Pember related in a September 1863 letter that she went to town to pay a visit, and “a gentleman stopping to hand me out of an awkward ambulance proved to be Gen. Lee. He looked much older and greatly worn.”[85] By the summer of 1864, the situation in Richmond was bleak. Privations had to be endured, Mrs. Pember recalled, “which tried body and soul.” Money was worthless. Theft was rampant. The railroads were cut off so often that the supplies for Chimborazo spoiled. What little food there was had to be carefully rationed: “it was almost ludicrous to see with what painful solicitude Miss G. [Mrs. Pember’s assistant] and myself would count the rolls, or hold a council over the pans of corn-bread.” The staff and the patients were grateful for the simplest fare and the coarsest clothing. Of course, Richmond was also under siege, and day after day, night after night, its residents heard the sounds of cannon, alarm bells, and the firing of arms.[86]

After a major exchange of prisoners, Mrs. Pember found herself comforting Confederates recently held as prisoners. Many had been starved to the point of death. One such prisoner was Richard Hammond Key, grandson of the composer of the “Star Spangled Banner.” He asked Mrs. Pember to bury him in a grave apart from the crowd “in some spot where those who knew and cared for him might find him some day.” The next day, with the enemy in sight of Richmond, Key died. The matron who befriended him had a coffin built, took the body to Hollywood cemetery herself, purchased a lot, and had a clergyman perform the burial service in the pouring rain.[87]

The winter of 1864 saw the beginning of the end of the Confederacy. Troops moved incessantly and rations were scarce. Government departments closed, and rumors abounded. Yet the city's social life was "unusually gay." Mrs. Pember and others realized the end was near. "Wise and thoughtful men disapproved openly of this mad gayety," she recalled. But Southerners always loved a party, and Mrs. Pember wrote, "If Spartan austerity is to win our independence, we are a lost nation." She was a careful observer of the people around her and wrote to her friend Lou Gilmer that people were not behaving very well, as "many young ladies are enjoying single blessedness with the painful accompanyments of married life." She learned in early March that Richmond would be evacuated but was sworn to secrecy. What would she do? Flee with the government and prominent Richmonders or stay at her post?[88]

She decided to stay. "My mind had been very unsettled as to my course of action in view of the impending crash, but my duty prompted me to remain with my sick, on the ground that no general ever deserts his troops." Richmond was evacuated and most, if not all, of Mrs. Pember's friends fled. The Confederate government and the military left, and those who stayed did not know what to expect from the invading Union army. Mrs. Pember stayed at Chimborazo even after all the male nurses went off to join Lee's army and the slave cooks ran away. She watched from the hill, where Chimborazo stood the turmoil and confusion of the evacuation, the fires set by the retreating Confederates, the destruction of bridges and boats, and the crowds of people leaving the old capital. Even many of the sick and lame left rather than face Yankee imprisonment. Before the hospital was taken over by Federal authorities, Mrs. Pember was set upon by some of the former malingerers, the "hospital rats" who tried to steal the whiskey left behind. An armed little matron met them, however. "Wilson," she told one, "you have been in this hospital a long time. Do you think from what you know of me that the whiskey can be taken without my consent?" When told there was now no one to protect her and to move away, Mrs. Pember responded by cocking a small pistol she had hidden in her pocket. That "sharp click, a sound so significant and so different from any other, struck upon his ear, and sent him back amidst his friends, pale and shaken…. 'You had better leave,' I said … 'for if *one* bullet is lost, there are five more ready, and the room is too small for even a woman to miss six times." The rats left.[89]

Eventually the Union army arrived. Mrs. Pember, although having no official position and liable to arrest or imprisonment, insisted on staying through the transition and caring for those Confederate soldiers who could not escape. Putting on her finest outfit to go meet the Union commander, she demanded to know whether she would be able to use her stores to feed her patients or whether the Yankees intended to "starve their captured sick.” The two former enemies resolved their immediate problem, and the Union officer attempted to make pleasant conversation. He regretted “the present state of scarcity, for he could see in the pale faces and pinched features of the Richmond women, how much they had suffered during the war.” While the officer may not have intended an insult, Mrs. Pember, now sounding more like her older sister, Eugenia, replied, “If my features were pinched, and my face pale, it was not caused by privations under the Confederacy, but the anguish consequent upon our failure.”[90]

Phoebe Pember stayed on at Chimborazo until her sick and wounded soldiers were removed to another hospital, where she went to nurse them. She stayed on there until “all the sick were either convalescent or dead, and at last my vocation was gone.”[91]

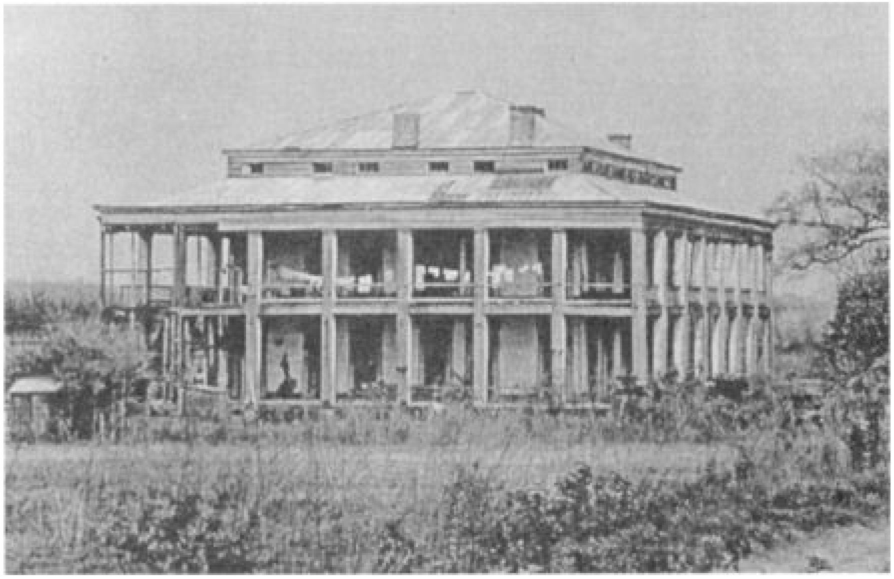
PART 4

In Our Unhappy Land

THE END OF AN ERA

"… future historians … will … attest the patriotism of the soldiers of the Lost Cause, who sacrificed all but honor in its defense, and who sought to preserve that honor alone from the dark wreck and ruin which followed their defeat."

—Senator Benjamin Franklin Jonas, address at the laying of the cornerstone of the monument to the memory of the Confederate dead at Baton Rouge, February 22, 1886



Belle Chasse in dilapidation. (Courtesy ofJacob Rader Marcus Center, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.)

CHAPTER 7

★

Lead Out the Pageant: Sad and Slow

“ATLANTA HAS FALLEN! & lucky are you that you removed your family when you did,” Maj. Isaac Scherck, an assistant chief commissary on Gen. John Bell Hood’s staff wrote his friend J. L. Meyer in Columbus in September 1864. “Genl Sherman *the fiend in human form*, issues an order for all Men, Women & Children, White and Black to leave Atlanta.” Scherck was not ready to surrender even though he and his men were living in the woods “like hogs.” Civilization, he thought, was collapsing before his eyes. ‘When enlightened millions of souls [in the South], raised & educated in freedom of speech & action have tamely to submit to such outrages—Liberty is gone indeed.” The Jewish Confederates, like Scherck, fought on.[1] But Jewish Atlantans, many of whom had come to the city from Savannah and Charleston to escape the Union army, were forced from their homes. The David Mayer family, for example, had lived in a cellar covered with cotton bales for three weeks while Sherman’s cannons shelled their city. During his family’s escape from the city, Mayer was forced to leave his wife and children to find a ferry to cross a river. He gave his ten-year-old son a pistol and told him to look out for his mother and sisters.[2] Jewish Georgians long remembered Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman.

Sherman’s famous March to the Sea ended on December 22, 1864, at Savannah. “I beg to present you as a Christmas gift,” the general’s famous telegram to Lincoln read, “the City of Savannah.” The Jews of Savannah, having celebrated a rather ironic Hanukkah—a holiday commemorating a brave band of Jewish warriors’ triumph over an occupying army—with the enemy literally at their gates weeks before, waited for the inevitable. There would be no miracle this time. Fanny Cohen, the twenty-four-year-old daughter of Octavus and Henrietta Cohen, detested the invader. She called them vandals, brutes, and Goths. “If we are conquered,” she wrote in her diary, “I see no reason why we should receive our enemies as our friends and I never shall do it as long as I live.” Her father was very concerned that Fanny’s open hatred of the Yankees would get her in trouble. When she saw a family friend who was a Confederate surgeon left behind with his patients, it “was the first pleasurable moment” she had had. “I had been so surrounded by blue coats that the sight of our gray uniforms made me happy.” She forced herself to be polite to the union officers who called. “I was obliged to receive [Captain Poe] and never was so embarrassed in my life," she wrote. "My hatred for the Army in which he was an officer and my desire to be polite made me almost speechless—the contending feelings were more than I could control."[3]

The Cohens were told that their home on Lafayette Square was being taken by the army for officers' housing. When Mr. Cohen complained that there were ladies in the house and that it would be exceedingly inconvenient for them to move, the response was: "Well! I suppose *it will inconvenience* you but you know you Rebs *will* fight and when you are conquered you must submit to what ever will contribute to our comfort." Mr. Cohen was extremely upset at having his family threatened in this fashion. "I have never seen a man so annoyed and unnerved as my Father is," Fanny confided to her diary. Mrs. Cohen was sick, her illness brought on, Fanny supposed, by "worry and excitement." Somehow Cohen convinced the Union authorities to take an empty house across the street with the promise of allowing the army to keep their horses in the Cohen stable. Soon, however, the Cohens were required to house Brig. Gen. William Babcock Hazen, one of Sherman's top lieutenants.[4]

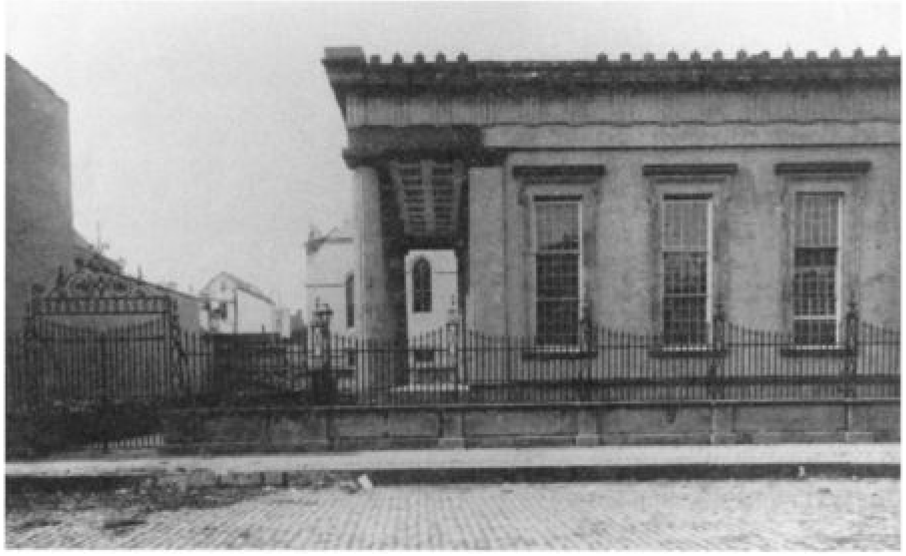
The Octavus Cohen house, Abercorn Street, Savannah. The Cohen house in Lafayette Square was commandeered by the Union Army after Sherman captured the city in December 1864. Fanny Cohen railed against the "vandals" and "Goths" who intruded on the Cohen family. The house

was demolished in the twentieth century, and a condominium stands there now. (Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society, Savannah.)

On December 25, Fanny wrote in her diary, “This is the saddest Christmas that I have ever spent and my only pleasure during the day has been in looking forward to spending my next Christmas in the Confederacy.” The whole Levy and Cohen extended family was despondent. Jacob and Fanny Levy, now back in Savannah, were sick and “very much dispirited.” Things had not improved by January 1, when Fanny wrote, “How sad this beginning of the year to us surrounded by our enemies without any prospects of seeing our friends.”[5]

From Savannah, Sherman marched into South Carolina, keeping the Confederates in doubt as to his real objective. “Charleston,” Sherman told Grant, was “now a mere desolated wreck,” and the conqueror of Georgia turned his army inland and headed for Columbia, South Carolina’s capital. “I look upon Columbia as quite as bad as Charleston,” Sherman wrote Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck on December 24, “and I doubt if we shall spare the public buildings there as we did at Milledgeville [Georgia].” Charleston’s supply lines having been cut by Sherman’s army, the Confederate army evacuated the city on February 17, 1865. Charleston surrendered the next day.[6]

Charleston was a defeated city. “A city of ruins, of desolation, of vacant houses, of widowed women, of rotting wharves, of deserted warehouses, of weed-wild gardens, of miles of grass-grown streets, of acres of pitiful and voiceful barrenness—that is Charleston,” Sidney Andrews, a reporter for the *Boston Advertiser*, wrote. “The splendid houses are all deserted,” another visitor noted, “the glass in the windows broken, the walk dilapidated, the columns toppled over.” The description undoubtedly applied to M. C. Mordecai’s grand mansion on Meeting Street, a few blocks from the Battery, and to the city’s synagogues and many Jewish homes and businesses.[7] Sixteen-year-old Lee Cohen, Isaac Harby’s granddaughter, watched the evacuation of Charleston. Cotton was burned in a public square; rice was set on fire. “As the day wore on,” she recalled, “explosions were heard on every side; the gunboats ‘Charleston’ and ‘Chicora’ were blown up at the wharves; the ‘big gun’ at the corner of South and East Battery was exploded…. Fires started everywhere … the city was helpless and expecting its foe…. It was a terrible, heartbreaking awful night.” Late on the night of the seventeenth, Lee watched the firing of the *Palmetto State*, a gunboat built with contributions from the ladies of Charleston. “Women who had worked and striven and contributed to its building stood at their windows and viewed the flames,” she later recalled, “and lo! As the last detonation sounded, the smoke arose, and upon the red glare of the heavens, formed a palmetto tree, perfect and fair, that stood out against the sky, then wavered and broke apart as we watched it through our tears.” The next day, she went to Meeting Street near Ann Street to see the last of the Confederate soldiers evacuate Charleston. “Yet, even then,” she recalled, “some laughed and jested, for, God pity us, we were hopeful still, and they were brave, and we could not think that the end had really come.” The *New York Herald* reported on March 25, 1865, that the “Hebrew congregation of Charleston sustained a heavy loss in the destruction of their splendid organ, the five Books of Moses, and other valuables. It is a noteworthy fact that not an Israelite left with the Yankees.”[8]



K. K. Beth Elohim in 1886. This photograph was taken twenty-one years after the war ended, and following the Charleston earthquake. It is the oldest known photograph of the temple. (Courtesy of K. K. Beth Elohim Archive, Charleston, South Carolina.)

Charlestonians believed that Sherman’s army would destroy Charleston, and they sent their valuables to Columbia for safekeeping. The trustees of Beth Elohim packed up its Torahs, chandelier, and other valuables and sent them to the capital. Now Sherman’s army was in Columbia.[9]

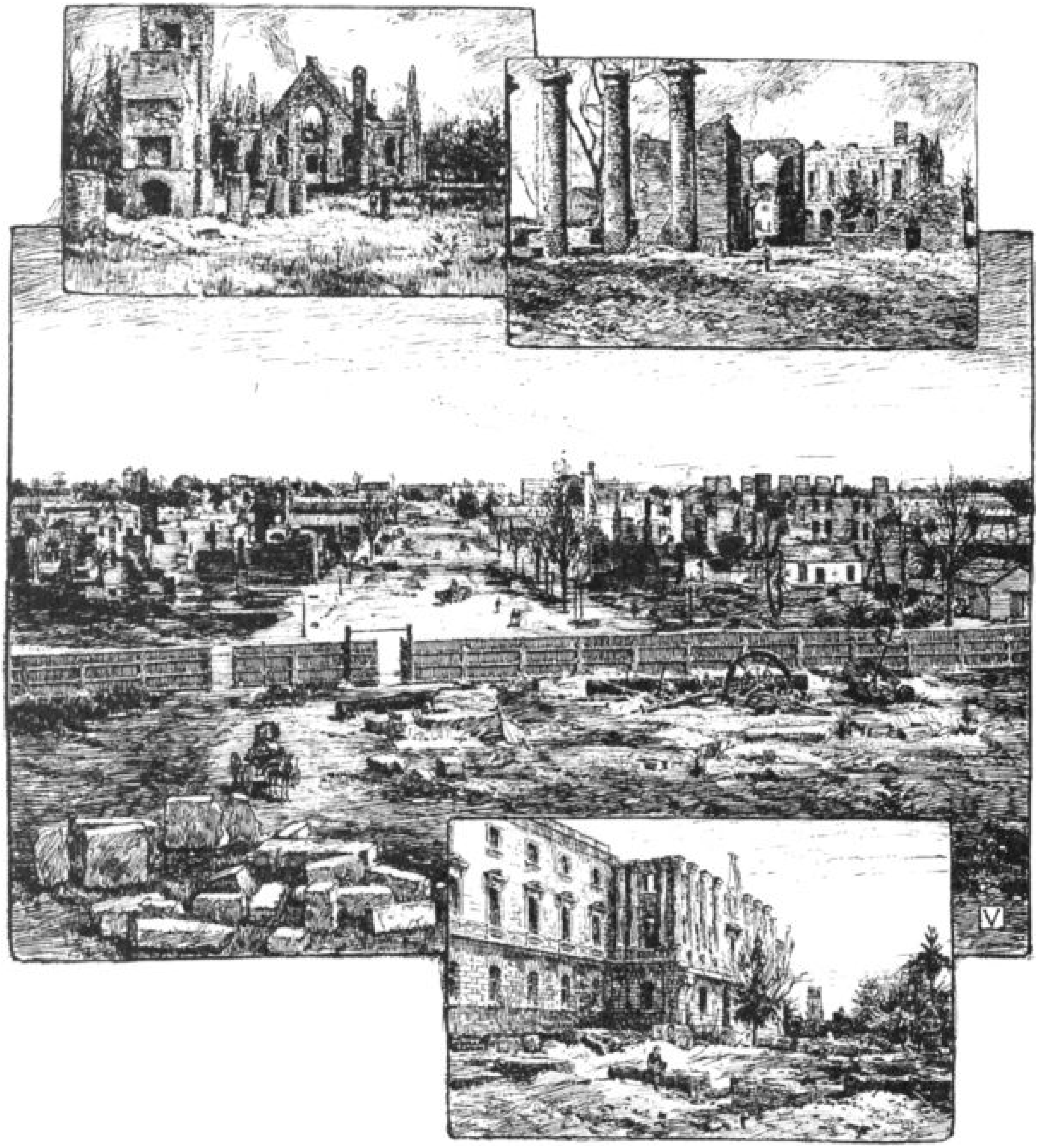
Eleanor Cohen was twenty-six years old when Sherman’s troops arrived in Columbia. The daughter of Dr. Philip Melvin Cohen and Cordelia Moise Cohen, Eleanor could trace her ancestry back to the founders of the Moise clan in South Carolina, Abraham and Sarah Moise, who escaped from Haiti (Santo Domingo) in 1791 in the midst of the slave insurrection. Seventy-five years later, in 1865, another Moise found herself in the middle of the collapse of the old regime and the end of another slave society.

Small, dark-complexioned, pretty, with black eyes and “a grand figure,” Eleanor also described herself as quick-tempered and intelligent. She was to have been married in April, but her intended, Benjamin Mendes Seixas, was forced to leave Columbia on February 7 and had not returned when the city was shelled by Union troops. “Oh! God, can I ever forget that day," Eleanor wrote in her diary, "Can time with Lethean draughts ever efface from my memory the deep sorrow, the humiliation, the agony of knowing we were to be under the Yankees, that our beloved flag was to be pulled down and the U.S.A. flag wave over the city." Eleanor recorded in her diary the Union army's arrival in Columbia, "the bands playing The Star Spangled Banner,' and the shouts of the soldiers filled the air."[10]

Eleanor H. Cohen grew up in Charleston, the daughter of Dr. P. Melvin Cohen, a dentist. She and her family moved to Columbia during the war. The Cohens were living in Columbia when it was burned by Sherman's troops. (Courtesy of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.)

Columbia was badly damaged by both the Union troops and the retreating Confederate army. Main Street, according to Eleanor, "was a fearful sight." The stores were looted; lawless mobs roamed the streets. Then the fires started. The Cohens gathered in a room at the top of their home and watched as the fires grew. The flames were "leaping and dancing assisted by the wind … and the air was filled with torpedoes, shells, hand grenades and all the most cruel instruments of evil doers." The Cohens did not think the fire would reach them, but they were mistaken. Soon the burning inferno reached their neighborhood and they fled, taking only a change of clothes and leaving behind all of their possessions, the “letters of loved absent ones, pictures of our precious relations, tokens and souvenirs of childhood.”[11]

The destruction, angry mobs, and drunken Union soldiers that fearful night were terrifying to all who lived through it. Philip S. Jacobs was at home when three soldiers came into his home and demanded his watch. “They put a bayonet before my breast and pulled the watch and chain from my body.” Union soldiers also invaded the home of Moses Winstock on Assembly Street while the family was in the midst of their Sabbath dinner. They invited the soldiers to join them and learned, after dessert, that the soldiers planned to loot and torch their home! The Winstocks fled and were separated in the confusion. It took Moses Winstock three days to find his family.[12] Mordecai DeLeon’s library was, Edwin DeLeon recalled years later, “one of the holocausts offered up to the Union at the burning of Columbia.”[13] Rabbi Henry S. Jacobs, who like many Charlestonians who had come to Columbia to escape Sherman, found he had come to the wrong place. All of his possessions were destroyed in the fire. He and his family were “driven forth from our home to a park in the suburbs, where wrapped in blankets we passed Friday night [February 17], and nearly the whole [Sabbath]…. I lost everything in the world—clothing, furniture, books, manuscripts, provisions, even my canonicals and [prayer shawls]—every-thing except hope and confidence in our Heavenly Father.”[14]



Columbia, South Carolina, after being burned by Sherman's army, the retreating Confederate army, and others. (*Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*.)

The streets were crowded with Union soldiers, freed slaves, and fleeing Columbians. Eleanor Cohen recalled being taunted by the invaders with jeers: "How do you like secesh now?" and "curses too fearful to be entered in my book." The flames did not abate. Instead, they seemed to Eleanor "to encircle us like a belt and the heat was so great that our faces were scorched and blackened by smoke!" The Cohens went to the country with barely enough food for one day, but the drunken soldiers and the lawless conditions there convinced Dr. Cohen to return to the burned city. Back in town, the Cohens, like their fellow townspeople, wandered about homeless, without food or change of clothing. “In one night,” Eleanor wrote, “we were brought from comparative wealth and luxury to abject poverty.” Advised to go to the state asylum on Bull Street, the Cohens joined hundreds of other families there. Everyone was shocked and in a desperate condition. Old men and young women were weighted down with bundles. There was no water. The Cohens stayed five days without a bed to lie on and little to eat. “I never imagined,” Eleanor recalled, “I should be so near actual starvation.”[15] The day after the fire, Rabbi Jacobs rushed to the synagogue on Assembly Street, where he had stored the Torahs and other treasures from Charleston. He found the building burned to the ground. He rummaged through the debris only to find the remnant of a Torah and a single Torah bell, which he sent to Charleston “as Sacred Relics.”[16]

The Jews of Columbia, like all Southerners, were bitterly resentful of the occupying Union troops. “No words of mine,” Eleanor concluded, “can give any idea of the brutality of the ruffians; they swore, they cursed, plundered and committed every excess … oh my God, teach me to bear my burden.”[17] The Cohens next stayed at Eleanor’s uncle’s house, which had survived the fire. By March 7 the family was “comfortably fixed,” with twenty-three family members. Eleanor was doing nearly all of the housekeeping and waiting anxiously for word of her fiancé.

Moses Henry Nathan lost his home and took up residence in an abandoned school. He asked to “beg a great favor” of an associate “to let me have some meat, grist, and potatoes,” as “we are almost at the point of starvation here.” Jacob C. Lyons, the president of the gas company and a successful merchant, lost all he had, his home at Marion and Gervais destroyed.[18]

Despite their massive losses, Columbia Jewry rose to the occasion. On the Monday morning after the fire, local citizens met at the home of Elizabeth Lyons, Mayor Henry Lyons’s widow, as her property (the block bounded by Lady, Bull, Gervais, and Pickens) had escaped destruction. Lyons’s building housed the local relief effort, and Jewish leaders led the effort to bring in food and supplies. Moses Cohen Mordecai, the former state senator, came to Columbia to serve as its food administrator. Augusta, Georgia’s Jewish community, sent provisions and funds. The *Daily Phoenix* lauded “the handsome conduct of the Israelites of Columbia…. No people could have been more active in their efforts to assist the sufferers during the fire.”[19]

The Southern nation began to dissolve. Casualties were high in Lee’s army. Survivors deserted. The end was near. But some young Jewish Southerners did not give up. Marx Cohen Jr. of Charleston, whose grandfather had been a Polish immigrant but whose father was a successful landowner, enlisted in the cavalry early in the war. By 1864 he was apparently impatient to join the fray in Virginia, so he enlisted in an artillery company, Hart's battery, which served in Hampton's cavalry brigade. (The fieldpieces were drawn by six horses and the artillerist rode on his own mount, thereby increasing the speed of the unit.) Hart's battery had attracted a number of Jewish Charlestonians, and, at one time, five Cohens served in the company.

Young Cohen was a true Southerner. In March 1865, when words were exchanged with one Thomas R. Chew, one of the soldiers challenged the other to a duel. At daybreak, the two young Confederate soldiers fired at each other in the last duel in the Confederacy. Because their seconds had placed blanks in the pistols, neither duelist was hurt. As soon as the men returned to camp, they heard the bugle sound, rushed to their horses, and rode into battle, the Battle of Bentonville, March 19, 1865. Tragically, both Chew and Cohen were killed by artillery fire in this, the last major battle of the Civil War.[20]

Richmond's government was now in a state of desperation. There is circumstantial evidence that in the early months of 1865, Jefferson Davis and Judah Benjamin were involved in desperate plans to blow up the White House and kidnap Lincoln and other high-ranking Federal officials. William A. Tidwell, the author of *Come Retribution* and *April '65*, contends that Davis and Benjamin decided in the early spring of 1865 to send a team of undercover operators to Washington and that it was financed by Secret Service gold drawn on the Treasury as late as April 1, 1865. John H. Surratt, one of John Wilkes Booth's lieutenants, whose mother, Mary Surratt, was later executed for her role in the assassination, had been a courier for Benjamin. Benjamin had sent Surratt on a mission to Canada two weeks before the assassination and had given him two hundred dollars in gold to defray his expenses. (Surratt later testified that neither Davis nor Benjamin had any knowledge of Booth's plans to kill Lincoln.) Surratt left Richmond on April 1, 1865, the day before its evacuation, with dispatches from Benjamin to be delivered to Brig. Gen. Edwin G. Lee in Montreal. Lee had replaced Jacob Thompson and Clement C. Clay as the head of the Canadian operation.[21]

In Tidwell's view, Booth was not a lunatic, but rather was a responsible undercover agent recruited by the Confederate secret service as a part of the kidnapping plot. The plot failed in March. The Confederate government, including its spymaster, Judah Benjamin, fled Richmond on April 2, leaving Booth and his undercover team with no direction. Lee surrendered. The assassination of the president on April 14 and attempts to assassinate other high Federal officials were not approved by Davis or Benjamin, or even known by them. Booth only concocted his scheme a few days or perhaps even hours before the commission of the crimes. The assassination and attempted assassinations were Booth's idea alone, but consistent, Booth erroneously thought, with his mission to disable the Union leadership. There is no direct evidence linking either

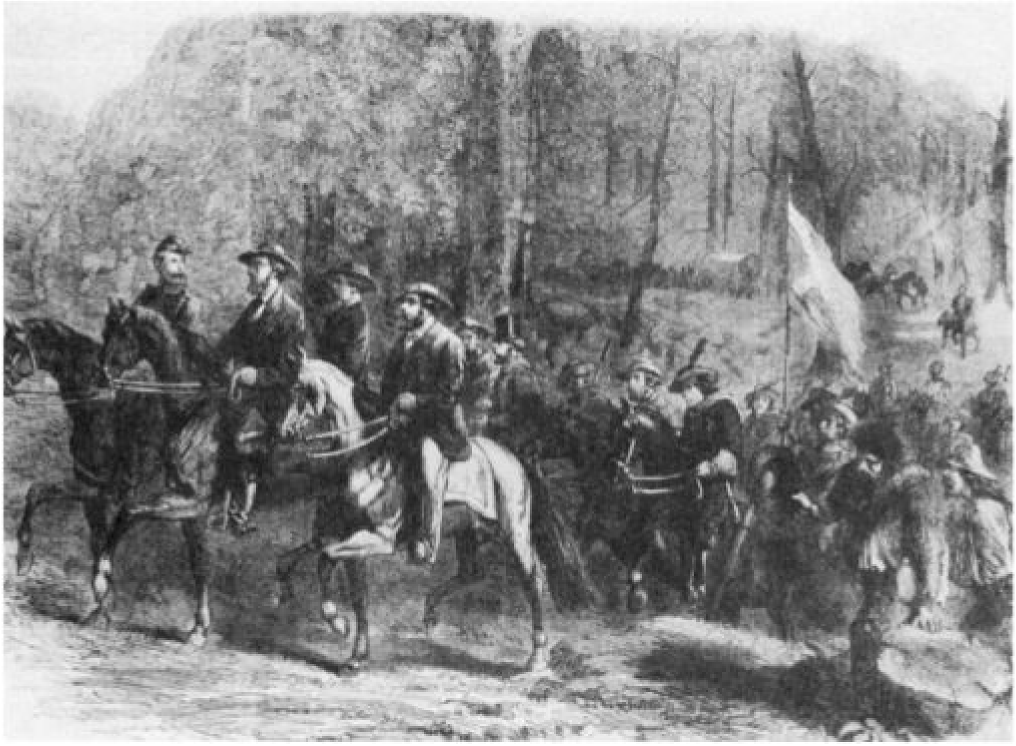
Davis or Benjamin to the bombing and kidnapping plot, but there is convincing circumstantial evidence that Davis and Benjamin set in motion a plot which ended in a rogue agent killing the president. All of these desperate schemes and many others failed.

By late March 1865, the siege of Petersburg was coming to an end and General Lee was waiting for the roads to dry out so that he could combine his army with General Johnston's army in North Carolina. Gen. Lee sent a message to Maj. Gen. John C. Breckinridge, the secretary of war, at 10:40 a.m. on April 2 warning him that the army would have to evacuate their position that night. This took place at about the same time General Lee sent information to President Davis, who had to be called out of Sunday morning church service.[22]

Secretary of State Judah Benjamin methodically destroyed all documents, correspondence, official records, files on covert operations, and anything else which would prove embarrassing if found by the Yankees. He personally destroyed the department's Secret Service records. Like others in the government, Benjamin anticipated that this hour might arrive and had sent his clerk and six boxes of key documents south to Charlotte. At 2:00 p.m. on April 2, Benjamin was visited by Alfred Paul, the French Consul. "I found him extremely agitated … his hands shaking, wanting and trying to do and say everything at once," Paul told his superiors. "Mr. Benjamin said to me in a trembling voice, 'I have nothing in particular to say to you, but I wanted to be sure to shake your hand before my departure.'"[23]

On Sunday afternoon, April 2, 1865, the Confederate government announced it was departing Richmond. On Sunday night, Emma Mordecai heard a "terrific explosion, which jarred the house to its foundation." She and her sister-in-law and her niece all got in bed together, terrified and trembling. The Confederates had set fire to ships, ammunition magazines, and ordnance. The arsenal was ignited. Soon, however, the women, alone on the family plantation and surrounded by slaves, decided that they had best begin making plans to hide their valuables and food.[24]

Two trains left Richmond that night, one carrying over a half a million dollars worth of gold and silver, all that was left of the Confederate Treasury, and the other carrying the presidential party: Mr. and Mrs. Jefferson Davis; Judah P. Benjamin; Stephen R. Mallory, secretary of the navy; George Davis, attorney general; Judge John H. Reagan, postmaster general; and George A. Trenholm, secretary of the Treasury. "Now," Ernest B. Furgurson wrote, "legislature and governor, Congress and president were gone," and Richmond "was capital of nothing."[25] Benjamin had regained his composure from the afternoon. His "Epicurean philosophy was ever at command," Stephen Mallory recalled, "and his hope and good humor inexhaustible … with a never-give-up-the-ship' sort of air, [he] referred to other great national causes which had been redeemed from far gloomier reverses than ours.” A. J. Hanna wrote: “The morale of the official family was strengthened by [former Texas governor Francis R.] Lubbock’s large stock of Texas anecdotes, Mallory’s Seminole Indian war stories, and Benjamin’s inexhaustible wit and good humor.”[26]

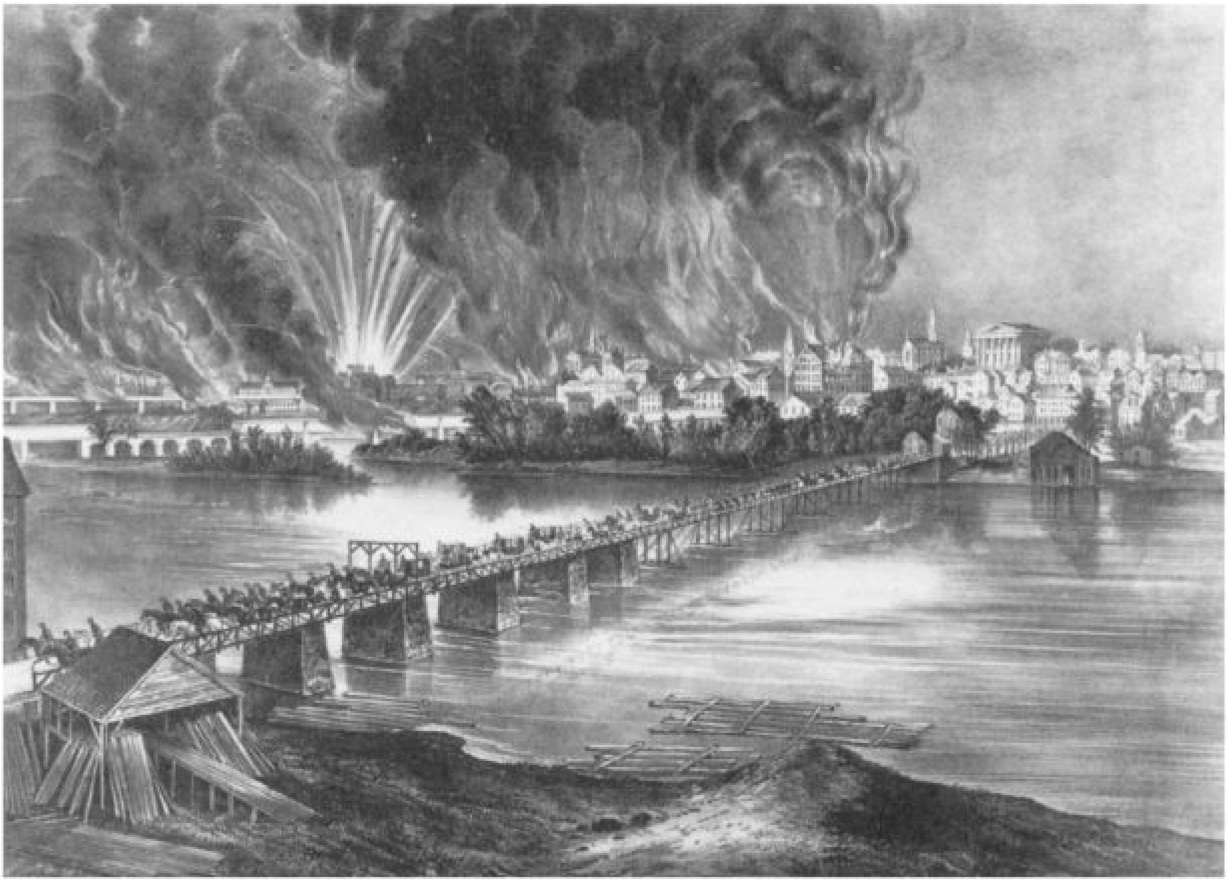


The Confederate cabinet escaping in April 1865. Judah P. Benjamin kept President Davis and his fellow cabinet members amused as they traveled south from Richmond. Benjamin is just behind Davis, wearing a silk hat. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress.)

Richmond was now at the mercy of the rabble. Looters roamed the streets. The Confederate army had evacuated, but the Union army had not yet arrived. Stores were ransacked. Fire swept the city. “The city was wrapped in a cloud of densest smoke, through which great tongues of flame leaped in madness to the skies,” one Federal officer recalled.[27] Philip Whitlock, still in the Quartermaster Department, stayed to the end, packing records to be sent south. “It is hard to describe the condition of this country at *this time*,” he recalled. The people of Richmond “did not know what will become of us. Some of us expected to be put in prison and all our property taken away.” Whitlock saw rioters and robbers plundering and setting fire to downtown Richmond, “people carrying away the goods on their Heads and rolling out Barrels of Licquor in the Streets.”[28]

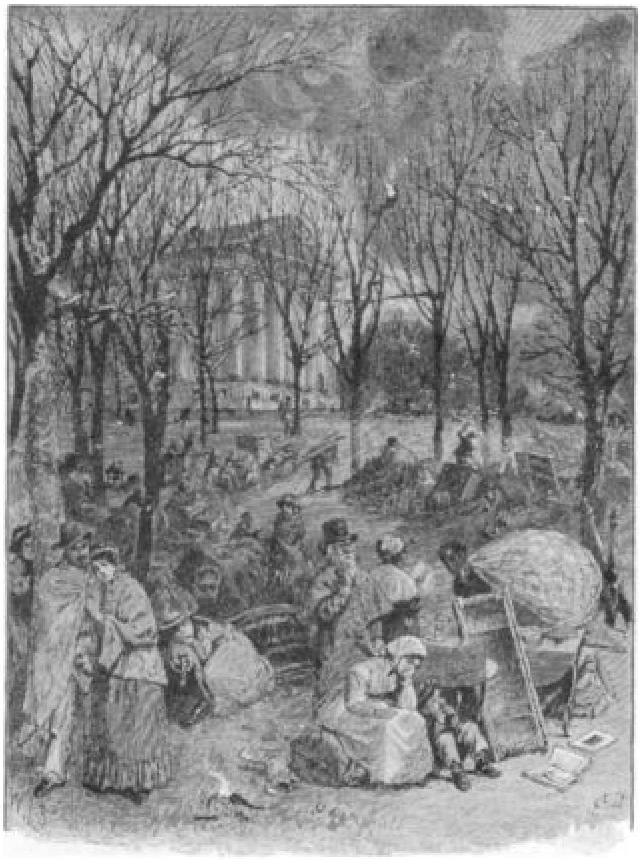
When Whitlock finished his packing job around midnight, he tried to leave the building but was prevented from doing so by a sentinel who told Whitlock he had orders to form all the men into a company to follow Lee's army. "This *did not suit* me," he later wrote. "I knew that there would be no use," so he went down to the basement, found an unguarded door, and escaped. It was on his way to his home and shop at the corner of Mayo and Franklin that Whitlock encountered the rioters. He determined to save his goods. When he arrived, his wife met him with "a whole Apron full of Confederate money," she had earned selling tobacco and cigars. Whitlock carried box after heavy box of tobacco up three flights of stairs to hide them from the looters.[29]

The next morning, the Whitlocks were awakened at 6 a.m. by the great explosion from the arsenal which broke several windows in their home. Fortunately, the fire did not destroy their building, and the arrival of Federal troops restored order. "That was a day," he wrote, "which was remembered by the people that were here as long as they lived."[30]



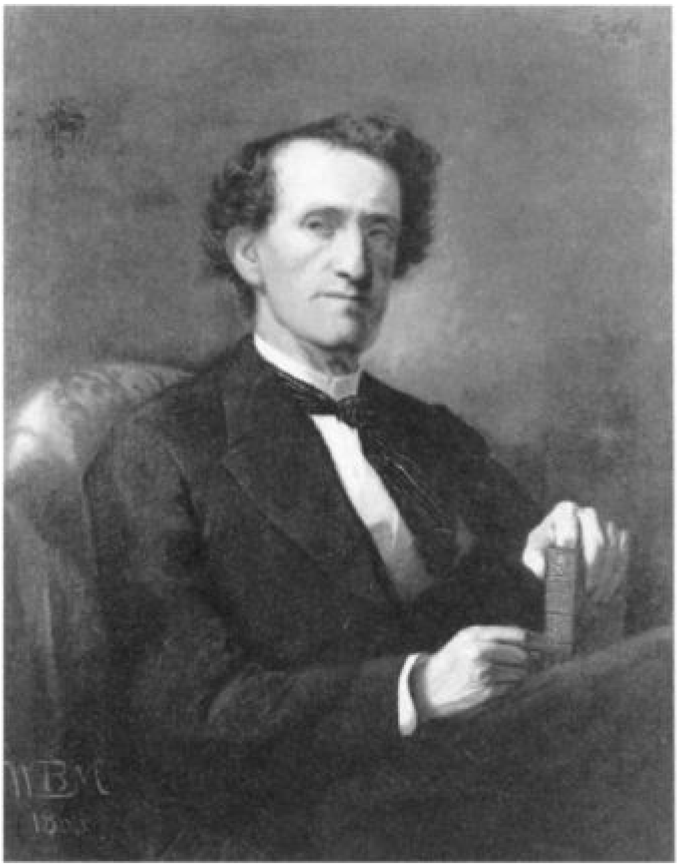
Richmond at the end of the war. The Confederate army and many civilians flee Richmond as the Union army is poised to enter. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress.)

On Tuesday, April 4, John A. Campbell, formerly a justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, asked a number of prominent Richmonders to accompany him on a visit to see President Abraham Lincoln.[31] Lincoln had come to the city a day after the Confederate government left. Accompanied only by sailors, the president walked through downtown Richmond, passing Philip Whitlock's store on Franklin Street and likely passing near Beth Ahabah on his way to the mansion Jefferson Davis had only just abandoned.[32] Campbell hoped to convince the president to be lenient. Gustavus Myers had heard from many citizens that they opposed taking an enforced oath of allegiance and he hoped to convince Lincoln to dispense with it. He also wished "to ascertain the tone and temper existing on the part of the Federal authorities towards the Citizens," and went also out of respect for Campbell, who did not wish to go alone. On the morning of April 5 Campbell and Myers met with Lincoln aboard the *Malvern*. The president was friendly and told the two men that he knew that they came in no official capacity and that they were not authorized to act on behalf of the government. He handed Campbell a paper outlining his conditions, which included that the authority of the United States would be recognized in all parts of the nation, that his sentiments on slavery would be respected, and that all fighting must end and all hostile forces disbanded. Lee, of course, had not yet surrendered and the war was still ongoing. The president said that he was disposed to exercise his authority with regard to the return of confiscated property "in the spirit of sincere liberality," that he hoped "to see an end of the struggle," and that he was considering a plan to ask the Virginia legislature to meet in Richmond. Myers expressed his concern about the oath to the president, who said "he had never attached much importance to the oath of allegiance being required." The men talked about the president's policy of leniency and lack of vin-dictiveness. Campbell gave the president a draft of proposed articles for a military convention to be held by Lee and Grant, which the president accepted. "Throughout," Myers recalled later, "it was conducted with entire civility and good humor."[33]



Citizens of Richmond in Capitol Square during the conflagration. (*Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*.)

Nothing came of the conference. Lincoln was assassinated nine days later, on April 14, 1865.



Gustavus A. Myers was Civil War Richmond's most prominent Jewish citizen after Judah P. Benjamin. He served on the city council and was active in civic affairs. He befriended Benjamin and, together with former Supreme Court Justice John A. Campbell, met with President Lincoln aboard the *Malvern* when the Union army occupied Richmond. His son, Will, was an adjutant to major generals Samuel Jones and William W. Loring. (Courtesy of the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.)

Meanwhile, the train carrying the Confederate leaders from Richmond pulled into Danville, Virginia, where the cabinet stayed for a week. It was obvious to Benjamin that the cause was now definitely lost, and he determined to escape or die trying. A fellow refugee later recalled, "I will never forget the expression of his countenance or the pitiless smile which accompanied his words when he said, 'I will never be taken alive.'" The train proceeded to Greensboro, North Carolina, and then to Charlotte. Burton Harrison recalled: "I could see from afar the occasional bright glow of Benjamin's cigar." While the other travelers were "perfectly silent, Benjamin's silvery voice was presently heard as he rhythmically intoned for their comfort verse after verse of Tennyson's 'Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington.'"

Mourning when their leaders fall,

Warriors carry the warrior's pall,

And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall …

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,

As fits an universal woe,

Let the long procession go,

And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow.[34]

After Pvt. Eugene Henry Levy recuperated from his wounds, he returned to his artillery unit and participated in the last desperate defense of Richmond. "Oh, ever-memorable day of horror!" he wrote in his diary on April 3, 1865, "I heard of the capture of Petersburg, the evacuation of Richmond, and the retreat of Lee's army…. May God protect our noble commander, for the name of Lee will act as a talisman for the recall of the army." He retreated with his company from Richmond. On Saturday, April 8, "a lovely day," he fell in behind the artillery and marched twenty-two miles until dark, "by which time we had arrived at the base of the hill on which is situated the pretty town called Appomattox C.[ourt] H.[ouse]. Here we parked for the night." Levy was captured and became a prisoner of war. Pressed into service to drive wagons, he met several fellow prisoners from the New Orleans Washington Artillery "bragging as usual in a disgusting manner." When the Yankee officers tried to convince Levy and his comrades that Lee would soon surrender, they "hooted at the idea" and its "fabricators." Of course Lee did surrender the next day.[35]

After Lee's surrender, neither Greensboro nor Charlotte was particularly hospitable to Jefferson Davis and the Confederate cabinet. The Union army was advancing in their direction, and the citizenry feared Yankee wrath in Charlotte. Benjamin lodged with the Abram Weill family. Weill was an ardent Confederate who not long before had offered his home to Varina Davis. When Benjamin was leaving, he presented the Weills with a gold-headed cane he had when he made his farewell speech to the U.S. Senate.[36]

Before leaving Charlotte, the full Confederate cabinet held its last meeting on April 26. Only President Davis wanted to continue the fight. The cabinet members saw the reality of the situation. The leaders of the Confederacy now had to consider their personal situations. Benjamin feared that, should he be captured, he would be blamed for acts committed by Confederate Secret Service agents. Lincoln's assassination had occurred on April 14, after Lee's surrender, but while the Confederate leaders were in flight. Federal authorities searched for Booth and his co-conspirators throughout the next twelve days. Booth was captured and killed on April 26, when the Confederate cabinet was in North Carolina. Davis had learned of Lincoln's death by telegram on April 19, when he arrived in Charlotte.[37]

There was talk of hanging the Confederate leaders. Gen. George Boutwell wrote General Butler that, if there were any evidence connecting any of "the rebel leaders with the plot," they should be pursued. "It is not unlikely," he concluded, "that Davis, Breckenridge and Benjamin had a hand in the business." The Jewish secretary of state, the man after Jefferson Davis most detested in the North, would almost certainly be a target. He was described by the former Speaker of the House, James G. Blaine, as the "Mephistopheles of the Rebellion, the brilliant, learned, sinister Secretary of State." Lincoln's secretary of state, William H. Seward, who disliked Benjamin, thought him, alone of the Confederate cabinet, guilty of complicity in Lincoln's assassination. Orville Browning recalled: "Mr. Seward expressed his belief that Booth and Surratt had conferred with Benjamin upon the subject, and that Benjamin had encouraged and subsidized them; but he did not believe that the matter had ever been under discussion before the Richmond Cabinet or received the countenance of other members of the Cabinet than Benjamin." Seward had unsuccessfully debated Benjamin when they served in the Senate before the war. When cornered by Benjamin in those years, Seward could only plead that he was not a lawyer. Seward, in fact, was likely the only Senator Benjamin had truly disliked.[38]

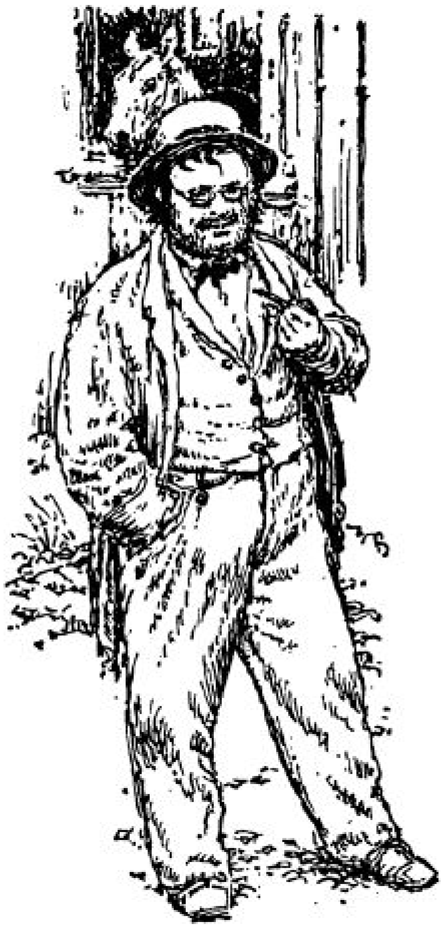
As it turned out, Federal prosecutors attempted to use the perjured testimony of one Sandford Conover, who claimed that he knew of letters from Davis and Benjamin authorizing the assassination. This attempt failed, but Benjamin could not know this in April and May of 1865. During the military trial of the Booth conspirators, the prosecutors continually claimed that the Confederate government was the real culprit. Writing in 1895, David M. Dewitt claimed in *The Judicial Murder of Mrs. Surratt* that scoundrels and perjurers attracted by the scent of reward money "flocked like buzzards, around the doors of the old Penitentiary … to swear that Davis and Benjamin were the instigators of Booth and Surratt."[39]

Years later, L. Q. Washington, Benjamin's secretary, wrote to Francis Lawley,

> I was present at the time when Mr. Thompson [Jacob Thompson, a Confederate secret agent serving in Canada] received his instructions from Mr. Benjamin. They were oral and largely suggestive and informal. Much was left to his discretion and wisely; for he was an experienced and conservative man. But there was not a word or a thought that looked to any violations of the rules of war, as they exist, among civilized nations. As a matter of fact, Mr. Davis, Mr. Benjamin, General Lee and the other leaders of the Confederacy believed to the last that it was not merely

> right, but the wisest and best policy to maintain and respect every one of the humane restrictions in the conduct of war which are upheld by the publicists.[40]

Like Davis, Benjamin determined to escape. Unlike Davis, he determined to leave the South. The cause had been lost. Only Benjamin and Breckinridge escaped imprisonment, although no member of the Confederate cabinet was ever executed. Benjamin left Davis and the dwindling presidential party after crossing into Georgia. Other cabinet members had already left. Benjamin decided not to make the next leg of a proposed escape on horseback. “Thus,” Varina Davis recalled in later years, “these two master minds … parted with mutual respect and affectionate esteem … after breasting as one man the heavy storm which beat upon them for five bitter years.” Benjamin had left a trunk of his personal belongings in Abbeville together with money for his sisters, now refugees in LaGrange, Georgia. He traveled disguised as a Frenchman who could not speak English, M. M. Bonfals. He had had the foresight to prepare a false passport describing himself as a French national. “The name itself,” Eli Evans wrote, “showed a kind of bravado—probably a play on the Cajun French for ‘a good falsification’ or ‘a good disguise.’ It must have given him a certain pleasure to tease his pursuers with a Cajun word-game.” He traveled with Col. Henry J. Leovy of New Orleans, who had served the Confederacy in espionage matters. Leovy “translated” for Benjamin. He made his way to the west coast of Florida, which he supposed would be an easier place from which to escape the country, and parted from Leovy, who later recalled that never was Judah Benjamin so great “as during the time of adversity. Traveling in disguise, sleeping at night in log huts, living on the plainest fare, subjected to all the discomforts of such a journey, with all his plans shattered and without definite hope for the future, his superb confidence and courage raised him above all.”[41]



Judah Benjamin disguised as "Monsieur Bonfals" during his daring escape through Florida. (Reprinted from A. T. Hanna, *Flight into Oblivion*. Courtesy of Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge.)

After a harrowing four-month flight to avoid capture, which included hiding in swamps, Benjamin took passage on a ship that sank not long after sailing and spent weeks at sea in another smaller boat and even sailed into a dangerous storm. "I had never seen a waterspout," he wrote his sister. "I got, however, more than I bargained for." When he finally landed in Southampton, England, he was bereft of assets and an occupation, but not of friends and hope.[42]

When the war ended, the business affairs of Benjamin's former Senate colleague David Yulee were in shambles. His home at Homosassa, Margarita, "the most beautiful in the land," was destroyed by fire in a Union naval assault. He had removed his family inland to Archer, thirteen miles west of Gainesville, where he built Cottonwood, a humbler structure. Another home was taken over by strangers. "Nearly all my means of support [were] lost," he wrote, "by acts of force of *both* the Governments during the war." Although he was not a diehard Confederate, Yulee was fiercely opposed to freeing the slaves to the bitter end. No other issue gave him as much concern. He wrote Davis in October of 1864 opposing the use of slaves as soldiers. Fighting for the Confederacy meant that slaves would be entitled to “the prerogatives of the citizen,” which could not be, because “This is a white man’s Government. To associate the colors in the camp, is to unsettle castes.”[43]

Now, Yulee counseled peace, acceptance of the Union victory and the end of slavery, and reconciliation between the sections. “The conflict of arms is ended,” he wrote one correspondent, “ended by the unconditional surrender of the South: and thereby, as practical facts, Slave labor is abolished…. It is bootless to look back…. The great duty, then, of the day, is Pacification. Not a partial, and constrained, but a solid, true, enduring pacification; thus restoring, as soon as practicable, a complete and earnest reconciliation.” Yulee may have wanted peace, but his many enemies wanted revenge for his role in the events leading up to secession. He was arrested a few weeks later.[44]

The Yulee family had one other connection with the Confederacy: The Confederate baggage and treasure train. When the Confederate government fled Richmond, they took with them officials records, baggage, and the Confederate Treasury. Traveling at first by train, and then by wagon, carriage, and horse, the presidential party went to Danville, Virginia, through North Carolina, and on to Abbeville, South Carolina, where the last war council was held. Some papers were left in Abbeville with Mrs. Henry J. Leovy, the wife of Judah Benjamin's friend Col. Leovy. With the cabinet dissolved, Davis and one cabinet member, John H. Reagan of Texas, and a few aides continued on with a wagon and two ambulances. Davis separated from the wagon train in Georgia and was soon captured. The wagon train, however, continued on to Florida, and the last remnant of the Confederate cabinet's records arrived at Yulee's plantation, Cottonwood, in Archer, Florida, near Gainesville on May 22, 1865. While at Cottonwood, the young soldiers escorting the train learned of the surrender of Gen. Joseph E. Johnston. "A general gloom," Tench Tilghman recalled in his diary, "pervades our camp. Of course the last hope is gone of the Confederacy." Yulee was not at home when the wagon train arrived, which was prior to his arrest and imprisonment. In his absence, Mrs. Yulee and young Wickliffe helped the soldiers hide and bury the valuable trunks and records. One of the trunks contained Jefferson Davis's personal papers. When the senator returned, two of the young soldiers asked his advice as to what they should do. He told them to obtain their parole, "return home to their families, and resume the duties of civil life." The trunks were eventually discovered by the Union troops.[45]

After his parole, and with other young Confederate officers from Johnston's army, Alroy Jonas hopped aboard the top of a railroad boxcar and traveled from North Carolina to Richmond, hoping to secure transportation back home. He and his comrades stopped at the Powhatan Hotel, run by fervent Confederates, where a theatrical company and its leading lady, a Miss Annie Rush, were also staying. One day Miss Rush came into the sitting room where Jonas and his friends were assembled, with a handful of Confederate $500 bills, blank on the back, which someone had given her, and requested that each officer write "a sentiment" for her on the back of the bills. "Well, I had been doing a good deal of doggerel during our sojourn," Jonas recalled, "and so I had the whole load dumped upon my shoulders and performed the required task for each as speedily as possible." He wrote poems for each of his friends, but, for his own contribution, he wrote a sentimental poem entitled "Lines on the Back of a Confederate Note," which was published shortly thereafter in the *New York Metropolitan Record*, a Copperhead (pro-Southern) newspaper, under the heading "Something Too Good To Be Lost." The author was not identified until years later, but the poem was an instant success, appealing in a sentimental way to the tragic frame of mind of Southerners in 1865. The idea of a hungry, penniless man giving away a $500 bill was a bit of grim humor for many Southerners. According to the *Aberdeen Examiner*, Major Jonas's newspaper, to write the lines of this verse on the back of a Confederate bill and send it to “some woe-begone friend” became a fad.[46] As Jonas later put it, he had “unwittingly … touched a subtle heart chord that gains vibration as the days pass by, and like Banquo’s ghost, it will not ‘down.’” The famous lines are as follows:

Lines on the Back of a Confederate Note

Representing nothing on God’s earth now,

And naught in the waters below it,

As the pledge of a nation that’s dead and gone,

Keep it, dear friend, and show it.

Show it to those who will lend an ear,

To the tale that this trifle can tell,

Of a liberty born of the patriots dream,

Of a storm-cradled nation that fell.

Too poor to possess the precious ores

And too much of a stranger to borrow,

We issued today our promise to pay

And hoped to redeem on the morrow.

The days rolled by and the weeks became years,

But our coffers were empty still;

Coin was so rare that the treasury’d quake

If a dollar should drop in the till.

But the faith that was in us was strong indeed,

And our poverty well we discerned

And this little check represented the pay

That our suffering veterans earned.

We knew it had hardly a value in gold,

Yet as gold each soldier received it.

It gazed in our eyes with a promise to pay

And each Southern patriot believed it,

But our boys thought little of price or of pay,

Or of bills that were overdue;

We knew if it bought us our bread today

’Twas the best our poor country could do.

Keep it, it tells all our history o’er

From the birth of the dream to its last;

Modest and born of the angel Hope,

Like our hope of success, it passed.[47]

Simon Mayer had enlisted in 1861 in the Natchez Light Infantry. He had served throughout the war in various Mississippi regiments, surrendered, and was paroled at Greensboro, North Carolina, on May 1, 1865.[48] He wrote his family, “At sunrise this morning we turn our faces homeward.” He was joyous about seeing his family again, “but how sad the reflection that all our efforts for the last four years have been in vain. Eager and anxious as I am to once more be at home, yet willingly would I forego that pleasure if I thought we could alter the present circumstances of our return.” He still believed fervently in the justice of the Southern cause. He was “proud and defiant,” believing that the South succumbed to over-whelming numbers. “We have still made an honest and glorious fight and as the boys express it ‘have kept the flies off the Yanks for the past 4 years.’” He hoped that “ere the month of June shall have passed that the ‘major’ will be able to present himself to you in ‘proper person.’” By May 25, “Maj. Simon Mayer AAG Sharp’s brigade paroled prisoner of the Army of Tennessee” was given permission “to proceed to his home in Natchez, Mississippi.”[49]

Lt. Simon Mayer was the son of immigrants who settled in Natchez. He served in the Natchez Southrons of the 10th Mississippi and was an ardent Confederate soldier. (Courtesy of Joan and Thomas H. Gandy, Natchez, Mississippi)

Most of Richmond's Jewish families were devastated by the war. Emma Mordecai visited Richmond in the early days after the end of the war and found the "pavement was covered with the plate glass from the fire doors and windows, reduced to powder by the explosions while rough boards supplied its place. All stores were closed and the street filthy." Later when she returned, she found it a "strange looking place … sidewalks thronged with Yankee soldiers and saucy Negro women." She was, needless to say, mortified and devastated by the fall of the Confederacy and concerned about its leaders. She wrote in her diary, "When I think of our President [Jefferson Davis], the victim of their petty tyranny, my heart aches, and fervently my prayers ascend to Heaven, that he may be sustained in these dark days, by a high and unfaltering trust in God!"[50]

Even the mild-mannered Mrs. Jacob A. Levy could not abide Yankees. When her nephew Jacob Ezekiel Hyneman came to visit her, she met him at the door. "Oh, Jacob, Jacob," the grieving mother of a dead Confederate son exclaimed, "I have made a vow never to touch the hand of a man who wears that uniform; but how can I keep it with my own flesh and blood, my sister's son?" Poor Hyneman had more to come. He went outside to see his cousin, in whom he had a definite romantic interest. She would not see him until he took off his sword. “The war is over,” he said. “I guess I can surrender.” His cousin then introduced the disappointed Jacob to her fiancé, 1st Lt. Edwin Kursheedt of the Washington Artillery, with the words, “This is my traitor cousin, Jacob Hyneman, from Philadelphia.” Kursheedt rose to his former enemy’s defense by telling young Miss Levy that she ought not call Jacob a traitor, as he had left Richmond as a little boy and was raised up North. Finally Jacob gave up. “I had an old briar-wood pipe sticking in my cap,” he later recalled. “Edwin said: ‘Comrade, let’s smoke a pipe of peace together,’ producing his tobacco pouch.”[51]

On April 9, 1865, Perry Moses of Sumter married Rosalie Levy of Mobile. They had met earlier, when Perry and his brother Jack were invited to dinner at the Levy home. “As the two young men came up the walk to the house,” Dorothy Bultman wrote, “Rose and Adele peeped through the blinds at them. Rose promptly chose ‘that one’ and Adele ‘the other’—a choice that was to end in marriage for both couples.” But on April 9, the war was not quite over and a squad of Yankees came looking for Lieutenant Moses. “Run, Cap’n run, the Yankees are after you,” an old servant yelled. Moses fled and did not see his bride for three months until they were reunited. They settled in Louisiana and later in Sumter, South Carolina, and had seven children.[52]

Raphael Moses Jr., Master, CSN, attached himself to the 20th Georgia Volunteers and served as a courier in Benning’s brigade during the retreat from Petersburg. He was with Lee’s army on that fateful April 9 and surrendered and was paroled at Appomattox Court House. He either marched the eight hundred miles home with Benning’s brigade or “walked home.” In early May his father, Raphael Moses, was ordered to Washington, Georgia, and he and another son, Israel Moses Nunez (“Major”), were staying with Moses’s old friend Robert Toombs. One day a cavalryman rode up and delivered a sack containing $5,000 in gold for Toombs’s personal use, presumably to make his escape from the Union army. Toombs handed the money to “Major” and told him to buy corn and provisions and distribute it among the returning soldiers, which he did. Toombs said he would not defile his hands with “any of the damn stuff.” Not long thereafter, Union soldiers arrived at Toombs’s home to arrest him, but young Major met the Union officer between the gate and the house while Toombs escaped. Toombs barely got away but eventually made his way with his wife to Paris, where he lived in exile. He was never pardoned and, years later, paid a call on President Grant and told him, so the story goes, that it was his practice, whenever he visited a foreign country, to call on the chief magistrate of the land.[53]

Davis was determined not to surrender. On May 5, the last fragments of the Confederate government met in Washington, Georgia. Present were Davis; John C. Breckinridge, secretary of war; John C. Reagan, former postmaster general and now secretary of the

Treasury; A. R. Lawton, quartermaster general; I. M. St. John, commissary general; and Raphael J. Moses, major, Confederate army. The government had ceased to exist, and most of the treasury had been disbursed on May 2. It now became necessary to dispose of the remaining gold bullion in the possession of the government. As the remnant of the government dissolved, one of the final orders of the Confederate States of America was given by W. F. Alexander, assistant to the quartermaster general: "Major R. J. Moses will pay Ten thousand dollars, the amount of bullion appropriated to the Q.M. Department by Secretary of War to Major R. R. Wood./May 5th, 1865. By order of Q.M. General/W. F. Alexander, Maj. & Assist./to the Q.M. General."[54]

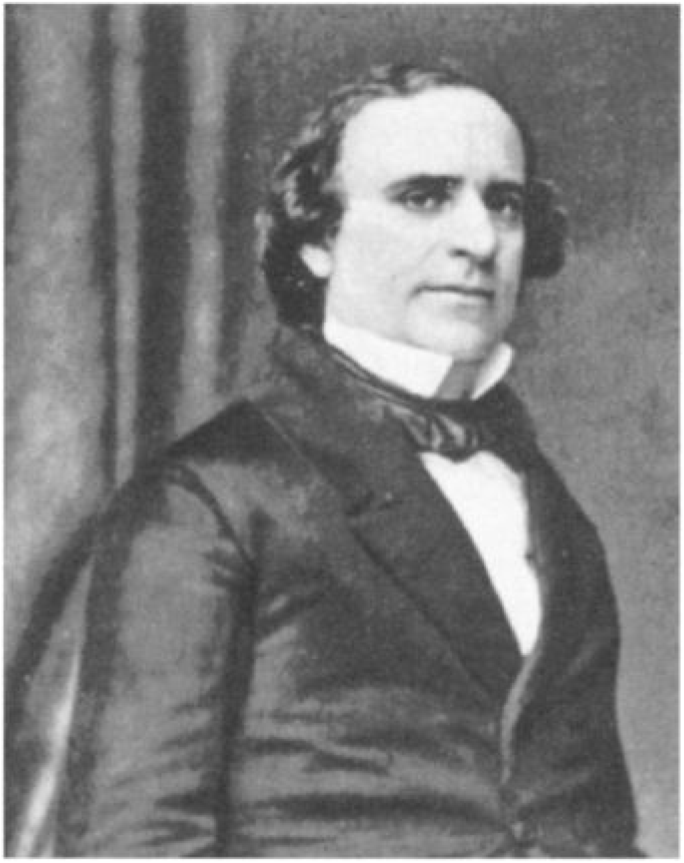
Moses was faced with what to do with this gold bullion in the midst of what can only be described as anarchy. The war was over. Soldiers were discharged. Union troops were nearby. Many were desperate for food and money. Local government was in disarray. Toombs gave Moses the names of ten reliable soldiers to guard the funds. He took a squad to destroy all the liquor in the shops. Then he put the gold in an unoccupied wooden building with a keg of powder under it and a guard around it. He passed the word that a trail of powder led outside and that, if the guard was challenged, the fuse would be lit. After a sleepless night, Moses and his detail boarded a train for Augusta but were met at the train depot in Barnett, Georgia, by a large group of unruly former Confederate soldiers. Rumor had it that the car containing the gold would be stormed. Moses's guard stood by him, but the men certainly had to consider whether they were willing to die protecting gold in a war that was over.[55]

Moses determined to go out into the crowd and talk quietly but directly to the men. He read his orders and told them he had no interest in protecting the bullion except to fulfill his orders; that every dollar of it would be devoted to feeding their fellow soldiers and caring for the wounded; that he would do his best to carry out these orders; that they might kill him and his guard but that would be murder; and that if he and his men killed any of them, which they "would certainly endeavor to do," they would be justified on grounds of self-defense and, he added, "the discharge of a sacred duty." A number of the men who knew Moses spoke up and assured the rest that Moses would not steal the money. The bullion was successfully delivered to the commanding general of the Union army in Augusta.[56] Raphael J. Moses had carried out one of the Confederacy's final orders.[57]

Jewish soldiers who had fought for the Confederacy straggled home to rebuild their lives. But David Yulee *was* home and the end of the war brought him his greatest suffering. The governor of Florida had appointed Yulee as one member of a commission to negotiate Florida's reentry into the Union. In May he met with Salmon P. Chase, secretary of the Treasury, and Whitelaw Reid, a journalist and Chase confidant, who let Yulee know in no uncertain terms that neither Yulee nor any Southern white man was going to negotiate for or reorganize the government of Florida. Disappointed, Yulee went home to Archer; martial law was declared on May 22, and a few days later Yulee and Gov. Abraham K. Allison were arrested. Yulee was sent to Jacksonville as a prisoner. Gen. Israel Vodges treated him with great courtesy and gave him the run of the city. Higher authorities, however, soon ordered Yulee to Fort Pulaski near Savannah.[58]

At the war's end, President Lincoln had not decided on the fate of the Southern leadership. Many believed that treason should be punished severely. There was substantial sentiment, particularly in the aftermath of Lincoln's assassination, to hang Davis, Lee, Benjamin, and other high-ranking officials. Thus when Yulee was taken off to prison, no one could know his fate. In fact, he had no idea what he was to be charged with until early January 1866, when Secretary of War Stanton reported to President Johnson that Yulee was charged with treason "while holding a seat in the Senate of the United States."[59]

Mrs. Yulee and the children visited him in prison on their way to Washington to plead his case. They stayed with family in Maryland, where Mrs. Yulee's father, Governor Wickcliffe, joined her crusade to free her husband. There were rumors that Yulee would be court-martialed and hanged. The family hoped to utilize their contacts in the government to free the imprisoned former senator. Few Confederates had been arrested or imprisoned. Lee was paroled by General Grant. Along with Davis and Sen. Clement Clay, Yulee, however, remained imprisoned longer than any of the other Confederates. He was still a prisoner after Robert Toombs and Alfred Iverson, Confederate senators from Georgia; Howell Cobb and George A. Trenholm, secretaries of the Treasury; Francis W. Pickens, governor of South Carolina; John A. Campbell, assistant secretary of war; Wade Hampton, Confederate lieutenant general; and many others had been released.[60]



David Yulee. (Courtesy of Frank and Marie-Therese wood print collections, Alexandria, Virginia.)

The reasons are not readily apparent. Robert L. Clarke contends that Yulee's Northern partners in the Florida Railroad Company kept him in prison "until they were satisfied that he would cooperate with them." Professor Thompson agrees that this may have been a factor. It does appear that a notorious carpetbagger lawyer, Lyman D. Stickney, came to Fernandina after it was captured and influenced local events. Serving as a Federal tax commissioner and lawyer for one of the northern creditors of the Florida Railroad, he sought out Union major-general Joseph Holt, now judge advocate general, and urged him to keep the "proslavery men, the active rebels during the rebellion" from resuming power. One way to do that—and take over the Florida Railroad at the same time (which Stickney attempted)—was to keep David Yulee in prison. No contemporary or historian has suggested that Yulee's Jewish lineage played any part in his outrageous treatment, but Yulee's fate was certainly not lost on his old colleague Judah Benjamin.[61]

The Yulee family had a more personal and more credible explanation: Yulee's former brother-in-law and old nemesis, Union Maj. Gen. Joseph Holt. Margaret Crepps Wickliffe, one of the Wickliffe sisters, had, in Mrs. Clay's words, "married Joseph Holt, [who] rose high in Federal honours after the breaking out of the War, having sold his Southern birthright for a mess of Northern pottage." Holt had been a stereotypical prosecutor as a young man. His loyalty to the Union caused him to reject not only his wife's family, but also his own brother in Mississippi and mother in Kentucky. As Holt was a staunch Unionist, Lincoln had appointed Holt judge advocate general of the Union army and had offered to appoint him attorney general. He had seriously considered him to head the War Department. During the war, Holt ferreted out spies, traitors, and, at times, political dissenters, and was conspicuously loyal to Edwin Stanton, his superior, in his various political difficulties. It was Holt who headed the investigation into the Copperhead and Order of American Knights movements, and it was Holt who was the chief judge in the military-style trial of Booth's co-conspirators. Holt and Yulee had known each other for decades, first as brothers-in-law until Holt's wife's death just before the war, and second as political allies during the Buchanan administration.[62]

Holt now accused Yulee of treason, and Holt was now the nation's chief prosecutor of traitors. He was also a bitter man rejected by his own family and little concerned about the rights of his victims. Holt felt he had been used by both Yulee and Stephen Mallory, and he now had both of them arrested and accused both of "overt acts of treason" and "skulking treachery." It was clear from gossip passed on by another Wickliffe brother-in-law, Judge William Merrick, that Holt was behind the arrest and detention of Yulee. Yulee, of course, was no more guilty of treason than millions of other Southerners and considerably less guilty than thousands who served more actively than he in the armed forces and the Confederate government.[63]

Holt based his accusations of treason on Yulee's attempt to learn about the condition of the Federal military in Florida while he was still a senator. Holt cited Yulee's January 1861 letter in which he promised to give "the enemy a shot" and "that I am willing to be their masters but not their brothers" in his continuing efforts to keep Yulee in prison and put him on trial for treason.[64]

Holt was so bitter he accused Mallory and Yulee of cowardice. He wrote, "Many of the most conspicuous of these modern conspirators—and this was especially true of Yulee and Mallory … —seem to have shrunk away from the bloody conflicts of the war in which they had so eagerly involved the deluded States and people they represented." Wickliffe Yulee described Holt as suffering from a "diseased vanity," a man "who sought to bite the hand that had aided him, and shine, in artificial light, as a spurious Brutus. He had been degraded, by the noble-minded Lincoln from his cabinet place" to the position he now occupied, where he "resembled the notorious Fouché," the French revolutionary. There was much truth to these allegations. Holt detested not just Yulee and Mallory but all of his former Southern friends and colleagues. He was willing to use perjured testimony in order to convict Davis and Clement Clay of complicity in the Lincoln assassination.[65]

Yulee's family and friends flooded Stanton and Johnson with letters and petitions and called in person. Mrs. Yulee went to Maryland so that she could work for her husband's release in person. In July she wrote that Holt "has gone to the White Mountains. If only he would stay there. The temperature would suit his heart." Yulee's old friends in high places, such as his former friend and lawyer Edwin Stanton and William Seward, refused to help. They were waiting to see which way the political wind would blow, and, in Stanton's case, he may have felt an obligation to support Holt as Holt had once supported him. President Andrew Johnson wrote a now thoroughly worried Governor Wickliffe: "Tell Mrs. Yulee that not one hair of her husband's head shall be touched—but for me to do anything now in his behalf, while passions remain excited, would only injure his cause."[66]

While passions cooled, the family continued to hope. When advised that a letter from General Grant would help, the Yulees turned to an old friend, Joseph E. Johnston, the former Confederate general whom Yulee had helped become quartermaster general of the U.S. Army under Buchanan. Johnston wrote Grant. "Wires flashed," Wickliffe Yulee recalled, "and magically the prison doors were thrown open; as were the hearts of Senator Yulee and his family, for the great and simple soldier, who had enemies only in time of war." He was pardoned by President Johnson and released on March 25, 1866, having been imprisoned for ten months.[67]

Emma Mordecai of Richmond spoke for her fellow Jewish Confederates when she wrote, "I feel as if there was nothing more to live for in this world. My very heart and soul were bound up in our cause and while I can truly say I do not murmur at God's will, I feel utterly cast down, at our failure."[68]

CHAPTER 8

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We Are Passing through Another Captivity

THE CIVIL WAR BROUGHT a social revolution to the South. Millions of slaves were freed, and those who had invested in the South's "peculiar institution" lost a great proportion of their wealth. White Southerners had expended their capital in a failed war for independence. Political power ebbed from antebellum elites to their former slaves, free blacks, and newcomers to government, both Northern and native-born, "carpetbaggers" and "scalawags," respectively, as native white Southerners called them. Much of the South lay devastated by the war, particularly Richmond and Charleston. Jewish Confederates who had shared in the glories, the honors, and the triumphs of the war now shared the despair and gloom of defeat.

The old Southern Jewish families, the few Sephardim remaining, those most committed to the cause, suffered the greatest losses. Judah P. Benjamin was in exile, having literally lost everything he had—his land, his home, his law practice, his fortune, and the comfort of his family. David Yulee spent almost a year in prison, uncertain of his fate. Abraham C. Myers lost his military career, his health, and his reputation, as did Camden DeLeon. Judith Hyams Douglas, recalling her Aunt Ann in 1936, remembered that she "wore her poverty as a badge of honor as all loyal Southerners did."[1]

Raphael J. Moses, Longstreet's commissary, returned to The Esquiline in Columbus. He had lost a son as well as a way of life. The war had taken a heavy toll on the extended Moses family. In addition to their son Albert, Raphael and Eliza Moses lost three nephews: Pvt. Perry Moses Jr., mortally wounded at Malvern Hill; Lt. Joshua L. Moses, killed at Fort Blakely; and Lt. David Cardoza Levy, killed in action at Murfreesboro (Stone's River), Tennessee. Five cousins were killed: Saul Magnus, Van Den Corput's Company, Georgia Light Artillery, at Resaca, Georgia; Alexander Hilzheim, Bradford's corps of Scouts and Guards, at Kennesaw Mountain, Georgia; Gratz Cohen, Bentonville, North Carolina; and two brothers, Cpl. Isaac Phillip Goldsmith, 17th South Carolina Cavalry Battalion, at James Island, South Carolina, and Lt. Mikel Myers Goldsmith, 1st South Carolina Regiment, Charleston Guard, at Macon, Georgia.[2]

Maj. Raphael J. Moses of Columbus, Georgia, served as a major and was Longstreet's commissary at Gettysburg. Douglas Southall Freeman called Moses "the best commissary of like rank in the Confederate service." He lost one son, Albert Luria, in the war, as well as several nephews. He was a vigorous opponent of the carpetbagger government of Georgia after the war. (Courtesy of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.)

Yet life went on for the Moses clan. On June 28, 1865, less than three months after Appomattox, Nina Moses, Raphael's daughter, married William Moultrie Moses, who had served in Company G, 2d Georgia in Longstreet's corps. It was likely no coincidence that the patriotic Moses family from South Carolina, whose daughter was marrying a man named for the great hero of the American Revolution, chose "Carolina Day" as the day of the wedding. (On June 28, South Carolinians celebrate the colonists' first victory of the Revolution, the defeat of the British fleet off Sullivan's Island, when Gen. William Moultrie led the victorious troops.) The couple was married at the family plantation before sundown under a *huppah*, the canopy prescribed by Jewish custom. The huppah, held up by four friends, was made of evergreens and white flowers. The proud father performed the ceremony himself, as no rabbi was available.[3]

Henry Hyams, who had gone west to Louisiana in the 1820s to seek his fortune, lost it in the war. "As Israelites," the former lieutenant governor of Louisiana wrote a family member in April 1868, "we are passing through another captivity which relives and reenacts all the troubles so pathetically poured forth by the inspired Jeremiah. Let us hope with him that the days of Bondage will have a permanent end and that freedom will again reign in our unhappy land.” Hyams and the defeated Jewish Confederates saw in the Union occupation and Reconstruction a modern-day version of the Jewish exile in Babylonia after the destruction of the Jewish state. Hyams believed that the spirituality of the Jewish faith had been adopted by its political conquerors and, in that sense, “Jerusalem has prevailed.” So he now hoped that the “pure patriotism of the Southern mind must *one day* conquer and overcome its present vanquishers—despite our present degradation.”[4]

Hyams lost three plantations and two hundred slaves in the war. His land was confiscated. At first, he accepted the results of the war philosophically. He moved to New Orleans. By September 1865, he had opened a law practice, and he worked diligently to have his friend, former Governor Moore, restored to his political rights. His interest in Governor Moore was personal. His son Kosciusko (“Kossie”) married Moore’s daughter, Emma Jane.[5]

By April 1868 Hyams, along with the rest of the white population of Louisiana, bore the yoke of the Reconstruction government. The Federal government, controlled by the Radical Republicans, at first denied the Southern states representatives in the Congress and divided the South into military districts. Later, rigorous laws were passed ensuring the right to vote to the former slaves and effectively taking control of the state governments away from native whites. The former leadership of the Southern states—planters, businessmen, lawyers—were removed from office and new leaders, loyal to the Union, took their place. This was revolution in the eyes of white Southerners, a revolution they did not accept.[6] Hyams wrote a family member, “I hope that we will all live long enough to see the end of our personal and political suffering. So far there is scarcely any ray of light ahead.” Despite his troubles, he felt he had done his duty and that sustained him. Like most native whites, Hyams was aghast at the tactics of the carpetbaggers, the Union occupying army, and the Reconstruction government.[7]

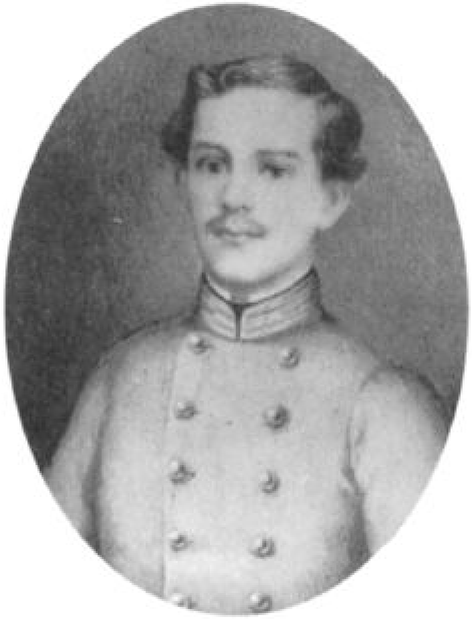
Hyams did not live to see the end of Reconstruction. He died on June 25, 1875. Some of the district courts in Louisiana adjourned out of respect for his memory, and the next day a hundred members of the legal profession assembled in the Louisiana Supreme Court to offer a tribute. The *Daily Picayune* relayed the sad circumstances of Hyams’s last years: “The downfall of the South—the death of his fair and accomplished daughters and of two sons—the latter within one year—and recently the demise of the worthy and cherished wife of his bosom, all contributed to break his noble spirit. He had devoted all his affection to these beings, too dear to him, and their loss, to use Irving’s phrase, was the bankruptcy of his heart. This good, and true and chivalrous old man had died overwhelmed with grief!"[8]

Abraham Myers, the former quartermaster general, never accepted his fall from grace. He contended after the war that his removal from office was illegal, that he had been the Confederacy's only quartermaster general, and that he had been promoted to general. Indeed, the words "Gen. A. C. Myers" are the most prominent ones on his original headstone.[9]

Many Southerners left the South; many Jewish Southerners did the same. Moses Cohen Mordecai, his shipping business destroyed by the war and his eyesight gone, moved to Baltimore. His son-in-law, Marks H. Lazarus, who had served in the Washington Artillery (South Carolina), handled his business affairs in Charleston. Eleanor Cohen of Columbia finally married Benjamin Mendes Seixas on August 2, 1865, in Columbia. The sun shone. The bride was radiant. She was dressed plainly in "white swiss muslin high & long sleeves." All "passed off well, the glass broke [the Jewish custom of breaking a glass], the ring was on my finger & from every side I received kisses & congratulations." After the wedding, Eleanor moved to New York City despite her concerns about living among those who were so recently her enemies. Her heart, she confided to her diary, was filled with "Southern fire" and bitterness toward the North. Retruning to Charleston in 1866 to have her first child, she was shocked by the crowds of Yankees, freedmen, and "colored soldiers." Many of her friends were dead; some were still refugees. She eventually had four children and died, a New York resident, at age thirty-four in 1874.[10]

Slavery was at an end, and Jewish slave owners experienced the same exodus of their slaves as their fellow Southerners. In some instances slaves stayed on as paid servants. In most cases, they left, searching for a new life. Emma Mordecai, living with her sister-in-law Rose on a plantation, witnessed the rapid deterioration of the relationship between the former masters and their slaves. Cy, now a freedman, demanded part of the farm on account of all the work he had done. Emma's nephew Willie Mordecai told Cy "he would give him three days to find a place to move." The Mordecais bargained for the former slaves to work until new servants could be hired. Cy did return and "expressed to Rose his regret for his improper conduct … and was very much affected at parting with her. She could not take leave of him without emotion and has felt miserable ever since." This, of course, left Rose and Emma with all the housework. "I have been doing drudgery for the greater part of the week," Emma complained, "assisted unwillingly and inefficiently by a little white girl from town."[11]

Emma Mordecai's experience with the freeing of her own slaves was more friendly. Like many city dwellers, Emma owned slaves whom she hired out to others for a portion of their wages. Moses, her former slave, was now a bricklayer. She remained on good terms with him. “No servant,” she wrote, “could behave better than he has done. He shewed great interest in me and all of us, and begged me to call upon him whenever he could do anything for me.” Emma was, in a sense, relieved at the turn of events, because she had the expense of Moses, his sickly wife, and young children, and it took nearly all of the wages Moses could earn to pay his family’s medical and clothing expenses.[12]



Gratz Cohen of Savannah died at the battle of Bentonville. (From the collection of Louis Schmier, Valdosta, Georgia.)

Eleanor Cohen of Charleston and Solomon Cohen of Savannah lamented the end of slavery. All of Eleanor Cohen’s clothing, she wrote, was saved from the fire in Columbia by Rose, “our faithful servant. She and Helen were true, so was Lavinia. I shall ever remember her devotion to us. She gave us cotton homespun and behaved like a friend. Ben, who we believed faithful, left us; he says, or said, he was forced to.”[13]

Many Jewish communities and congregations were decimated by the war. Although life went on in Norfolk, New Orleans, and Memphis, Charleston was practically destroyed by the Civil War. More dependent on slavery and the planter class than Richmond, besieged by an invading army for years, more remote from railroad lines, and bound to an agricultural economy, Charleston’s economic life came to a standstill. The ranks of the old Charleston Jewish families and the new German and Polish immigrant families were shattered by the war. Many had died: Thomas W. Mordecai, 4th South Carolina, in 1861 at Fort Moultrie; R. Blankensee, Hampton Legion, at First Manassas; Jacob Blankenstein, 15th South Carolina, near Richmond; Mikell. M. Goldsmith, 1st South

Carolina Charleston Guard, killed accidentally in 1864; Isacc P. Goldsmith, 5th South Carolina, of disease; Jacob M. Hoffman, 10th South Carolina, at Franklin; Isaiah Jacobs, 2d South Carolina, at Chickamauga; 1st Lt. W. Myer Wolff, Co. G, 11th South Carolina, at Swift Creek; Mendel Brown, 10th South Carolina, at Atlanta; 5th Sgt. Jacob B. Cohen, Company A, 21st South Carolina, at Fort Fisher; Marx E. Cohen Jr., Hart's (South Carolina) Battery, at Bentonville. Add to this partial list a much longer list of the wounded, disabled, impoverished, the widows, the orphans and the grieving survivors, and it is apparent that the old Jewish elite of Charleston was no more.[14]

The leaders of congregation Shearith Israel took advantage of the military occupation to take over Beth Elohim's synagogue. The military authorities, now administering the laws and acting as the local government, gave possession of the temple to the Wentworth Street congregation until the Beth Elohim trustees petitioned Brig. Gen. William Gurney, the provost judge, "that they be put in possession and control of their Synagogue in Hasell Street." The military judge agreed with Benjamin D. Lazarus and B. F. Moise that the "congregation to which Mr. Moise belongs" had the right to the building on account of a decision by the state courts before the war.[15]

The once proud Jews of Charleston, like their fellow Charlestonians, were reduced to poverty and misery. Many prominent businessmen left the city to find work elsewhere. One-third of Beth Elohim's congregation were stricken from the rolls in 1867 for their inability to pay dues. A fund established before the war by Abraham Ottolengui for "poor Israelites" of the city, had among its applicants some of the formerly well-to-do, including Ottolengui himself.[16]

In January 1866, Beth Elohim's building was still not repaired and was so dilapidated and damaged that its few members met in the Hebrew Orphan Society building. The minutes noted that the "Organ, Chandeliers, Sepherim and Remonim … removed for safety" to Columbia for safekeeping were destroyed when "that City was invaded by the ruthless Army under command of General Sherman." Beth Elohim and Shearith Israel, soon voted to combine the two synagogues "on a basis of mutual concessions." The membership of Beth Elohim, the minutes noted, had been "disastrously diminished by death, and removals and by the ravages of War, its property … seriously damaged, and its finances greatly reduced." Charleston Jewry no longer had the luxury to debate the merits of Reform versus Orthodoxy. It had to survive. The new constitution was a compromise: the service would be a shortened version of the Orthodox Portuguese Minhag. The Wentworth Street synagogue would be sold; the two cemeteries on Coming Street would be combined. Secession on one level had ironically led to union on the congregational level.[17]

When the indefatigable journalist Rabbi Isaac Leeser visited Charleston in the summer of 1866, he found Shearith Israel "so greatly injured during the war, as almost to render it useless as a place of worship." He found Beth Elohim "much disfigured by the explosion of shells fired indiscriminately into Charleston during the protracted siege it underwent, and, by being so long closed, it suffered likewise by natural dilapidation." When Leeser went to Beth Elohim to preach on Saturday morning, June 2, 1866, he saw "the unwashed floor, the dust resting on the furniture and benches, many panes of glass broken, [and] the ceiling crushed in many places by the explosion of shells that penetrated the roof." The "Polish synagogue" on St. Philips Street, Lesser found, was "without a permanent minister." Leeser found that many of the assimilated Charleston Jews were dead or gone.[18] Charles Henry Moise, a grandson of Abraham and Sarah Moise from Haiti, served as president of Beth Elohim for four years. Moise spent a great deal of time raising funds up North to rebuild the Jewish community. Because he could not make a living in Reconstruction Charleston, Moise went to live with his brother Edwin in Sumter.[19]

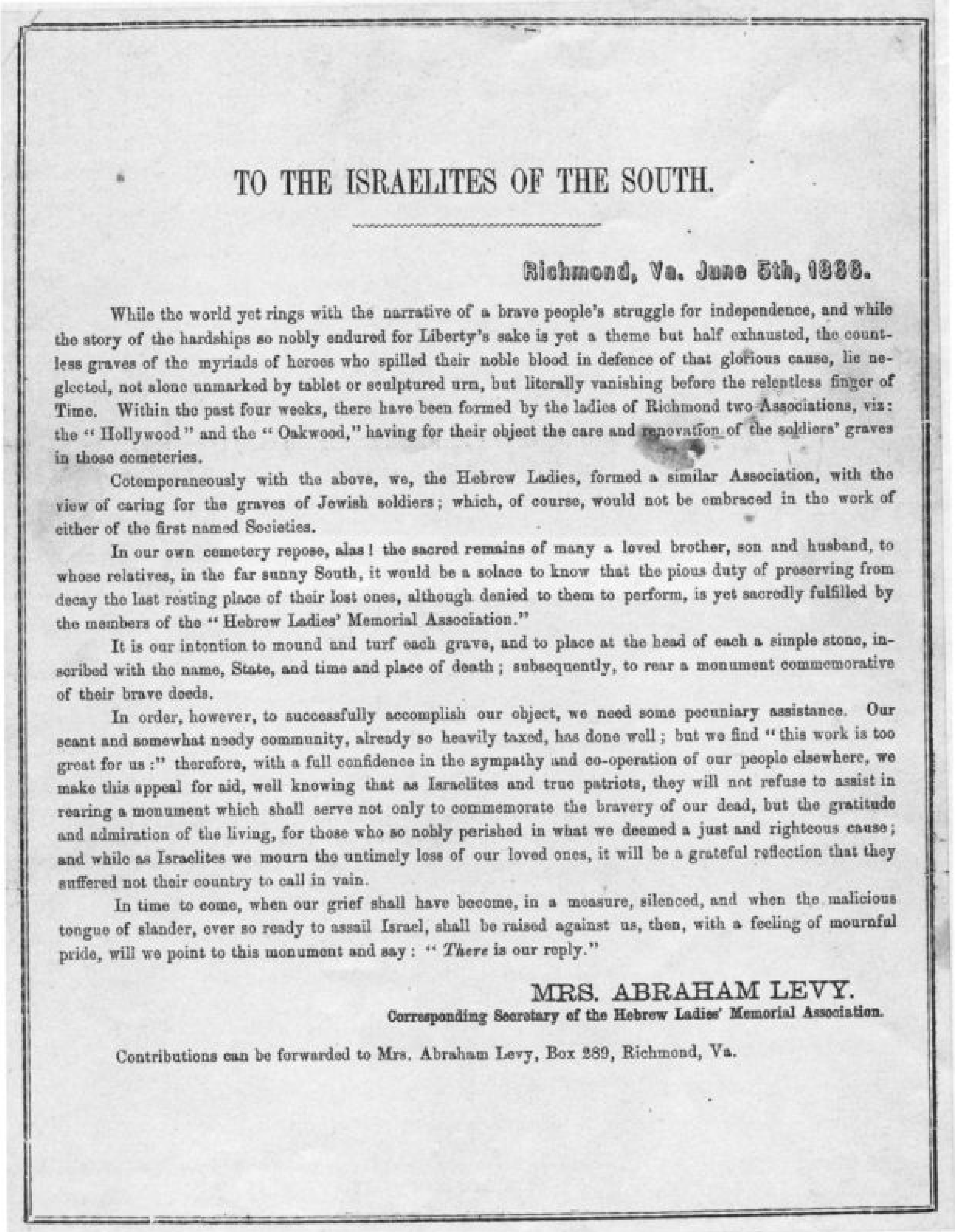
The Jewish community of Richmond was in deep despair after Appomattox. The old Virginia Jewish families could not abide the invaders. "Richmond is a strange looking place," Emma Mordecai confided to her diary, "with its heap of ruins, its streets transversed by U.S. Army wagons, sidewalks thronged with Yankee soldiers and saucy Negro women." Mordecai could not bear the thought of Yankees in Richmond. "Everything looks unnatural and desecrated," she wrote, "and the eye is offended by all it sees, and the ear by all it hears."[20] Like the Jews of Charleston, the members of Richmond's Jewry were subject to grinding poverty. Rosena Hutzler Levy recalled that all she and her husband Leopold Levy "had worked for & as he thought saved it … was swept away."[21] Jacob Ezekiel could not make a living and was forced to move in order to support his family. Richmonders, like Charlestonians, grieved for the many killed and wounded.[22]

Rabbi Leeser described Richmond in October 1865: "Suffering had been familiar to them in every shape, and the deprivation of many comforts of life had become habitual, and it is only wonderful that all this had left so few traces in them. It must be recorded to the credit of the Israelites of Richmond, that they kept up all their various organizations during the trials through which they had passed."[23] The returning soldiers took their places in the community. For four years, Beth Ahabah had been without its secretary, Capt. Ezekiel Levy. The congregational minutes of May 1865 reflected that Levy had returned to his congregational post.[24]

In 1866 Beth Shalome's Franklin Street cemetery was "a vacant lot, overrun with rank weeds and grass, showing the track of wagons and bearing the hoof-marks of horses and which is washed into deep ruts and gullies by the rains of many a season." The city had been badly damaged and, indeed, in some places destroyed, by the shelling and the fires set by looting mobs and the departing Confederate army in 1865.[25]

The Jewish women of Richmond formed the Hebrew Ladies' Memorial Association for the Confederate Dead. Many a Southern Jewish youth had died and been buried in Richmond. Jewish Richmonders took on the responsibility of caring for their graves. Their notice in the newspaper read as follows: "HEBREW LADIES MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION FOR CONFEDERATE DEAD.—A society has been formed by the Hebrew ladies of this city for the purpose of caring for the graves of the Israelitish soldiers of the Confederate army who have been interred in their cemetery on Shockoe Hill. This society will not come in conflict with the others already formed, but is merely intended for the deceased of their own persuasion, while they have all joined in the general associations for Hollywood and Oakwood, recently established. We will publish their proceedings shortly." A circular was sent out "To the Israelites of the South" asking for funds to "mound and turf each grave," to place simple stone markers, and eventually to erect a monument to the Jewish Confederate dead. Time was of the essence, the circular said. "While the world yet rings with the narrative of a brave people's struggle for independence," it began, and while the story of their noble sacrifices for liberty was fresh, the graves themselves were neglected. This was not a situation which Southern Jewry should allow. Southern Jews should remember "the myriads of heroes who spilled their noble blood" in defense of the "glorious cause." The circular was also designed to appeal to the Southern Jewish readers' fear of anti-Semitism: "In time to come," it concluded, "when the malicious tongue of slander, ever so ready to assail Israel, shall be raised against us, then, with feeling of mournful pride, will we point to this monument and say: '*There* is our reply.'"[26]

Tending to graves became an important event. William B. Myers, Gustavus A. Myers's son and a former Confederate officer, designed the railing around the Confederate graves in the Hebrew Cemetery on Shockoe Hill, complete with furled flags, stacked muskets, and a Confederate flag. Every May the Jewish ladies would, like their Christian counterparts, "decorate" the graves of the Confederate dead with wreaths of roses and magnolias. In May 1869, the *Richmond Dispatch* contained this notice: "Hebrew Memorial Day. This is the day set apart by the Hebrew Ladies Memorial Association for the decoration of the graves of the young men of their nationality who fell in the Confederate struggle. They cordially invite the people of Richmond to unite with them in the sad but pleasing exercises, and contribution of flowers will be thankfully received. The Hebrew cemetery is in the northern part of the city—a pleasant walk or ride."[27]



TO THE ISRAELITES OF THE SOUTH.

Richmond, Va. June 5th, 1866.

While the world yet rings with the narrative of a brave people's struggle for independence, and while the story of the hardships so nobly endured for Liberty's sake is yet a theme but half exhausted, the countless graves of the myriads of heroes who spilled their noble blood in defence of that glorious cause, lie neglected, not alone unmarked by tablet or sculptured urn, but literally vanishing before the relentless finger of Time. Within the past four weeks, there have been formed by the ladies of Richmond two Associations, viz: the "Hollywood" and the "Oakwood," having for their object the care and renovation of the soldiers' graves in those cemeteries.

Cotemporaneously with the above, we, the Hebrew Ladies, formed a similar Association, with the view of caring for the graves of Jewish soldiers; which, of course, would not be embraced in the work of either of the first named Societies.

In our own cemetery repose, alas! the sacred remains of many a loved brother, son and husband, to whose relatives, in the far sunny South, it would be a solace to know that the pious duty of preserving from decay the last resting place of their lost ones, although denied to them to perform, is yet sacredly fulfilled by the members of the "Hebrew Ladies' Memorial Association."

It is our intention to mound and turf each grave, and to place at the head of each a simple stone, inscribed with the name, State, and time and place of death; subsequently, to rear a monument commemorative of their brave deeds.

In order, however, to successfully accomplish our object, we need some pecuniary assistance. Our scant and somewhat needy community, already so heavily taxed, has done well; but we find "this work is too great for us:" therefore, with a full confidence in the sympathy and co-operation of our people elsewhere, we make this appeal for aid, well knowing that as Israelites and true patriots, they will not refuse to assist in rearing a monument which shall serve not only to commemorate the bravery of our dead, but the gratitude and admiration of the living, for those who so nobly perished in what we deemed a just and righteous cause; and while as Israelites we mourn the untimely loss of our loved ones, it will be a grateful reflection that they suffered not their country to call in vain.

In time to come, when our grief shall have become, in a measure, silenced, and when the malicious tongue of slander, ever so ready to assail Israel, shall be raised against us, then, with a feeling of mournful pride, will we point to this monument and say: "*There* is our reply."

MRS. ABRAHAM LEVY.
Corresponding Secretary of the Hebrew Ladies' Memorial Association.

Contributions can be forwarded to Mrs. Abraham Levy, Box 289, Richmond, Va.

Circular sent to Southern Jews in 1866 by the Hebrew Ladies' Memorial Association. The Jewish women of Richmond raised funds to care for the graves of "the glorious dead" at the Hebrew Cemetery on Shockoe Hill. (Courtesy of Beth Ahabah Museum and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.)

The war certainly did not bring the contentious factions of Nashville Jewry together. A story in a Jewish periodical in 1867 described Nashville's 250 Jewish families as "divided into three groups [who] … do not cooperate…. The spirit of unity did not move them to establish and build a united synagogue, but each has bought a place to build its own house of worship, and that which one planned to build, the others plotted to destroy."[28] In 1868, two prewar synagogues united to form Khal Kodesh Ohava Sholom, later known as the Vine Street Temple. Former President Andrew Johnson, who had so many anti-Semitic things to say about Judah P. Benjamin and David Yulee, was one of the speakers at the dedication of the Temple in 1874. He told his listeners that he hoped the temple "would ever remain a monument to the industry, prosperity and welfare of the Jewish citizens of Nashville."[29]

Of course the Jewish South after the Civil War did not belong exclusively to native Southern Jewry. More Jewish immigrants from Germany, Poland, Russia, and the North came South during the Reconstruction years. Often poor, like the previous generation of peddlers, these new settlers, rejuvenated many moribund congregations and helped rebuild the shattered Southern economy.[30] These new settlers did not share the same feelings about the war as those who had lived through it, but there is little evidence that they played any significant political role in the Reconstruction era. Clearly, however, Jewish immigrants from abroad and the North played a substantial role in rebuilding Atlanta, Memphis, and Richmond.

Janice O. Rothschild wrote of these newcomers to Atlanta: "These enterprising young men [peddlers for Northern merchants] perceived that Atlanta, a booming hub of trade and transportation, would be a good place to go into business for themselves. By 1866 they were sufficiently prosperous to organize a social club, the Concordia Society, forerunner of the present Standard Club." In 1867 Rabbi Leeser returned to Atlanta to again urge the formation of a congregation. This time he succeeded. "The Israelites of the place," he wrote, "have rented a hall, purchased a Sepher [Torah] and intended holding services…. We expect much from Atlanta. The city has been fearfully devastated during the late war…. Still, it is a center of commerce…. Israelites will, to a certainty, take their share in the regeneration of Georgia."[31]

* * *

Before the war, Dr. Simon Baruch had courted Isabelle ("Belle") Wolfe, the daughter of a prominent Jewish planter, Saling Wolfe. Belle was the granddaughter of Charleston Rabbi Hartwig Cohen and the niece of Baruch's mentor, Mannes Baum. When the war ended, the Wolfes, like their fellow South Carolinians, were ruined and impoverished. Their fortune had been invested in Confederate money. The Wolfe plantation in Winnsboro—the home, the crops, the outbuildings—were all burned by Sherman's army. A neighbor found Mr. and Mrs. Wolfe "with all their little children gathered around them offering up prayers in Hebrew."[32] Simon Baruch married Isabelle Wolfe on November 28, 1867.[33] They lived in Camden, in the Midlands of South Carolina. Life was difficult in Reconstruction South Carolina. Baruch was a country doctor who soon had four children, including the second son, Bernard, born in Camden in 1870. (Bernard Baruch later became one of the most prominent Jews of the twentieth century, a friend and advisor to Franklin D. Roosevelt.)[34]

John and Jeanette Mayer continued to live in Natchez. Their son, Simon, returned from the war a hero. He had narrowly escaped being killed at the Battle of Franklin when a bullet passed through his hat but missed his head as he carried a message to Gen. Jacob H. Sharp when he served as acting adjutant. The Mayers's home was, according to their daughter, "the center of all Jewish festivities, and at the long dining table … there were often seated as many as thirty-five guests on Passover Eve, the feast of Seder, which was always celebrated with much 'pomp and ceremony.'" In 1865 the Jewish community was small. It had an Orthodox congregation, Chevra Kadusha (Holy Society), made up mainly of Polish Jews. The older families and German Jews soon established a Reform congregation, and a new temple was dedicated in 1871.[35]

When the war ended, the Lehman brothers were in business as Lehman, Durr & Co., still at Court Square in Montgomery. The business had to be rejuvenated, and the family worked diligently to rebuild its fortune. By 1866 Emanuel Lehman reactivated the New York office of Lehman Brothers at 176 Fulton Street. They also opened a New Orleans office the same year. In 1868 Mayer Lehman moved to New York, and Lehman Brothers soon became one of the largest brokers of commodities in New York City. The firm traded petroleum, coffee, and sugar as well as cotton.[36]

After the war, Thomas Cooper DeLeon moved to Baltimore, where he served as the editor of the *Cosmopolite Magazine*, lending a hand to his poverty-stricken colleagues from the South, including Phoebe Pember. The *Cosmopolite* published some portions of Pember's memoir, *A Southern Woman's Story*. DeLeon moved to New York City in 1866, where he wrote for newspapers and magazines and was a translator of French novels. He collected and edited *South Songs*, a collection of war poems of the South in 1866. In 1868, DeLeon moved to Mobile to become the managing editor of the *Mobile Register*. There, he became a well-known member of society, creating and managing the Mobile Mardi Gras Carnival for twenty-five years. He became the owner and editor of the *Register* in 1877 and also owned and edited the *Gossip* and the *Gulf Citizen*. He was a prolific writer, publishing plays, novels, and memoirs of the war. His Confederate poems included "Asleep with Jackson," an ode to Stonewall Jackson, and "Paladin and Poet," a tribute to Robert E. Lee. He wrote two journalistic memoirs of the Civil War, which have become classics: *Four Years in Rebel Capitals*, published in Mobile in 1890, and *Belles, Beaux, and Brains of the ’60s*.[37]

Thomas Cooper DeLeon served as a clerk in the Confederate government in Richmond. After the war, he became a noted Southern author, writing *Four Years in Rebel Capitals* and *Belles, Beaux, and Brains of the ’60s*, two Civil War classics. He also wrote Confederate poetry and, in later years, was known as “the Blind Poet of the Confederacy.” The Civil War–era DeLeons abandoned Judaism. They proved to be more Southern than Jewish, according to Jacob Rader Marcus (Gergel and Gergel, *Tree of Life*, 35). (Courtesy of South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.)

Yates Levy resumed the practice of law after the war and became the outspoken pro-Southern editor of the *Daily Advertiser*, a Savannah newspaper. His editorials during the Union occupation were not acceptable to General Meade, and he was forced to resign. His father wrote in 1868, “I should not be surprised if he again finds himself one of these days in prison.” He resumed the practice of law and was active in Mikve Israel, serving as the congregation’s attorney.[38]

Jacob and Fanny Levy survived the war and moved back to Savannah. Former Alabama Sen. Clement C. Clay and Jefferson Davis were among a group of prisoners that passed through Savannah on their way to Northern prisons on May 14, 1865. Clay and Davis were sent to Fort Monroe on the tip of the Virginia Peninsula.[39] Mrs. Clay followed them to Savannah so that she could be close to her husband. She relates in her charming memoir, *A Belle of the Fifties* (1904), a story of the Levy family:

> Just before leaving the hospitable coast city [Savannah], I was the guest of Mrs. Levy, mother of the brilliant Mrs. Philip Phillips, of Washington, of Mrs. Pember, and of Miss Martha Levy, one of the readiest wits I have ever known. During the evening … many guests were introduced, among them some of Savannah's prominent Hebrews. For an hour Miss Martha had been busy presenting her friends, both Christian and Jew, when one after another came Mr. Cohen, Mr. Salomon, Dr. Lazarus and Dr. Mordecai. At this remarkable procession my risibles proved triumphant. I glanced slyly at Miss Martha. Her eyes shown with mischief as she presented Dr. Mordecai. "And is Hayman here, too?" I asked.[40]

The extended Levy family cared passionately about the welfare of Varina and the imprisoned Jefferson Davis. The Davises were old friends of Eugenia and Philip Phillips and Henrietta Levy Cohen and her husband, Octavus Cohen. One of the Phillipses's daughters, Carolina Meyers, remembered in 1900 how much she valued her association with "that dear martyr Mr. Davis. As a girl, I often sat on his lap with my arms around his neck." After the war, Octavus Cohen took a leading role in raising funds for Mrs. Davis.[41]

The Levy family regrouped in Savannah and the younger members adjusted to the new order. By 1868 Clavius Phillips was socializing every night and even attending the opera. Like his fellow Southerners, Jacob C. Levy was devastated economically by the war and bitter about the Reconstruction government. He detested Republican rule. “There may be some choice to be sure in the Quality of the Scamps,” he wrote his daughters in 1868, “for the invading Yankees always make one believe they confer a favor on you in all that is done.”[42]

In later years after his presidency, Ulysses S. Grant made a tour of the South and stopped in Fernandina and visited for several days with the Yulees. David Yulee spent his later years pursuing his railroad and farming ventures. He continued to be an officer or director of the Florida Railroad Company until his death. Not only did time cool the hatred of his captors, but Yulee was even compensated in later years for his efforts on behalf of the railroad during the Civil War. The company prospered in the postwar era, and the rail lines over which two armies made war were gradually absorbed by bigger companies. Yulee retired with a comfortable income. He had been the great Floridian of antebellum Florida history, and he had mapped out his state’s internal improvement system and its railroads.[43]

When Maj. Alroy Jonas returned to Aberdeen, Mississippi, in 1865, he was, like most Southerners, broke. On a shoestring budget, he established the *Aberdeen Examiner*, which was published weekly, and Jonas was its editor for fifty years. He married a Methodist woman of Aberdeen, and their children were raised in the Methodist church. The major apparently never joined a church, but must have ceased the practice of Judaism. Yet he was always considered to be Jewish.[44]

Jonas became something of a local character. His office was a curiosity shop, having, one local newspaperman said, “more the appearance of an agricultural museum than newspaper establishment.” When Sen. L. Q. C. Lamar of Mississippi was appointed chairman of the senate committee on the Mississippi River and Tributaries, Jonas was appointed clerk and Lamar’s secretary. Jonas’s fortunes in Washington, like those of all white Southerners of the period, rose and fell with those of the Democratic Party. He moved to Washington for a time, where his brother, Frank Jonas, was a senator from Louisiana. Then he served on the staff of the sergeant at arms, as secretary to the Assistant Secretary of the Interior Colonel Muldrew, and as Lamar’s clerk when Lamar became secretary of the interior.[45]

Maj. Alroy Jonas, the author of the famous poem "Lines on the Back of a Confederate Note." (Courtesy of Mel Young, Chattanooga, Tennessee.)

* * *

Jewish Southerners who had served in the Confederate army and who had supported the South's war for independence were outraged by the Federal military occupation and Reconstruction. In 1868 Octavia Harby Moses of Sumter, South Carolina, wrote a poem about her dead son, Josh Moses, containing these lines:

The lovely land thou died'st to save,

Is ruled by traitor and by slave,

Wretches who in their thirst for gain,

An eminence of guilt attain.[46]

Some of the old Southern Jewish elite, like some of their former comrades in arms, returned to power at the end of Reconstruction. Indeed, a number of Jewish Confederates were active in the Conservative (or "Bourbon" or "Redeemer") Movement, which returned the old antebellum elite and a new business elite to power. Three Jewish Confederate officers in particular played prominent roles in the Reconstruction era: Edwin Warren Moise of South Carolina, who had served with Wade Hampton in Virginia and North Carolina; Raphael J. Moses, who had served with Longstreet at Gettysburg; and Benjamin Franklin Jonas of Louisiana, who was sergeant major of Fenner's battery.

When the war ended, Frank Jonas returned to New Orleans, where he practiced law with Henry Hyams. He became a key leader of the Democratic Party in Reconstruction Louisiana. Elected to the Louisiana House of Representatives in 1865, Jonas served as chairman of the finance committee. The *Picayune* observed that the legislature was charged with nothing less than the reorganization of the entire civil government. Louisiana whites intended to control the state government and keep the black population from exercising many of their newly created rights. The Federal government disagreed, and the legislature was dissolved by Maj. Gen. Philip Sheridan of the occupation army. In 1872 Jonas was nominated as lieutenant governor on a ticket with John McEnery, when the native white Louisianians attempted unsuccessfully to take the reigns of power from the Republican regime. But with the formation of the "fusion ticket," Jonas withdrew in favor of another candidate. He was elected to the state senate in the same year and sat in that body as long as McEnery was governor. When the Federal courts declared that the Republican candidate had been elected governor, Jonas refused to serve, even though he was chosen by the election boards of both Republicans and Democrats. In the colorful language of Louisiana politics, Jonas's supporters later boasted that "he refused to sit in the Legislature created by fraud, by the midnight order of a drunken Federal Judge, and maintained by the bayonets of United States troops." Jonas later told the U.S. Senate, "I never entered the door or took my seat by the grace of military permission."[47]

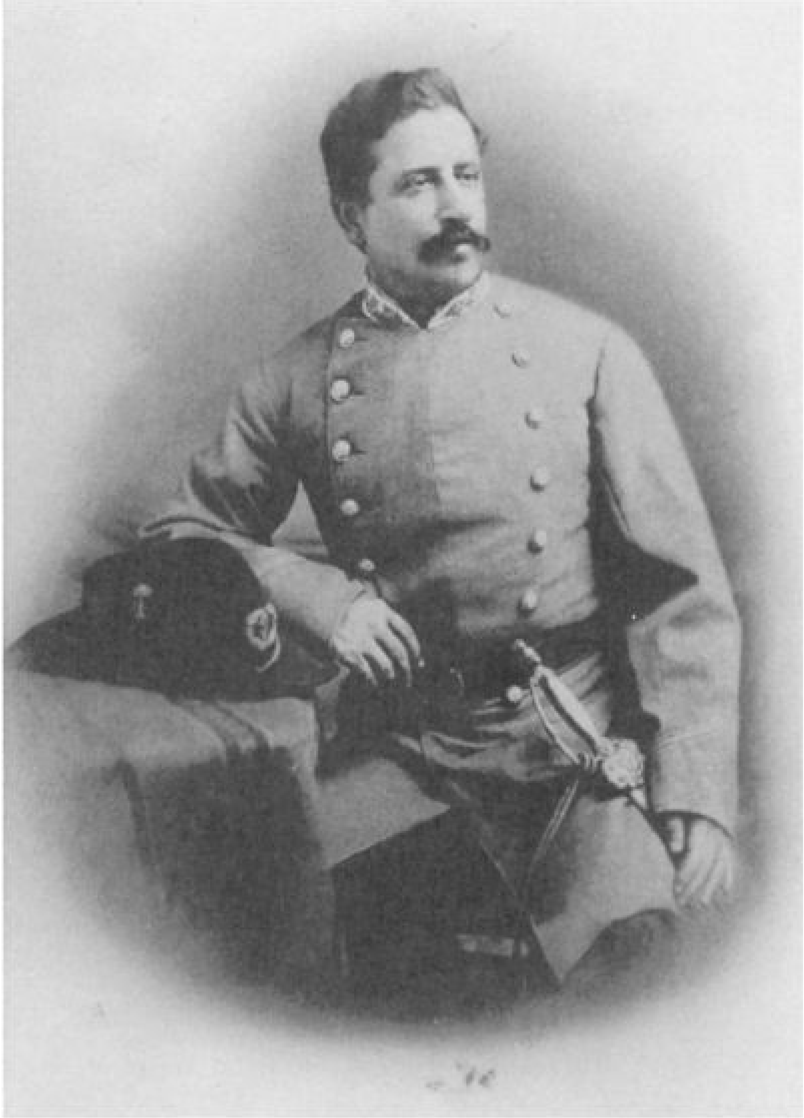
Sen. Benjamin Franklin Jonas. Frank Jonas's father, Abraham, served in the Illinois legislature with Abraham Lincoln. Frank Jonas moved to New Orleans and fought in Fenner's battery. He was elected city attorney of New Orleans and then to the U.S. Senate in 1876, becoming the first practicing Jew elected to the Senate. (Courtesy of Tulane University.)

Louisiana politics was among the most turbulent in the Southern states during Reconstruction. Military rule was accompanied by violent and at times deadly factionalism and racial confrontation. For a time after the 1872 election, the state had two governors and two legislatures which even the U.S. Army could not subdue. Jonas was regarded as a key leader of the old regime by the opposition. A carpetbagger from Vermont, Marshall H. Twitchell, who would have served in the Louisiana Senate with Jonas, wrote: "In the Senate a party of newly elected extremists under the leadership of a little wizened-faced person by the name of Jonas decided they would not take the oath" written by the carpetbag regime. "Lit-the Jonas never forgave me," Twitchell concluded.[48]

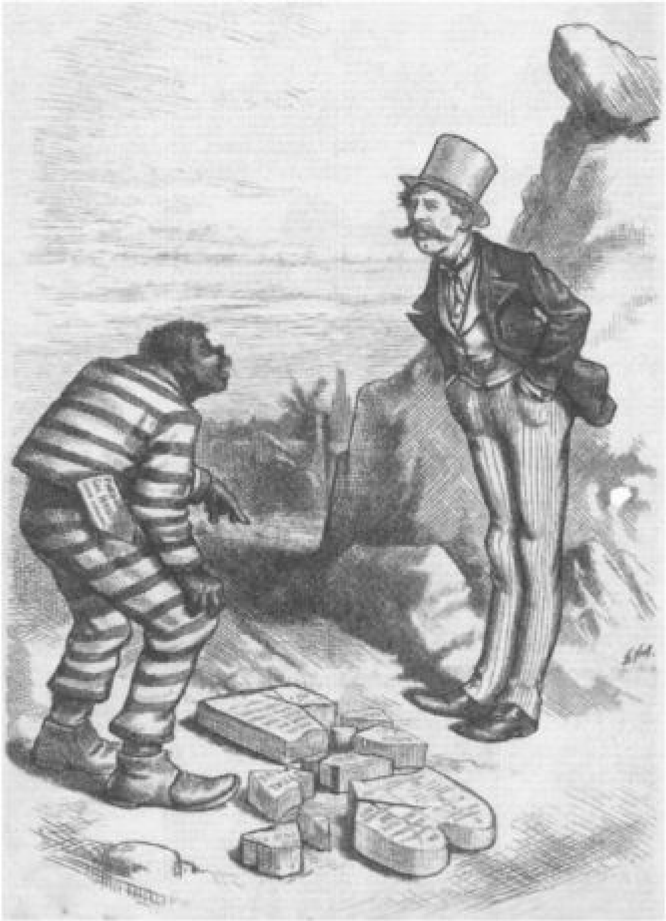
Jonas was a brilliant attorney. He became city attorney of New Orleans in 1875 and was elected to the state legislature in the tumultuous year of 1876. He served as chairman of the Judiciary Committee in 1877 and 1878 and was an ally of Governor Nicholls in his efforts to expel the Republicans from the state supreme court, framing and offering the legislative resolutions on this controversial issue. He undoubtedly helped to organize the crowd of armed citizens who went to the supreme court to "install" the newly elected justices and eject the Republican court.[49] At the height of his political power, Jonas was elected U.S. senator in 1879. No doubt many in the Louisiana legislature saw in Benjamin F. Jonas a reincarnation of Judah P. Benjamin.

Capt. Edwin W. Moise surrendered with Wade Hampton at Greensboro, North Carolina. He returned to Columbus, Georgia, but saw no future there and then moved to Sumter, South Carolina, where some of his family lived. He arrived, Harold Moise wrote, "riding a wounded horse and paid the first month's board for his family of a wife and five children from the sale of that horse." He built a law practice, went into politics, and wrote for the local newspaper. The charismatic Moise, now in his early thirties, became one of the most successful trial lawyers in the region and a noted orator as well. A physically powerful, energetic man, he was a natural leader who campaigned effectively for his many political friends. He was involved in community affairs and even represented the Episcopal Church. While he himself was a practicing Jew, he was invited to become an honorary member of the vestry, an invitation he declined.[50]

Like Jonas, Moise was a bitter opponent of the Reconstruction government. South Carolina, like Louisiana, suffered under one of the most corrupt state governments in American history. Indeed, Gov. Franklin J. Moses Jr., the son of a Jewish father (but raised as a Protestant) became known as the "Robber Governor" on account of his acceptance of bribes and misappropriation of funds. He was, wrote R. H. Woody, "the most perfect scalawag, perhaps, in all the South." Moses served as governor in the early 1870s, and after his two-year term ended, the Republicans would not renominate him. When he was elected a circuit judge for the Sumter area by his cronies in the legislature, Edwin Moise, by then a well-respected Sumter lawyer, threatened to shoot and kill Moses if he came to Sumter. (Gov. Daniel Chamberlain refused to issue the commission, and Moses never served.) The Jewish Moses families of Sumter changed their names to DeLeon and Harby to avoid any identification with the governor.[51]



Edwin Warren Moise, a South Carolina native, raised a company of men for the Confederate army in Columbus, Georgia, where he resided. Known as the "Moise Rangers," it was one of the few Confederate companies named for a Jewish Confederate. A captain, Moise served with the 7th Cavalry under Gen. Wade Hampton and was one of the commanders of "the Great Beefsteak Raid" in 1864. After the war, he was an energetic Hampton lieutenant in Reconstruction South Carolina and commander of the Red Shirts. He was elected adjutant general of the state in the tumultuous 1876 election. (Courtesy of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.)



Franklin J. Moses Jr., the “Robber Governor” of South Carolina, was the very essence of a scalawag. He is depicted here in a political carton by Thomas Nast. Despite the fact that he had been raised as a Christian, the public and the press identified him with the Jewish religion because of his name and background, and indeed Moses had many connections to the South Carolina Jewish community. (Author’s collection.)

Franklin J. Moses Sr. had been a distinguished lawyer and state senator for twenty years before the war. After the war and during Reconstruction, he was elected chief justice of the South Carolina Supreme Court. Like his son, he was alienated from the white majority. But, unlike his son, he was an honest and competent jurist. “He was a man of recognized ability,” Simkins and Woody wrote, “and served with distinction until his death.”[52] The *News and Courier* lamented his death while deploring his connection with the Reconstruction government. “It is pleasantest to know,” the Charleston paper concluded, that Judge Moses was about to rule in favor of Wade Hampton’s contested election as governor, but death prevented Moses from delivering the opinion. “The act that would have blotted out the past he was not, in God’s Providence, allowed to perform. From the heights, like the Hebrew lawgiver, he might look down upon the land where reigned plenteousness and peace, but he had not kept the faith, and in the flesh he might not enter in."[53]

In the dramatic election of 1876 in which the fate of Republican rule, and indeed the continuation of Reconstruction, was at stake, Moise enthusiastically supported his former commander, Wade Hampton, for governor. This campaign—which pitted Hampton's Red Shirts, a volunteer armed organization, against the Republicans led by carpetbagger Daniel H. Chamberlain—included intimidation of blacks by some and the wooing of black voters by others. Moise ran for adjutant general on Hampton's ticket and commanded the Red Shirts, who engaged in armed intimidation at times. He made numerous appearances and speeches to rally South Carolinians to elect Hampton and overthrow Republican rule. While Moise counseled moderation and nonviolence, he directed the armed might of Hampton's followers. Moise stumped the state and spoke to black audiences on behalf of Hampton's candidacy. "The only brand Wade Hampton's slaves ever wore," he exclaimed, "was the name of their master stamped on their loving hearts."[54] The office of adjutant general was especially critical in 1876 because the successful candidate would command the state's militia. The election was permeated by fraud, bribery, and intimidation. Both candidates claimed to have been elected. In fact, as had happened in Louisiana earlier, rival general assemblies existed. This time, though, the outcome was different. As part of a bargain in the disputed presidential election of 1876, Rutherford B. Hayes withdrew the last of the Federal troops from South Carolina and the Reconstruction government collapsed.

Moise was elected adjutant general and commanded the militia in a fair and evenhanded way. He was now a general. Like Hampton, Moise was a moderate on racial issues, inviting black South Carolinians to join the militia even in the racially charged atmosphere of the 1870s. Moise served a second term as adjutant general but declined reelection in 1880. He ran for Congress in 1892 but was defeated. By then, Moise had become a fierce opponent of "Pitchfork" Ben Tillman, the Populist demagogue. He retired from the law to tend his little farms near Sumter but remained active in civic affairs.[55]

Like his brother Confederate officers, Raphael Moses detested the Reconstruction regime in Georgia: "we were," he wrote, "surrounded by spies, carpetbaggers, a class of politicians, men without character who came from the North in swarms seeking whom they might devour." Columbus society, like Southern society generally, was "upheaved and the bottom turned on top by the revolution." Moses felt that his fortunes, like those of other members of the gentry, were destroyed by the war and the bitter reconstruction. "No one except one who had passed through the ordeal can realize the changes of fortune … [and] change of position, that takes place in a generation following a revolution."[56] Ironically, because Moses had never held elective office, he was one of the few prominent men in Muskogee County eligible to serve in the legislature under the early Reconstruction laws. He was elected to the Georgia House of Representatives and was appointed chairman of the Judiciary Committee. He was described in *The Occident* in April 1866 as the acknowledged leader of the House, "a short, heavy-built Israelite—proud of his tribe—with raven hair … and dark eyes, languid in repose, but which when aroused kindle with Promethean fire…. Being chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary, he is often called to address the House, and never fails to command attention."[57]

Moses was regarded as an outstanding orator and a man of integrity. When the state decided to create a lottery designed, ostensibly, to fund a Confederate orphan's home, Moses opposed it because he believed it would result in corruption, and he knew and distrusted the proponents. Unable to defeat the bill, he offered an amendment at the last minute replacing all of the trustees, except the bill's proponent, with Confederate widows. He eulogized their dead husbands, and the amendment passed by an overwhelming majority. Moses took on the oversight of the lottery by acting as advisor to the widows on the board, all of whom were paid handsome salaries for the times. Eventually, Moses was able to catch the manager and his staff in corrupt practices and did his best to keep the lottery honest.[58]

Moses remained active in politics after the war, but, except for another brief term in the Georgia House in 1877, he never held another elective office, although he was a candidate for several. He was in the thick of the resistance to the Reconstruction regime in Georgia, in one instance acting as counsel for a group of young white men, the "Columbus Prisoners," accused of killing a carpetbagger politician, George W. Ashburn. When funds were raised to pay the legal fees, Moses and his fellow Columbus lawyers gave the money to the Democratic Club. (The trial was suspended and never concluded.)[59]

Moses was pugnacious when defending his religion, and, as he was both an experienced soldier (and presumably a good shot) and hot-tempered, few chose to antagonize him. Once, in the 1870s, Moses took on the case of a Jewish immigrant to Columbus named Koemeker who had saved a thousand dollars to visit his mother in Germany. He obtained a check with his cash to be used in New York. Unbeknownst to Koerneker or anyone else, the bank was in the midst of collapse, and the local bankers, who took the poor immigrant's money, knew full well the check would not be honored in New York. Koerneker had to abandon his trip. The bank went into bankruptcy. Moses fought the bankruptcy and "had no hesitancy in saying on the streets that if [the banker] had purchased a check from Koerneker, a Jewish Banker, under the same circumstances, the Jew would have been hung to a lamp post."[60]

In 1877 he was reelected to the Georgia House. In 1878, he campaigned vigorously for a candidate named Harris in the congressional race. At a campaign rally when Moses was not present, Harris's opponent, Tuggle, attacked Moses as a Jew. Moses was livid. He published an open letter to Tuggle in which he took the candidate to task: "You could not have honored me more highly, nor distinguished me more gratefully than by proclaiming me a Jew," he began. "I am proud of my lineage and my race; in your severest censure you cannot name an act of my life which dishonors either, or which would mar the character of a Christian gentleman." The letter continued: "Would you honor me? Call me a Jew. Would you place in unenviable prominence your own unchristian prejudices and narrow minded bigotry? Call me a Jew. Would you offer a living example of a man into whose educated mind toleration can not enter—on whose heart the spirit of liberty and the progress of American principles have made no impression? You can find it illustrated in yourself."[61]

Moses's finances declined after the war. Like many Southerners, he lost a fortune. He had invested money in forty-seven slaves. When the war ended, he wrote, "I had forty-seven free men. All left me except one—old London, he stayed with me until he died." His crops could not be sold. He owed money he could not repay. He had earned nothing from his law practice for years.[62]

Finally, he retired to The Esquiline, where he lived quietly with his wife, Eliza; his daughter Isabel; her husband, Lionel Levy; and their children. Moses kept in touch with his children and his grandchildren. When William Moultrie Moses died in 1879, his widow, Raphael's daughter Penina, came to live at The Esquiline with her children. Among the children was seven-year-old Stanford. Years later, when Stanford Moses entered the Naval Academy at Annapolis, Raphael Moses wrote him a long letter filled with advice. He instilled in his grandson pride in being Jewish: "You can point to your ancestry and show the wisdom of Solomon, the poetry of David, the music of Miriam and the courage of the Maccabees. Who can excel you in your past?"[63]

The greatest of the Jewish Confederates had gone to England. Judah Benjamin wrote a former colleague, Senator Bayard of Delaware, that he had arrived "on the 30th of August, nearly four months after my separation from the President, during which time I had spent twenty-three days seated in the thwart of an open boat, exposed to the tropical sun in June and July, utterly without shelter or change of clothes. I never, however, had one minute's indisposition or despondency but was rather pleased by the feeling of triumph in disappointing the malice of my enemies."[64]

Benjamin Disraeli offered to assist him. Shortly after his arrival, he visited with Sir Frederick Pollock, lord chief baron of the exchequer, and his family. When Sir Frederick's daughter asked him what the Northerners would have done to him if they had caught him, he replied that they probably would have put him to death. When the young lady exclaimed "in horror at such an atrocity, he said *apologetically* that party feelings ran so high just then that his side might have done the same, had the circumstances been reversed." The former attorney general of the Confederacy and nominee to the Supreme Court of the United States now became a law student again at age fifty-five at Lincoln's Inn. He wrote for newspapers to earn a living, and at one low point despaired of making a living. But Benjamin persevered at his first and only love of his life: the law.[65]

The English bar quickly accepted Benjamin, and he became a member of the esteemed Charles Pollock's chambers. He wrote an authoritative treatise on the law of sale of personal property, which came to be known as *Benjamin on Sales*, and gradually advanced to the front ranks of the bar. He became a queen's counsel and developed a profitable commercial and appellate law practice in the Northern Circuit, Liverpool, the port to which the South exported its prewar cotton and a city where he was well known to the business, legal, and political communities. He was so successful that he eventually limited his practice to the highest courts in the land, the House of Lords and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. His cases involved important legal issues or substantial financial interests. He became an acknowledged expert on international commercial law. His cases involved appeals from former French colonies ceded to England, the supreme courts of Canada and New Zealand, the consular courts of Constantinople, and the court of appeals of Malta, among other exotic jurisdictions.[66]

Despite Benjamin's resolve to stay out of political matters and never look back to his former life, he was compelled in September of 1865, only months after arriving in England, to come to the defense of Jefferson Davis. The former president was being held under deplorable circumstances as a prisoner in Fort Monroe, shackled to the wall in a damp cell. His health was failing. Benjamin, outraged by this barbaric mistreatment of his former chief, wrote a long letter to the *London Times* defending Davis's record, his integrity, and his honor. He knew Davis better, he wrote, "than he is known by any other living man," and he told the readers of the *Times* (and readers in the United States, because he knew the letter would be reprinted widely), "Neither in private conversation nor in Cabinet council have I ever heard him utter one unworthy thought, one ungenerous sentiment." Davis consistently rejected any plan to inflict atrocities on the enemy, Benjamin argued. Davis, for his part, told the prison doctor that Judah Benjamin had been "the ablest and most faithful member of his advisory council."[67]

In 1868 Jefferson and Varina Davis traveled to England and spent considerable time in the company of their fellow former Confederates. Benjamin met the Davises in Paris and attended a round of parties and receptions in their honor. Benjamin helped Davis in the preparation of his memoirs, but only on the condition that he be left out of it.[68]

When at the age of seventy-two Judah Benjamin retired, the *London Times* called him "almost the leader of the English Bar in all heavy appeal cases, and 'in the widest sense of the term, an international lawyer.'" Lamenting that he was not made a judge, the *Times* noted that Benjamin had "equal authority with a standard text-book." He was so popular with the English bar that its leaders all gathered for a farewell dinner in his honor at the Inner Temple Hall in London. More than two hundred lawyers and judges, including the lord chancellor, the attorney general, the lord chief justice, the solicitor general, and other distinguished guests, came to pay tribute to one of Great Britain's greatest advocates.[69]

Benjamin remained married to Natalie, and he continued supporting her and their daughter Ninette. He gave up all of his savings to create a dowry for his daughter when she wed Henri deBousignac, a French army captain, in a Catholic ceremony in Paris. He determined to retire to Paris one day. He built a mansion there, on the Avenue d'Iena. While on a brief visit to Paris in 1880, he was severely injured as he attempted to jump off a moving trolley car, as he was used to doing thirty years earlier in New Orleans. He died at home in Paris in his mansion near the Arc de Triomphe on May 6, 1884.[70]

Judah P. Benjamin in his barrister's wig after the war. (Author's collection.)

Solomon Benjamin, Judah's older brother, had died shortly after the war. Brother Joseph Benjamin also left the country and settled in Spanish Honduras. "And here," Robert Douthat Meade concludes, "after various vicissitudes, this cultured graduate of the University of North Carolina operated a store and plantation near Puerto Cortes." Joseph's descendants, still living in Honduras in the 1940s, are perhaps Judah P. Benjamin's nearest relatives.[71]

Benjamin never forgot the South. When he resided in England, he never claimed British citizenship, and in his application to study law at Lincoln's Inn he stated simply that his father was a merchant of Charleston, South Carolina. In his letters home, he said he could not bring himself to return to New Orleans and see firsthand the carpetbaggers in power. Toward the end of his life, he told a visitor from home: "Louisiana … remember me there."[72]

EPILOGUE

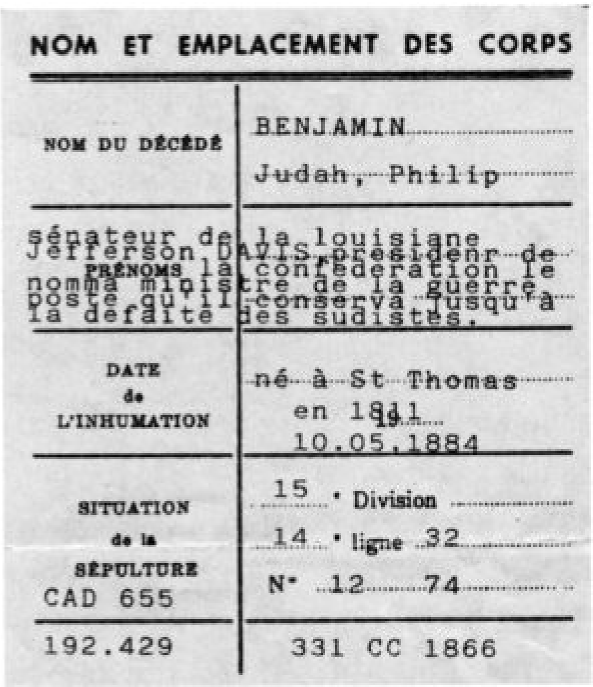
★

It Seems Like a Dream As We Look Back

Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee.

Moses' song of farewell to the Israelites, Deuteronomy 32:7

Judah P. Benjamin lies buried in Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris. The official record card reads as follows: "BENJAMIN, Judah Philip, sénateur de la louisiane, Jefferson DAVIS, président de la confédération le nomma ministre de la guerre poste qu'il conserva jusqu'a la défaite des sudistes" (senator from Louisiana, named secretary of war by Confederate President Jefferson Davis, he served until the Southerners were defeated.) The gravesite gave no indication of who he was until, in 1938, the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Paris chapter, placed a plaque on his grave identifying him as attorney general, secretary of war, and secretary of state of the Confederate States of America.[1] He wanted history to forget him. He had discouraged biographers and destroyed his papers.



NOM ET EMPLACEMENT DES CORPS

NOM DU DÉCÉDÉ	BENJAMIN Judah, Philip
PRÉNOMS	sénateur de la louisiane Jefferson DAVIS presidenr de la confederation le nomma ministre de la guerre poste qu'il conserva jusqu'à la défaite des sudistes.
DATE de L'INHUMATION	né à St Thomas en 1811 10.05.1884
SITUATION de la SÉPULTURE CAD 655	15 • Division 14 • ligne 32 N° 12 74
192.429	331 CC 1866

The record of Judah Benjamin's burial at Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris. (Author's collection.)

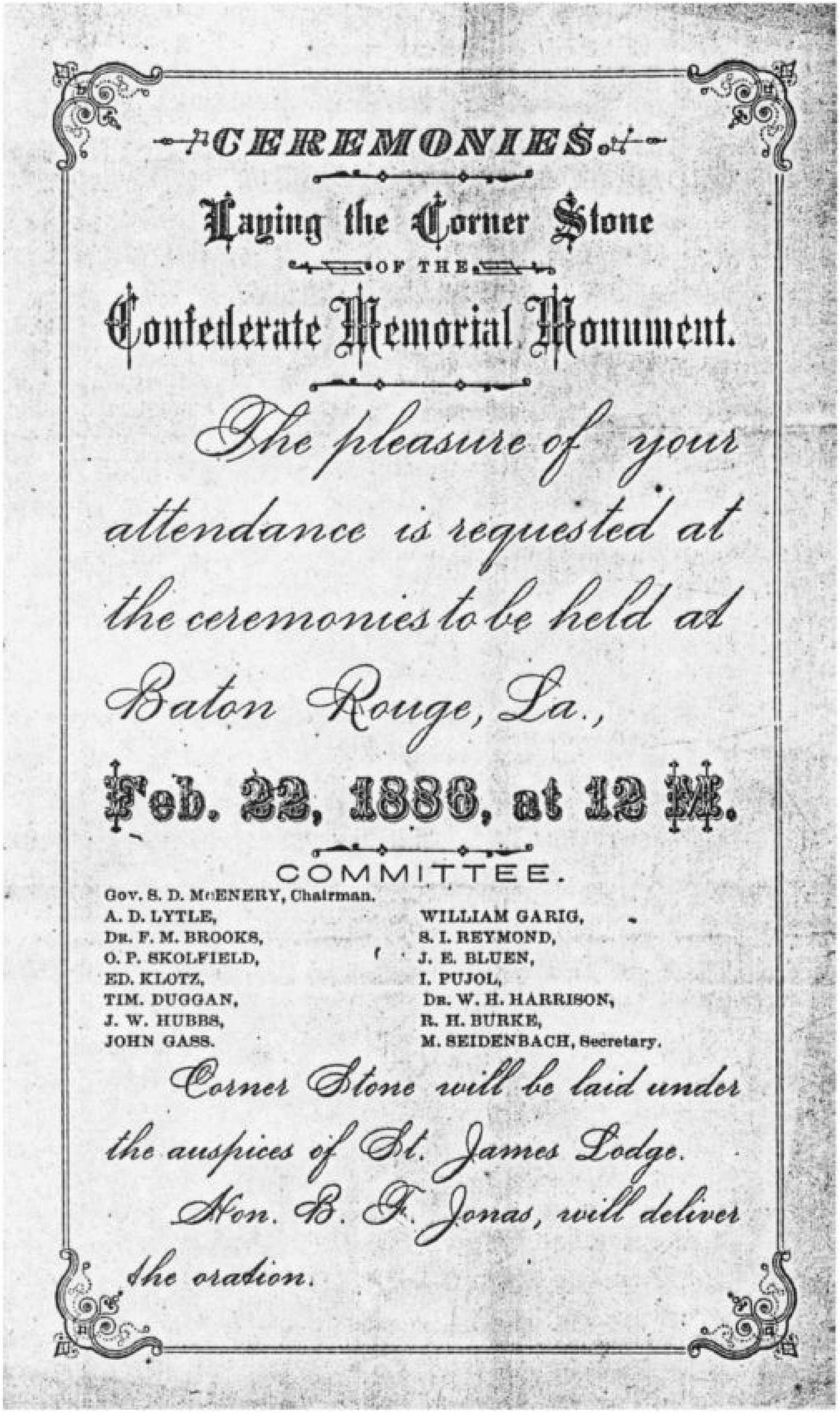
But people did not forget him. In 1889, Benjamin's nephew Ernest Benjamin Kruttschnitt was asked by Varina Howell Davis to serve as a pallbearer at the funeral of her husband. She had not forgotten Benjamin and wanted to honor his memory as her husband would have wished. In 1906, when Kruttschnitt died, the *New Orleans Item* editorialized, "His mother was sister of that orator, statesman and lawyer, Judah P. Benjamin, and it is the inherited qualities of his ancestors that irradiated his life."[2]

In 1911 Confederate Veterans celebrated the centennial of Benjamin's birth. In Florida in 1925, the United Daughters of the Confederacy saved from destruction the Gamble Mansion, where Benjamin had hidden out during his escape through Florida. (The house has since been deeded to the State of Florida.) In 1927 Stephen Vincent Benét published his monumental poem *John Brown's Body*, referring to Benjamin as "the dapper Jew / Seal-sleek, black-eyed, lawyer and epicure / aide, well-hated, face alive with life." In 1930 the City Council of Richmond granted approval to the Stonewall Jackson Camp, Sons of Confederate Veterans, to erect a monument to Benjamin at the intersection of Monument and Malvern Avenues "to perpetuate the character and services of the Honorable Judah P. Benjamin." In the 1930s, the Louisiana State Museum made an effort to preserve Belle Chasse but failed. In 1942 the United Daughters of the Confederacy arranged for the erection of a memorial marker in Sarasota, Florida. The governor of Florida attended the ceremony. In 1948 the two Jewish congregations of Charlotte made a gift of a monument to Benjamin on South Tryon Street (between Third and Fourth Streets) to the North Carolina Division of the UDC.[3]

Why did Judah Benjamin's memory survive? "Without a question," Rabbi Korn wrote, "he achieved greater political power than any other Jew in American history." Rabbi Calisch of Richmond explained his meaning for Southern Jews in 1902: "I stand here in the name of the Jewish community of this city.… Judah P. Benjamin was born of Jewish parents and reared as a Jewish child. I have not been able to discover if he was an observing Jew or not. But this I know, had he been a traitor we would have had to bear the ignominy of his wrong doing—but as he was a hero, a statesman, a gentleman and a patriot, we claim the privilege of sharing in the reflection of his glory."[4]

* * *

In 1886 Sen. Benjamin F. Jonas gave the main address at the laying of the cornerstone of the monument to the Confederate dead at Baton Rouge. Representatives of the regiments and military organizations Louisiana sent into the field were present. "Over twenty years have past since the last gun was fired in the civil war," he told his listeners, "and since the last soldier who gave his life to the cause which he espoused was gathered to his rest." Looking back to 1861, Jonas said, "the call to arms, North and South—all of these strange things passed with the rapidity of a dream, and it seems like a dream as we look back upon them after the lapse of twenty-five years." The old soldiers, now in "the afternoon of life … with the shadows of evening gathering," the former Confederate continued, "look back through the twenty years of trials and struggles … without regret over precious years wasted and sacrifices made in vain, but with feelings of melancholy satisfaction and pride over duty done." He closed on a personal note, recalling his own wartime experience: "In memory, I see again these regiments and battalions starting for the front, with music and banners and all the panoply of war, and memory brings back to me, and to all of you, the recollection of loved faces and brave hearts of many who were marching in the ranks. … We cannot strew flowers upon their scattered graves; we cannot mark their unknown resting places with stone or monument … but we erect this monument in their honor that all people in all time to come may know that the soldiers who died for the Confederate cause are not without love and honor and reverence in the land which gave them birth."[5]



CEREMONIES.

Laying the Corner Stone

OF THE

Confederate Memorial Monument.

The pleasure of your attendance is requested at the ceremonies to be held at Baton Rouge, La.,

Feb. 22, 1886, at 12 M.

COMMITTEE.

Gov. S. D. McENERY, Chairman.
A. D. LYTLE,
Dr. F. M. BROOKS,
O. P. SKOLFIELD,
ED. KLOTZ,
TIM. DUGGAN,
J. W. HUBBS,
JOHN GASS.
WILLIAM GARIG,
S. I. REYMOND,
J. E. BLUEN,
I. PUJOL,
Dr. W. H. HARRISON,
R. H. BURKE,
M. SEIDENBACH, Secretary.

Corner Stone will be laid under the auspices of St. James Lodge.

Hon. B. F. Jonas, will deliver the oration.

Invitation to the ceremonies laying the cornerstone of the Confederate memorial monument in Baton Rouge, 1886. "Hon. B. F. Jonas will deliver the oration." (Author's collection.)

One by one the old Jewish Confederates passed into history.

In 1866, Edwin Kursheedt of the Washington Artillery married “Miss Sallie” Levy of Richmond. They returned to New Orleans, where Kursheedt resumed his occupation as a merchant. He was later in the hardware business and served as assistant postmaster of New Orleans. He continued to serve in the Washington Artillery. Active in the Jewish community, he was president of the Jewish Orphan’s Home and treasurer of the Touro Infirmary. Upon his death, he was buried with full military honors attended by the members of his old company. His casket was wrapped in the battle flag of the Washington Artillery.[6]

Solomon and Fanny Cohen alternated between living in New Orleans and Meridian, Mississippi, where they operated stores selling boots, shoes, saddles, and custom-made leather goods. “In both,” his daughter remembered, “Solomon sat reading and studying while Fanny took care of the customers.” The 1880 census shows Solomon married to Fannie, living in New Orleans with three daughters, Cecelia, Laura, and Minni, and two elderly servants, both Irish. Their descendants live in New Orleans today.[7]

Harris Kempner of Galveston, Texas. (Courtesy of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.)

The young Polish immigrant who settled in Cold Springs, Texas, Harris Kempner, returned to his general merchandising business. He had invested his funds, Jacinto County’s funds, and his neighbors’ funds wisely during the war. In the 1870s, Kempner moved to Galveston, where he went into the wholesale grocery business. He later owned a cotton factory, a merchant bank, hotels, manufacturing plants, cotton baling plants, and interests in railroads and shipping. He was an early and enthusiastic member of the Confederate Veterans. In 1885 he organized and supported a militia unit, the Kempner Rifles. By his death in 1894, Harris “Herschell” Kempner was one of the wealthiest men in Texas.[8]

Leopold Levy returned to Richmond after the war and went into the supply and grocery business. He was one of the first members of the Robert E. Lee Camp Number One of the Confederate Veterans and became a director in the Veteran Cavalry Association of the Army of Northern Virginia. He was an early member of the Tobacco Exchange and a prominent businessman. He died in November 1897. The R. E. Lee Camp reported “the death of our beloved and esteemed comrade.” His funeral took place from his residence at 15 East Marshall Street, Rabbi Calisch presiding. He was buried in the Hebrew Cemetery. Eight members of the camp were detailed to attend Levy’s funeral.[9] In January 1988 the descendants of Leopold Levy were included in a commemoration of the birthday anniversaries of Robert E. Lee and “Stonewall” Jackson at the Virginia State Capitol in Richmond.[10]

Eliza Moses died in June of 1892 at the age of eighty. Raphael Moses survived her by sixteen months. In 1893 the old soldier embarked on a pleasure trip to Europe with his daughter Mathilda and her husband, Robert Samuel. He died in Brussels, Belgium. His calling card still read, “Major Raphael J. Moses, C.S.A.”[11]

William Mallory Levy served in Virginia as a captain in the 2d Louisiana. The Confederate cause, he wrote his wife, “is a righteous one.” He later served in Louisiana as a lieutenant colonel and adjutant under Lt. Gen. Richard Taylor. Levy was elected to Congress from Louisiana and served one term from 1875 to 1877. He later served on the Supreme Court of Louisiana. He died in Saratoga, New York, on August 18, 1882, and was buried in Natchitoches, Louisiana. (Courtesy of the Historic New Orleans Collection.)

Adolph Proskauer remained in Mobile after the war. He was active in his synagogue and served in the Alabama legislature. He moved to St. Louis in 1895, served as president of the Merchants’ and Cotton Exchanges, was engaged in the life insurance business, and was active in social clubs and the Confederate Veterans Association. He died at age sixty-two in 1900 and was buried in Mount Sinai Cemetery, St. Louis. Joseph Proskauer, Adolph Proskauer’s nephew, became a prominent New York lawyer, a judge, an adviser to Alfred E. Smith, and a leader in Jewish affairs.[12]

On March 28, 1878, Mayer Lehman’s eighth and last child was born. He named the boy Herbert, in honor of his friend Hilary A. Herbert, colonel of the 8th Alabama, and his lawyer in Montgomery. Herbert H. Lehman, the namesake of a Confederate officer and a New Yorker, later became the first Jewish governor and a U.S. senator.[13]

Col. Henry J. Leovy, the military judge and confidant of Judah Benjamin, returned to the practice of law in New Orleans. He was the executor of the estate of William R. Hunley, the builder of the famous Confederate submarine CSS *Hunley*. Elected city attorney of New Orleans, he built a successful commercial law practice representing railroad and insurance companies.[14] He was prominent at the bar and was a partner with Judah Benjamin’s nephew E. B. Kruttschnitt in the 1870s. Leovy was an exceptional lawyer. He had the confidence of the leading members of the former Confederate government and army. They may have met Leovy through Judah P. Benjamin, and with Benjamin gone, they turned to the lawyer to whom Benjamin himself had entrusted his legal affairs. Both Jefferson and Varina Howell Davis were his clients, as was Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston’s son, Col. William Preston Johnston. In 1877 Johnston wrote to Leovy to ascertain the facts about General Butler’s opening of his famous father’s tomb on the pretext of searching for treasure. Leovy died in 1902.[15]

Octavus S. Cohen as an older man. The Cohens were a prominent Jewish family in Savannah before, during, and after the war. "Octy" Cohen served in the 32d Georgia at Morris Island and in the Battle of Olustee, Florida. (Courtesy of Bob Marcus, Springfield, Virginia.)

When Wade Hampton died in the same year, Edwin W. Moise was asked to give the oration at the memorial services in Sumter. "Wade Hampton with his latest breath," Moise told his fellow townspeople, "had given his blessing to all his people, white and black. Who here does not feel that he is richer for blessing of so good, so great, so pure a man?" Let Harold Moise, his grandson, conclude the story of Captain Moise's life: "Eight months later in the twilight of December 12, 1902, coming out [of] a coma, his eyes unclosed to see the fading light, Hampton's faithful lieutenant uttered his last words, What a beautiful sunset!'"[16]

LEON DAWSON MARKS
MORTALLY WOUNDED

ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTIETH
INFANTRY
COL. MARCUS M. SPIEGEL
OHIO

Monuments to a Jewish Confederate colonel, Leon Dawson Marks, and a Jewish Union colonel, Marcus H. Spiegel, at the Vicksburg Battlefield.

This is undoubtedly the only instance of monuments to Jewish colonels of the Confederate and Union armies on the same battlefield. (Courtesy of the Vicksburg National Park.)

Col. Leon Dawson Marks of Shreveport was remembered at Vicksburg in 1903 when a bronze relief portrait case by Tiffany was mounted on a granite base and placed on the battlefield. It overlooks the area were Marks was mortally wounded. In 1992 the Col. Leon D. Marks Camp of the Sons of Confederate Veterans was formally chartered.[17]

Maj. Alexander Hart of the 5th Louisiana was presented with a handsome sword by the residents of New Orleans in recognition of his service during the war. He soon returned to Richmond, where he married Leonora Levy and went into business. He and Leonora had four children. They lived in Staunton for a while and then in Norfolk. Hart was active in the Confederate Veterans, serving as commander of the Pickett-Buchanan Camp in Norfolk in 1906. His family belonged to the Ohef Shalom Temple, where Hart conducted services in the absence of the rabbi. His tombstone in Norfolk reads, "Major Alexander Hart, 5th La. Inf. C.S.A."[18]

Maj. Alexander Hart, a native of New Orleans. Hart became major of the Louisiana 5th. He met one of Jacob A. Levy's daughters in wartime Richmond, married her, and settled in Virginia after the war. He is pictured here in 1893 as the president and minister of the Staunton,

Virginia, synagogue. (Courtesy of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.)

David Levy Yulee died in 1886. Fernandina suspended all business, and the church bells rang during the hour appointed for the funeral service. The *Washington Post* remembered that before the Civil War, “as Senator from Florida, he was better known than the state he represented.” The *Florida Times-Union* regarded him as “by far the ablest man that Florida ever sent” to Congress. Florida has remembered its first senator in the name of Levy County, and the towns of Yulee and Levyville. The Wickliffe Madonna from Kentucky and the Father of Florida Statehood are buried beneath a marble angel in Oak Hill Cemetery in Georgetown in Washington, D.C. In 1939 the United Daughters of the Confederacy erected a bronze plaque at Cottonwood Plantation in honor of the “First United States Senator from Florida” and the officers who accompanied the Confederate baggage and treasure train. A great-grandson of Moses Levy, Samuel Yulee Way, was mayor of Orlando, Florida, in the 1940s. The remnants of Yulee’s plantation at Homosassa are now a Florida state park, the Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins State Historic Site.[19]

Despite his heroic efforts as the religious leader of Beth Ahabah before, during, and after the war, the synagogue board declined to reelect Max Michelbacher as its minister. The reason, apparently, was Michelbacher’s guttural German accent, which the board felt was not appropriate for the more acculturated English-speaking congregation. Michelbacher stayed in Richmond, remained active in the Jewish community, taught, and conducted weddings and other services. He died in 1879. In 1904 Beth Ahabah placed a stained glass window in the synagogue depicting the Eternal Light “to symbolize,” Allan Creeger wrote, “the illumination which came from Michelbacher.” Michelbacher’s descendants are active members of Beth Ahabah today.[20]

Rabbi James Gutheim. This portrait of the distinguished rabbi was painted in 1884, two years before his death and long after the war. As can be seen by comparing an earlier likeness at page 249, he had come a long way from his immigrant roots. His funeral in 1886 was reputedly the largest in the Crescent City since the Civil War. (Courtesy of Louisiana State Museum.)

New Orleans escaped the ravages of war. Its Jewish community prospered. Rabbi James Gutheim returned to New Orleans but left again in 1868 to officiate at Temple Emanuel in New York City. He returned to New Orleans in 1872 to become rabbi at Temple Sinai on St. Charles Avenue. In 1882 the South’s most distinguished rabbi spoke to the Southern Historical Society, then meeting in New Orleans, about the history of the Lost Cause, a cause “which had enlisted the warm sympathies and active participation of our noblest, purest and ablest minds.” He talked to the delegates, who included Jefferson Davis, about sectional reconciliation, citing the history of ancient Israel. “The eloquent Rabbi was loudly applauded,” the minutes noted.[21] Gutheim became a venerated figure in both Jewish and Christian circles, and when he died in 1886 his funeral was reputedly the largest in the Crescent City since the Civil War. His body, guarded by young men of the synagogue, lay in state at Temple Sinai. Jewish businesses in New Orleans closed, as did the Louisiana legislature. “The funeral cortege was the largest ever seen in New Orleans,” the *Israelite* reported. Rabbis came from throughout the South, as did local Christian ministers. The governor of Louisiana and the mayor of New Orleans were pallbearers. “It was,” reported the *Israelite*, “the greatest demonstration of respect ever shown to a Jew in the United States.”[22]

In 1869 George Jacobs left Richmond to assume the pulpit left vacant by the death of Isaac Leeser. He returned to Richmond often to visit his wife’s family, the Levys, and returned in 1870 at the request of the entire Jewish community when fifty-six people were killed in the collapse of a balcony at the capitol building. He died suddenly in 1884, still in his late forties. Among the mourners were Jacob E. Hyneman and Edwin J. Kursheedt of New Orleans, who had met and smoked a peace pipe at the Levy home in Richmond in 1865.[23]

Miriam DeLeon Cohen’s son, Lawrence Ludlow Cohen, the young lieutenant in the Boykin Rangers who fought for Stonewall Jackson, survived the war unhurt. In 1870, however, he was killed in a duel fought near Savannah, falling at the fourth exchange of shots. The seconds were indicted for murder, but the case was dismissed for lack of evidence. The affair, according to Perry M. DeLeon, “put an end to dueling in Georgia, so young Cohen did not die in vain.”[24] It must have ended Mem Cohen’s life, however, because she died soon thereafter. Her old friend Mary Chesnut lived on in sadly reduced circumstances in Camden, South Carolina, until her death in 1886. Her famous memoir was published posthumously as *A Diary from Dixie* in 1905.[25]

Thomas Cooper DeLeon lost his sight in 1903 but continued to write articles and books and attend to his many social obligations. He became known as “The Blind Laureate of the Lost Cause.”[26] Edwin DeLeon remained in Europe, writing for English periodicals. He was a part of the literary world that included Dickens and Thackery. In 1881 he was involved in bringing the telephone to Egypt, and he published several books and novels, including *The Khedive’s Egypt*. He died in New York in 1891 while on a lecture tour. His wife survived him by a few days.[27]

Miss Alice Kruttschnitt as Queen of Comus (Mardi Gras) in 1896. The caption on the reverse of this photograph at Tulane reads: “Miss Kruttschnitt was the daughter of John Kruttschnitt and Penina Benjamin K. (sister of Judah P. Benjamin).” (Courtesy of Howard-Tilton Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana.)

Julius Ochs died in 1888. He was buried in Chattanooga, with members of the Grand Army of the Republic at his graveside. As he had requested, the Stars and Stripes was placed over his coffin. Bertha Levy Ochs died in 1908. She was a charter member of the A. P. Stewart Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and members of her chapter attended the funeral. She was buried next to her husband. Bertha Ochs’s coffin was, at her request, draped with the Confederate flag.[28]

Pvt. Simon Kohlman of the Point Coupee Artillery in later years. He was active in the Confederate Veterans. (Courtesy of Cecile Levine, New Orleans.)

Their son Adolph Ochs went to Chattanooga in 1877 and became a successful newspaperman. He owned and operated the *Chattanooga Times* for years and became the city's most prominent citizen. In 1896 he saw an opportunity to buy a floundering newspaper, the *New York Times*. By the early 1900s it was one of the nation's leading newspapers. In 1928 Adolph Ochs made a gift of a new temple to Congregation Mizpah in Chattanooga.[29]

Sen. Benjamin F. Jonas died in December 1911. He was buried near his brother George in the Dispersed of Judah Cemetery on Canal Street, several miles from the French Quarter. The Solomon family remained in New Orleans. In the 1870s the family lived on Magazine Street. Their fortunes declined. Alice married in 1866. Clara married a much older man in 1866; the following year he died. Solomon Solomon died in 1874 at age fifty-eight. Clara next married Dr. George Lawrence, a former Confederate doctor, in 1872; the couple had four daughters. Clara died in New Orleans in 1907. Emma Solomon, Clara's mother, outlived her husband by almost forty years, dying in Atlanta in 1913.[30]

Graves of Solomon and Emma Solomon, Dispersed of Judah Cemetery, New Orleans. (Photograph by Susan Rosen. Author's collection.)

Alroy Jonas lived to be seventy-seven, telling one correspondent that "Time's hand has fallen gently upon me, and I have changed but little in nature or appearance since the days I wore the gray." He died in 1915, survived by two children. He is buried in Aberdeen, Mississippi. The R. E. Lee Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy erected a monument to him on the Parkway in Aberdeen where James Street crosses Commerce. The inscription reads: "United Daughters of the Confederacy, In Memory of Major S. A. Jonas, Editor, Journalist, Poet." The lines of his famous poem were inscribed on the back.[31] His poem lives on. Margaret Mitchell quoted from it in *Gone with the Wind* ("Oh, how beautiful! How touching!" cried Melanie when she read it).[32]

Simon Mayer of Natchez married Emma Roos. They named their first child Robert E. Lee Mayer.[33] On January 19, 1898, the anniversary of Robert E. Lee's birthday, Simon Mayer spoke to the Confederate veterans about the Lost Cause, the honored dead "with the rest of Heaven upon their cheeks & the fire of liberty in their eyes." But time was running out for the Confederate veterans. The war had been over for more than thirty years, and the "majority of that vast army are fast joining their grand old comrades on the other shore, but what a precious legacy they can leave to their children and posterity."[34] In 1915 Herbert T. Ezekiel of the distinguished old Richmond Ezekiels gave an address to a Jewish group. (The son of a Jewish Confederate, Ezekiel goodnaturedly told the group that he had no idea why “one who was not born in the United States” was asked to give the talk. Ezekiel was born in 1863 in Richmond—then in the Confederate States of America.) “Confederate Jews,” he concluded, “are becoming scarce. Most of them are resting quietly in our home of the dead.”[35]

Lewis Leon lived to see his *Diary of a Tar Heel Confederate Soldier* published in 1913. After the war, he returned to his job as a store clerk. He later owned his own store in Charlotte, North Carolina. He died in 1919 at the age of seventy-eight in a home for old Confederate soldiers. Isaac Hermann apparently learned to obey orders, became a pillar of his community, and rose to the rank of Captain in the Georgia militia. He died at age seventy-nine in 1917.[36] Herman Kaminski returned to Georgetown, South Carolina, where he became a highly respected businessman, owning a hardware company and a steamship company, and becoming a bank officer.[37]

Yours Truly
M. Ezekiel

Sir Moses Ezekiel, Virginia’s internationally renowned sculptor. After the war, with the encouragement of Robert E. Lee, then president of Washington College, Ezekiel pursued his dream of becoming a sculptor. (Courtesy of American Jewish Historical Society, Waltham, Massachusetts, and New York City.)

Moses Ezekiel graduated from VMI in 1866, and, after consulting with Robert E. Lee, then president of Washington College, decided to pursue his dream of becoming a sculptor. “Whatever you do,” Lee told the aspiring artist, “try to prove to the world that if we did not succeed in our struggle, we were worthy of success.” He left for Europe, where he achieved international celebrity as an artist. He later lived in Rome, was decorated by European royalty, and was knighted by the king of Italy. He never forgot that he was a Virginian and a Confederate. His works stand now in the Old Dominion: Thomas Jefferson before the Rotunda at the University of Virginia, *Virginia Mourning Her Dead* (1903) at VMI, and the monument to the Confederate War dead at Arlington National Cemetery, dedicated by Woodrow Wilson in June 1913. Ezekiel died in Rome in 1917 and was buried in his home state, at the base of his monument at Arlington. President Warren G. Harding eulogized the famous sculptor from Richmond’s Jewish community as a great American and a great Virginian.[38] The simple inscription on his grave reads: “Moses J. Ezekiel, Sergeant of Company C, Battalion of Cadets of the Virginia Military Institute.” “And now,” the *Confederate Veteran* reported, “the eye that saw is closed, the hand that executed is still.” The “soldier lad who fought so well” was lauded in foreign lands, but dying “his last request was that he might rest among his old comrades at Arlington.”

Moses Ezekiel's Confederate monument at Arlington National Cemetery. (Courtesy of Andrew Felber, Bethesda, Md.)

Eugene Henry Levy returned to New Orleans, where he joined his father in the banking and brokerage business. In 1875 he left New Orleans and bought a sugar plantation at Vermillionville, Lafayette Parish. In 1886 he moved to New York, where he was a stockbroker. A victim of the perils of the stock market, he became a correspondent on financial matters for the *New Orleans Item* and the *Picayune*. He later opened a rare-books store on Liberty Street called the Dixie Book Shop, which served a great many Wall Street businessmen. He never missed a Confederate reunion or the meeting of the Confederate Camp, of which he was a member. His bookstore was a place where "those who were interested in the cause he loved so well could foregather and obtain the books which told of the Confederacy." He died at eighty-one and is buried at the Confederate Veterans Cemetery at Mount Hope, New York. Prior to his death in June 1921, he claimed the honor of being the only surviving private of the Confederate army.[39]

Alfred Huger Moses and Mordecai Moses of Montgomery became prominent citizens after the war. Mordecai served three terms as mayor from 1875 to 1881, and the brothers became successful businessmen, building the tallest building in Alabama in 1887, the six-story Moses Building on Court Square, near the offices of Lehman, Durr and Company.[40] By 1880, according to Kenneth Libo, "Moseses brothers was the largest real estate, insurance, and retail banking institution in the state." Alfred's daughter Adeline married Carl M. Loeb, a young man who boarded with her aunts. Their son John, Alfred's grandson, married Frances Lehman, Mayer's granddaughter, thereby joining two exceptional Jewish families from Alabama, the Moseses and the Lehmans.[41]

Philip Whitlock of Richmond died in 1919 at the age of eighty-one. His tobacco business had grown mightily since the war. He had pioneered the manufacture of inexpensive cigars, inventing and producing the "Old Virginia Cheroot." He eventually sold his company, one of the largest employers in Richmond, to the American Tobacco Company, and retired. He was buried at the Hebrew Cemetery, Rabbi Edward N. Calisch of Beth Ahabah presiding.[42]

In 1867, only two years after the war ended, Eugenia and Philip Phillips returned to Washington, where Mr. Phillips became a successful lawyer practicing before the U.S. Supreme Court. He argued hundreds of cases before that Court and published scholarly articles on the law and a treatise on the Supreme Court. Before the war, he had proposed the creation of the court of claims and is credited with being one of the fathers of that federal court.

In 1876, when Phillips wrote his memoirs, he remembered Eugenia's arrest as a noble moment: "If the imprudence of my wife brought on her these difficulties, she endured the consequences of them with a heroic spirit that could not be excelled." It also afforded Phillips amusement "to look over the letters of my daughters as I prepare this [memoir]. These two young girls of amiable disposition wrote under the excitement which then pervaded the public mind like two viragos. If they could read them now they would themselves laugh heartily at their extravagant expressions. It is no less amusing to note the extravagant excitement of the Provost Marshal, who gravely endorses the tattle of these two children as 'Rank treason.'"[43] Philip Phillips died in 1884 at the age of seventy-seven. He was buried in Laurel Grove Cemetery in Savannah, Georgia, the last home of the Levy family.

Eugenia Phillips lived on in Washington, the irascible leader of the old Washington society. She had been a part of the "best" Washington society since the 1850s. One newspaper, before her death, described her as "the most remarkable of the hostesses of the old Washington regime…. Her brilliant sallies, caustic wit, kind and generous heart… have been the wonder and despair of the other social celebrities."[44] Three of her children preceded her to the grave: William Hallet, who lived with his mother, was a prominent international lawyer in Washington. He accidentally drowned several years earlier. Eugene, the Confederate navy veteran, had died in New Orleans; and Randolph had died in Savannah.

After the war, Fanny Phillips married Capt. Charles S. Hill, nephew of the wealthy banker W. W. Corcoran. (Hill had served as chief of ordnance on General Forrest's staff.)[45] Clavius Phillips married a Cohen of Savannah, and John Walker Phillips married Nellie Jonas of New Orleans, the daughter of Sen. Benjamin Franklin Jonas.[46]

Eugenia Phillips died in 1902 at the age of eighty-three, being, her daughter Caroline remembered, "the last of the old regime and the grand old ladies of the day."[47] Newspapers ran fanciful obituaries recalling her famous brushes with the Union authorities. Her famous exploits grew with time. One newspaper lamented that "Washington society has suffered a great loss by the death of Mrs. Eugenia Levy Phillips…. During the Civil War Mrs. Phillips acquired fame as a Confederate spy and once she slapped Gen. "Ben" Butler in the face." She was buried next to her husband in Savannah, Georgia.

Phoebe Pember returned to Georgia after the war. She was appointed, with the help of Raphael J. Moses, to the Georgia Lottery Commission. She spent many of the postwar years traveling at home and abroad and writing articles for magazines such as the *Atlantic Monthly, Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, and the *Independent*.[48] She wrote her memoir, *A Southern Woman's Story*, in the 1870s. She moved to New York and died in Pittsburgh on March 4, 1913. She is buried next to her husband in Laurel Grove Cemetery in Savannah. Maj. Gen. Jeremy F. Gilmer and Mrs. Gilmer, Phoebe's dear friend "Lou," are buried nearby.[49]

In 1995 the U.S. Postal Service issued twenty stamps commemorating the Civil War. A committee of historians chose the battles and famous persons to be depicted. Among them was Phoebe Pember, Confederate nurse. The back of the postage stamp reads: "Confederate Nurse, Phoebe Yates Levy Pember, 1823–1913, Directed care and dietary needs of over 10,000 soldiers at Richmond's Chimborazo, one of CSA's largest hospitals. Speciality: chicken soup. Criticized poor care in her *A Southern Woman's Story*."

The Straus family left Georgia after the war and moved to New York City. In the 1890s, Isidor and Nathan Straus took over R. H. Macy and Company. In 1912 Isidor Straus refused a lifeboat while women still remained on the *Titanic*. Mrs. Straus stayed with her husband, and they died at sea.[50]

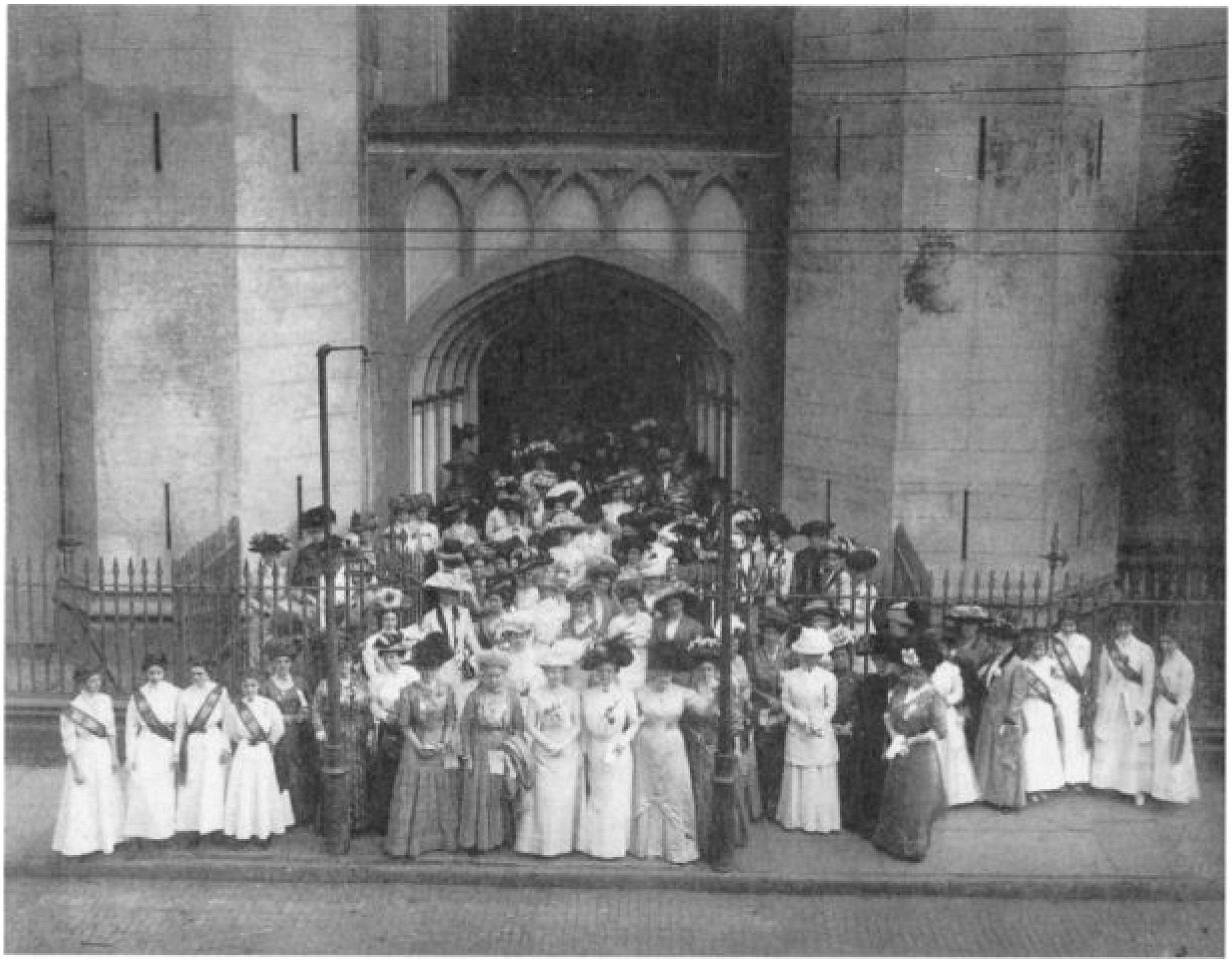
Dr. Simon Baruch moved his family up North to pursue his medical career. By the early 1880s the Baruchs were living on West Fifty-seventh Street, in those days the northernmost fringe of Manhattan. Dr. Baruch soon became a prominent physician, surgeon, and public health reformer. (He once described Manhattan as a "body of land surrounded by sewage.") He wrote books on hydrotherapy and taught at Columbia University. His son Bernard grew up in New York City and became the most successful financier of his time and one of the best-known American Jews of the twentieth century. He was chairman of the War Industries Board during World War I, an adviser to Woodrow Wilson at Versailles, and a close friend of Franklin Roosevelt.[51]

Dr. Simon Baruch as an older man. (Courtesy of American Jewish Historical Society, Waltham, Massachusetts, and New York City.)

Simon Baruch never forgot his Southern heritage. He was an active member of the Confederate Veterans and a frequent contributor to the *Confederate Veteran*.[52] Belle Baruch also remained a staunch Southerner, becoming a member of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. The Baruchs raised their children with pro-Southern views. If a band struck up "Dixie," no matter where he was, Dr. Baruch would jump up and give the rebel yell. Bernard recalled that as soon as the tune started, the whole family knew what was coming. "Mother would catch him by the coattails and plead, ‘Shush, Doctor, shush!’ But it never did any good. I have seen Father, ordinarily a model of reserve and dignity, leap up in the Metropolitan Opera House and let loose that piercing yell.”[53] Dr. Baruch died in New York on June 3, 1921.

* * *

In the 1890s, the few remaining old Southern Jewish families still revered their Confederate ancestors and joined the Sons of Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Joseph Proskauer wrote in *Boyhood in Mobile* of his veneration for his Uncle Adolph. “My grandmother’s attic was a storehouse of worthless Confederate bills,” he recalled. “[M]y uncle’s partner, Leopold Straus, was known as ‘Johnny’ because he had been a fighting Johnny Reb…. Until my entrance into college in 1892 I was never quite sure that a ‘Yankee’ could be anything but damned.”[54]



The leadership of the South Carolina division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. President Irene Goldsmith Kohn, wearing a dark hat, is standing at the far left of the five women in the very front row. (Courtesy of Julian Hennig Jr., Columbia, South Carolina.)

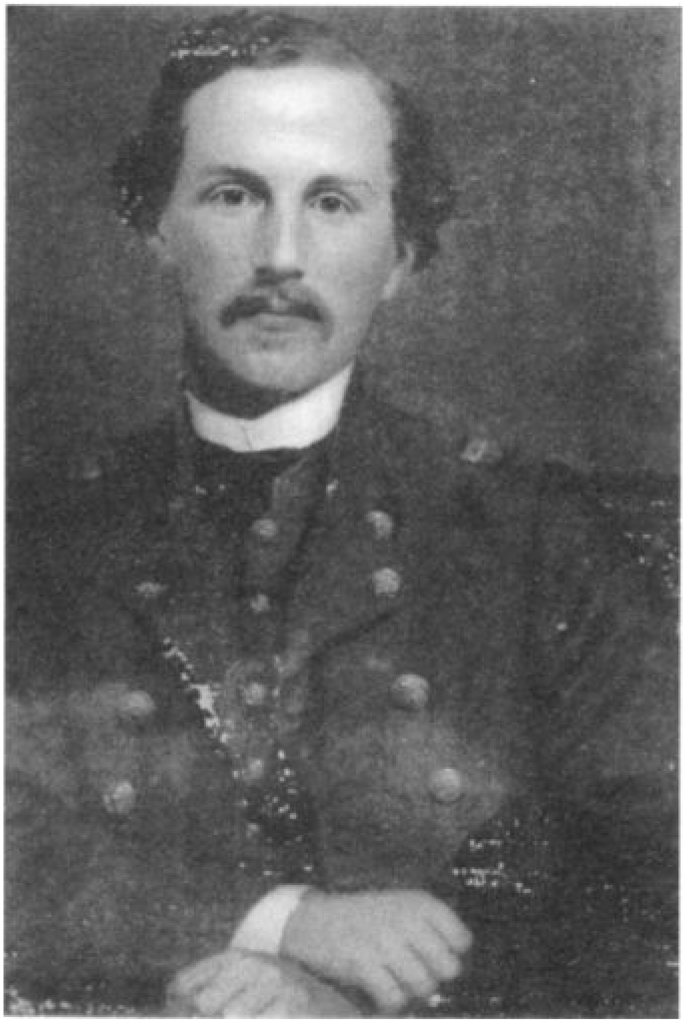
Irene Goldsmith was born in 1868 in Charleston, the daughter of Abraham A. Goldsmith, who had been seriously wounded at Antietam. Four Goldsmith boys had fought in the war. Her mother's only brother, Alexander Hilzheim, was killed at Kennesaw Mountain during Sherman's campaign against Atlanta. His body was never recovered, but his name is inscribed on a monument in the Coming Street Cemetery, "A victim at 18 years to the horrors of war." In her application to the Wade Hampton Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, she noted that she had four uncles in Confederate service as well as her father. After marrying August Kohn, Corporal Theodore Kohn's son, in 1894 at Beth Elohim, the couple moved to Columbia, where they helped organize a new congregation, Tree of Life. Irene Kohn, like Joseph Proskauer, also revered her Confederate relatives, and in the 1890s became a charter member of the UDC. In 1909 she was elected president of the South Carolina Division, believing that the war reflected the "sacrifice, devotion to duty, courage, and struggle for conviction" of Confederate soldiers. "In honoring our sires and their patriotism," she wrote, "we honor ourselves."[55]

* * *

In the 1880s Alexander III, the czar of Russia, began a campaign of terror against the Jews of his empire. His pogroms and anti-Semitic brutality drove hundreds of thousands and then millions of poor Russian, Polish, and Ukranian Jews to America, that "fabled land of freedom" that the German Jews had sought fifty years before. By the early twentieth century, these immigrants, like the wave of German Jewish immigrants before them, had overwhelmed the American Jewish community. Like a great ship passing a small boat in a foggy night, the wave of Jewish immigrants from Russia and Eastern Europe came to the South and founded their own communities and institutions. Many never knew the Jewish families in their own cities and towns who had fought and died for the Confederacy.

The old congregations were gradually taken over by the newcomers, who knew little or nothing about Robert E. Lee, Jefferson F. Davis, Judah P. Benjamin, Henry M. Hyams, Edwin W. Moise, or Benjamin Franklin Jonas. Nor did they share the communal loss of Joshua L. Moses, Isaac Levy, Albert Luria, Isaac Valentine, Gustavus Poznanski Jr., Joseph Calhoun Levy, or Leon Marks. They knew little or nothing of the sacrifices made on their behalf on the battlefields of Shiloh and Antietam, Vicksburg, Gettysburg, Cold Harbor, or Atlanta. Indeed, the Confederate War, as their Southern neighbors then called it, was as remote to them as Joshua at the Battle of Jericho. And as the years passed and the Confederate War receded into memory for all Southerners, the Jewish Confederates, many of their descendants no longer members of the ancient faith, disappeared from the communal memory of Southern Jewry. Theirs was a lost world as well as a lost cause.

Little remains of the Jewish Confederate South. Both of Richmond's antebellum synagogues, Beth Ahabah on Eleventh Street and Beth Shalome on Mayo Street, are gone, as are many of the Jewish homes and shops that crowded Main Street in the 1860s, victims of "progress" and Richmond's urban growth. In 1891 Beth Shalome Synagogue was sold to a newly organized Russian congregation and was demolished in 1935.[56] All of New Orleans's antebellum synagogues are gone as well, and for the same reason. The old commercial district near Canal Street has been rebuilt. Belle Chasse was demolished. Judah Benjamin's law office is no more, nor is Frank Jonas's. Clara Solomon's house is gone, and the neighborhood has fallen into decay. The Jackson Street synagogue has been sold, is now boarded up, and is in danger of destruction.



Lt. Joshua Lazarus Moses, Company C, 3d (Palmetto) Battalion, South Carolina Light Artillery. (Painting courtesy of Robert Moses, Sumter, S.C.).

Octavus Cohen's home on Lafayette Square in Savannah, where his daughter excoriated the Yankee invaders, has been replaced by a condominium. Shearith Israel in Charleston was torn down.

Yet some remnants of the Southern Israelites still survive: the Hebrew Cemetery on Shockoe Hill in Richmond; Moses Cohen Mordecai’s house and Phoebe Pember’s childhood home in Charleston; the Solomon Cohen house and the Minis house in Savannah, where Robert E. Lee was charmed by Sarah and Phillipa Minis. And Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim—where Gustavus Poznanski promised that the sons of Jewish South Carolinians would defend their temple, their city, and their land—still stands on Hasell Street in Charleston, facing east toward Jerusalem.

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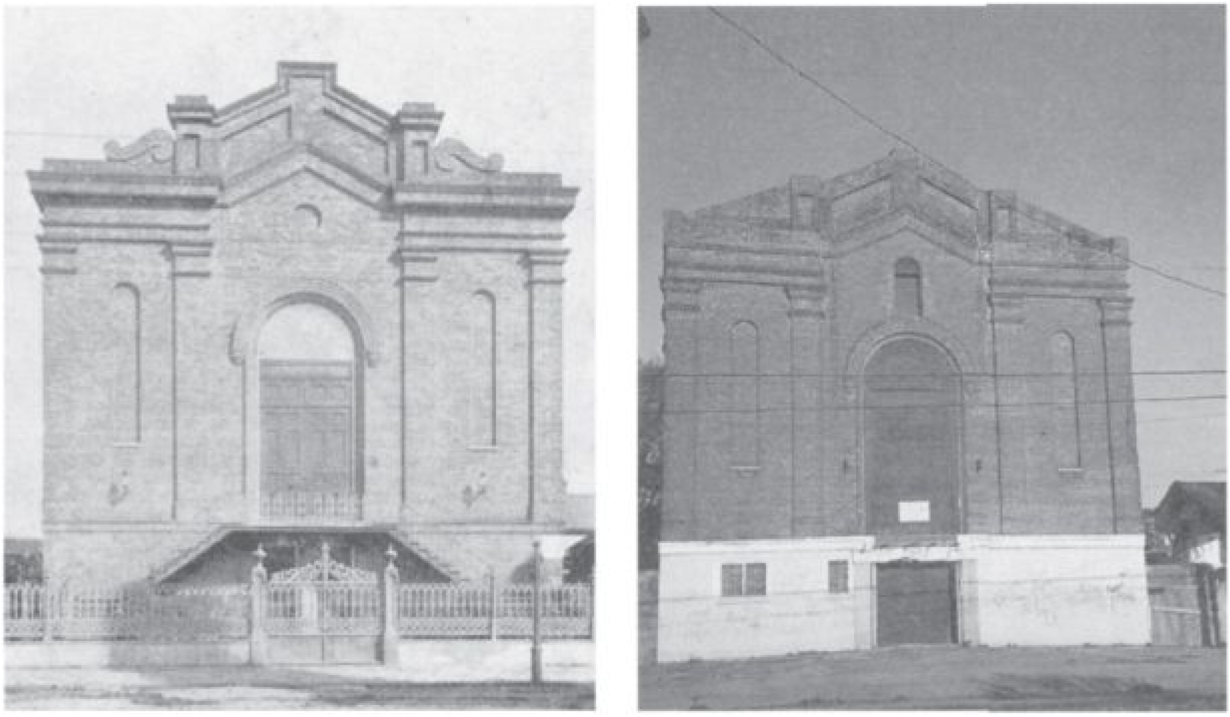
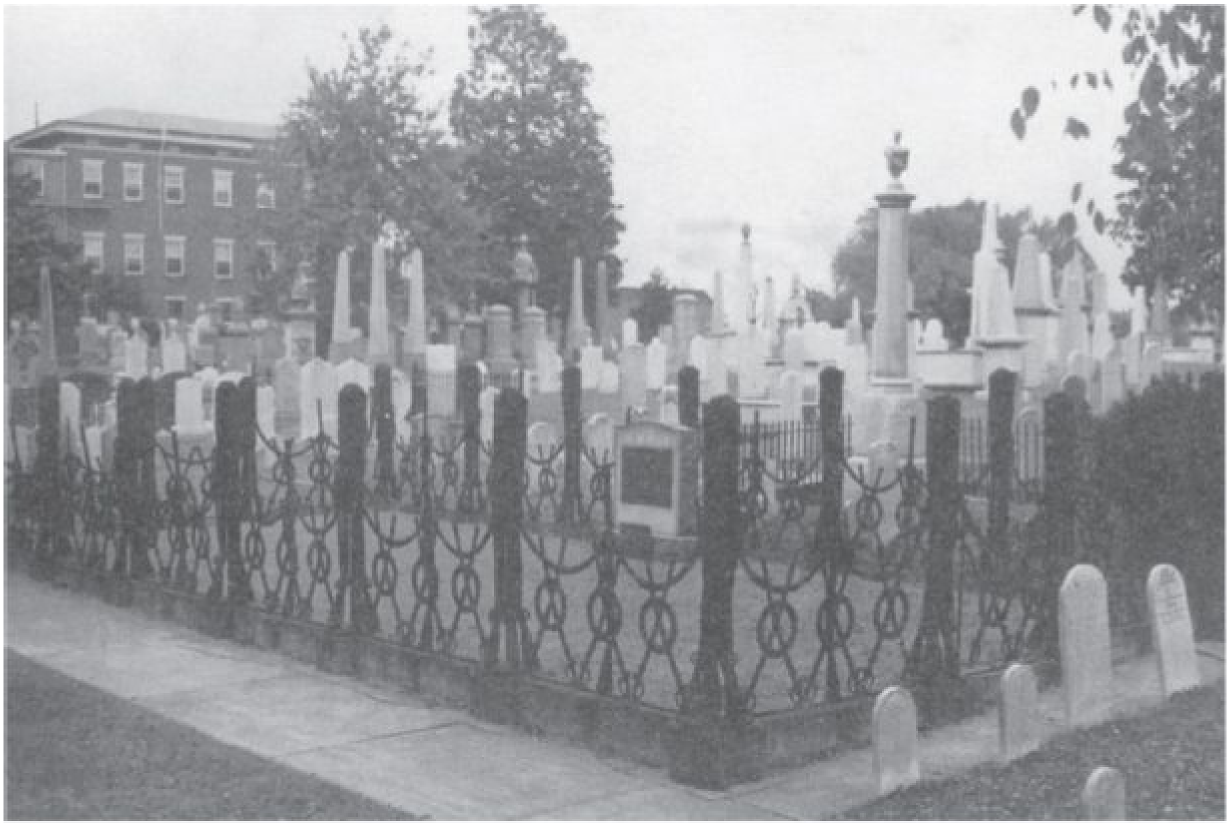
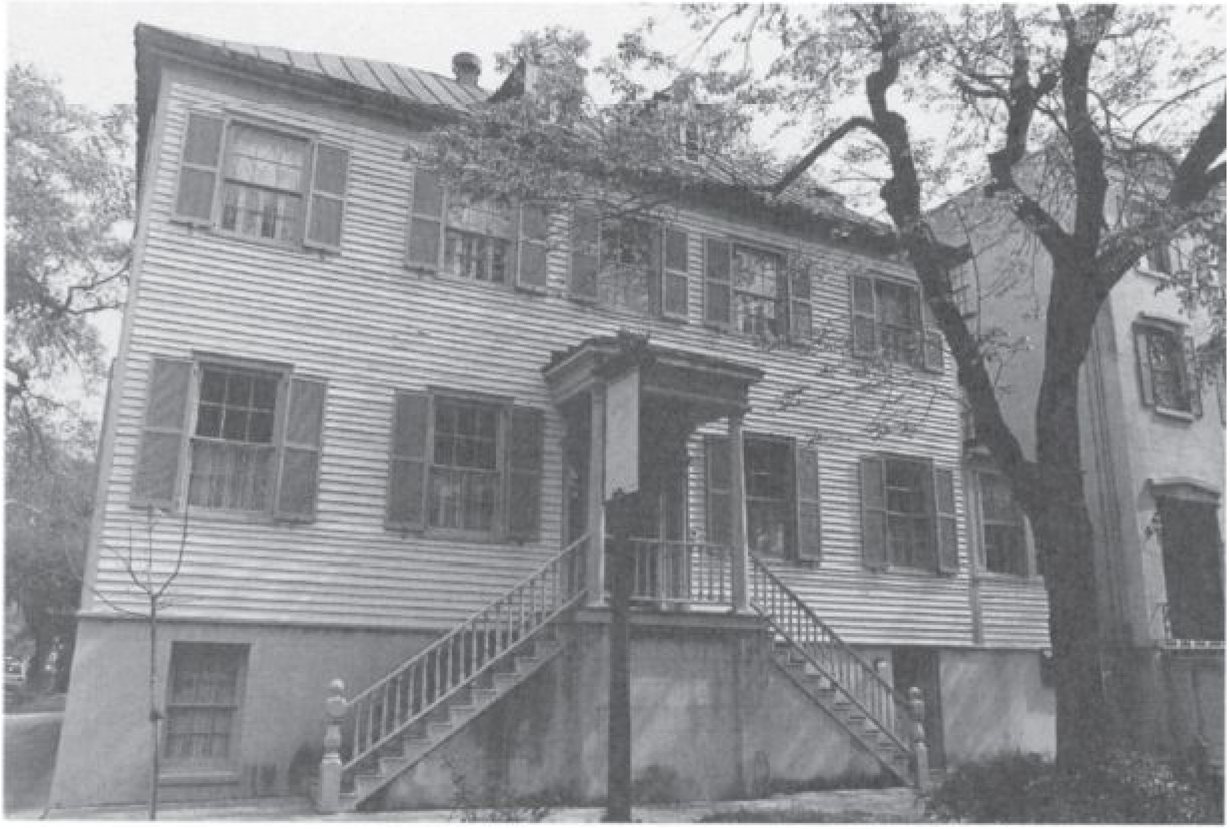


Gates of Prayer, then and now. The Jackson Street Synagogue in New Orleans just after the war and today. (Courtesy of Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans, Louisiana; Photograph by Susan Rosen.)

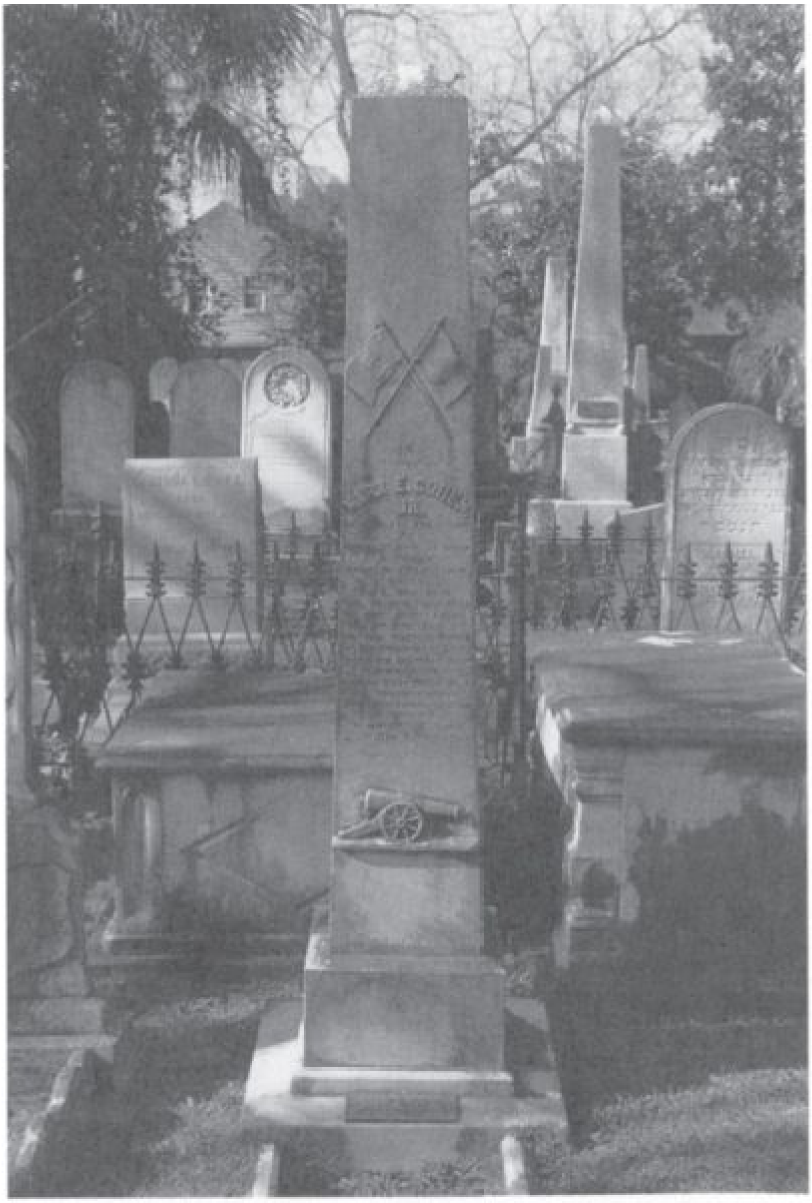


The Hebrew Cemetery, Confederate Section, at Shockoe Hill, Richmond. (Courtesy of Beth Ahabah Museum and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.)

The home of Moses Cohen Mordecai on Meeting Street in Charleston today. (Author’s collection, courtesy of Robert and Susan Prenner. Photograph by Michael Levkoff.)

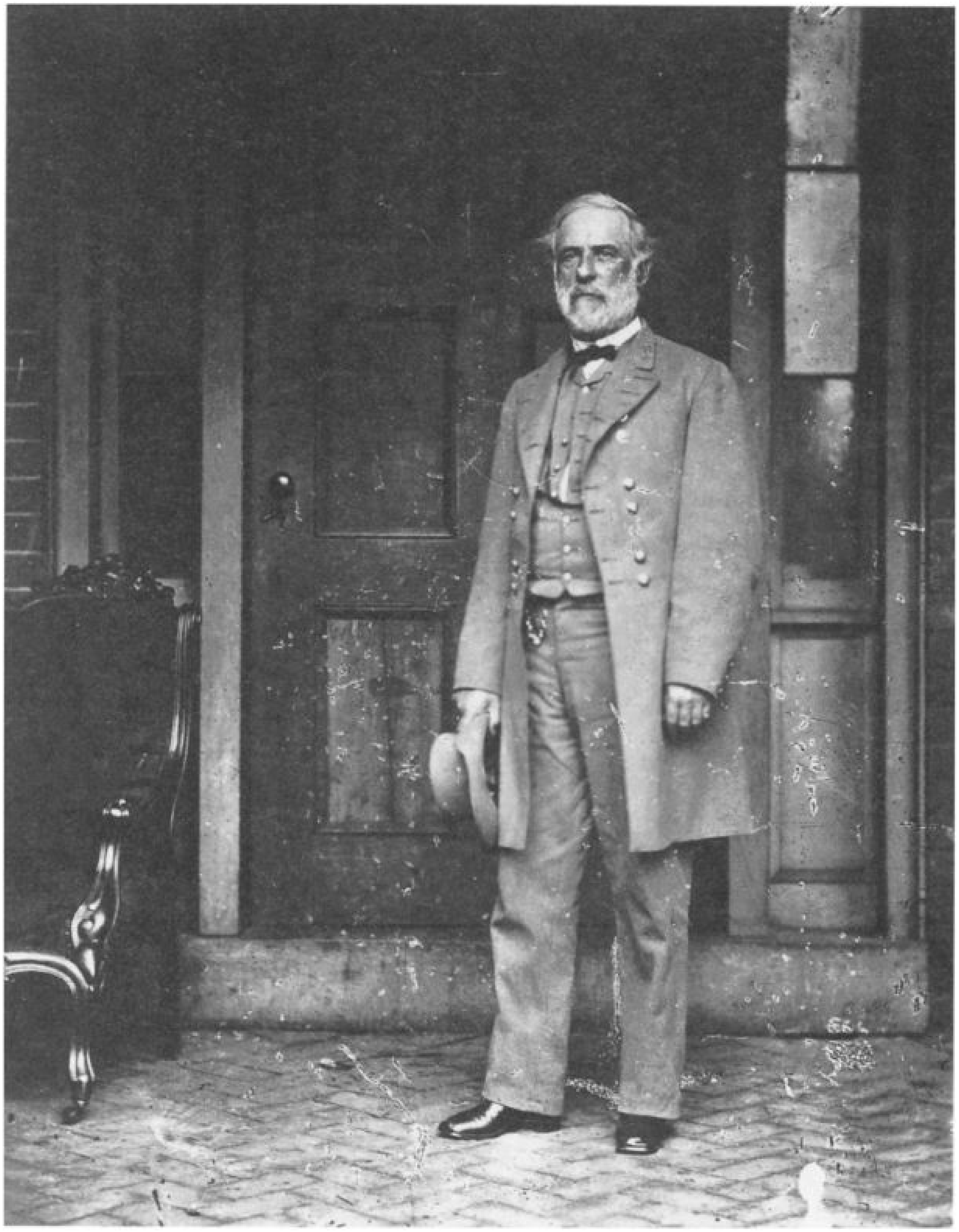


The home of Solomon Cohen at Barnard and Liberty in Savannah today. (Author’s collection. Photograph by Michael Levkoff.)



Monument to Marx E. Cohen Jr. at the Coming Street Cemetery, Charleston, South Carolina. The two flags are the South Carolina flag and the Confederate battle flag. (Author's collection. Photograph by Michael Levkoff.)

Mikve Israel in Savannah, built after the war in 1875. (Author's collection. Photograph by Michael Levkoff.)



Robert E. Lee. This Mathew Brady photograph was taken one week after the surrender. Jewish Confederates continued to venerate Lee. They even named their children for him: "Throughout the Southland today," Simon Mayer of Natchez told his fellow veterans in 1898, "the birth of the immortal Lee is being celebrated." "I was brought up to

believe that Robert E. Lee was the epitome of all virtues," Bernard Baruch wrote. "Father often quoted a maxim of Lee's as a guide to my own conduct: 'Do your duty in all things. You could not do more. You would not wish to do less.'" (Courtesy of Mathew Brady Collection, Prints and Photos Division, Library of Congress.)

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NOTES

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PREFACE

1. There are two people named Edwin Warren Moise in this work. One was born in Charleston in 1811 and lived in Louisiana; the other was born in Charleston in 1832 and lived in Columbus, Georgia, at the beginning of the war and in Sumter, South Carolina, afterward. Harold Moise, *The Moise Family of South Carolina and Their Descendants* (Columbia, S.C.: R. L. Bryan, 1961), 48–50, 83–126.

2. Bertram W. Korn, preface to paperback edition to *American Jewry and the Civil War*, 2d ed. (Cleveland and New York: Meridian Books/World Publishing, and Philadelphia: JPSA, 1961), xx–xxi.

3. Lawrence Fuchs, "Introduction," *AJHQ* 66, no. 2 (December 1976): 187.

4. Nathaniel Weyl, *The Jew in American Politics* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Arlington House, 1968), 54–55. Many Jewish historians, reflecting their own beliefs and preconceived notions and reading history from the present to the past, cannot bring themselves to believe that Jews voluntarily fought for the Confederacy. Typical of this disbelief is Jordan Schwarz in *The Speculator: Bernard M. Baruch in Washington, 1917–1965* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981). Simon Baruch, Bernard's father, Schwarz writes, "feeling the social pressure of watching other Camden men enlist for the Southern cause … became a Confederate army medical officer" (11). Baruch was, however, one of the most ardent of the Jewish Confederates. He was active in Confederate Veteran affairs even after he moved to New York after the war.

5. See, for example, Thomas Cahill, *The Gifts of the Jews* (New York: Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 1998), 120–22, 154.

6. Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), 63.

7. See chapter 1 below for a discussion of the motivation of Jewish Confederates. The literature on the causes of the Civil War is immense. See the following for an introduction: Allan Nevins, *The Emergence of Lincoln: Prologue to Civil War, 1859–*

1861 (New York: Scribner's, 1950), chap. 11; David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848–1861* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976); and Potter, *The South and the Sectional Conflict* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968). The best single explanation of the relationship between the war and slavery is a minor classic, Charles E. Cauthen's *South Carolina Goes to War, 1860–1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1950), chap. 5 ("Much has been written on the causes of secession, but one who reads the contemporary literature can have no doubt of the fundamental issue in South Carolina" [71]).

8. On the history of early anti-Semitism and Judeophobia, see Klaus Fischer's excellent work, *The History of an Obsession: German Judeophobia and the Holocaust* (New York: Continuum, 1998), chaps. 1 and 2. (Anti-Semitic pamphlets in Germany in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries claimed that Jews "belonged to an absolutely different nation" [46].) Benjamin F. Perry, quoted in Lewis Jones, *South Carolina: A Synoptic History for Laymen* (Lexington, S.C.: Sandlapper Press, 1978), 169. On Lee's actions and opinions on slavery, see Douglass Southall Freeman, *R. E. Lee* (New York: Scribner, 1934), 4:400–401.

9. Lee quote, Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, 4:401.

10. Rabbi Saul Jacob Rubin, *Third to None: The Saga of Savannah Jewry, 1733–1983* (Savannah: Congregation Mikve Israel, 1983), 68.

PROLOGUE

1. Gene Waddell, “An Architectural History of Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, Charleston,” *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 98, no. 1 (January 1997): 6–55, *Charleston Daily Courier* quote, 55; Solomon Breibart, “The Rev. Mr. Gustavus Poznanski: First American Jewish Reform Minister,” paper delivered at Congregation Beth Elohim on the 100th anniversary of Reverend Poznanski’s death, College of Charleston, January 19, 1979. James W. Hagy, *This Happy Land: The Jews of Colonial and Antebellum Charleston* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993), 236–39. “Kahal Kadosh” (Holy Congregation), traditionally the first two words of all early Sephardic congregations, is usually abbreviated “K. K.,” as in K. K. Beth Elohim.

2. Barnett A. Elzas, *The Jews of South Carolina from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1905; reprint, Spartanburg, S.C.: Reprint Co., 1983), chap. 12; Charles Reznikoff and Uriah Z. Engelman, *The Jews of Charleston: A History of an American Jewish Community* (Philadelphia: JPSA, 1950), 157–60; Compiled service record (CSR), Gustavus Poznanski Jr.

3. Raphael J. Moses, *Last Order of the Lost Cause—The Civil War Memoirs of a Jewish Family from the “Old South,”* edited by Mel Young (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1995), 94–101. The Columbus Light Guards became a part of Wright’s brigade in November 1862.

4. Moses, *Last Order*, 98.

5. Ibid., xv, 111, 94.

6. Ibid., 162–63.

7. C. Vann Woodward, ed., *Mary Chesnut’s Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 378.

8. Moses, *Last Order*, 165–66.

9. The *Charleston Mercury*, June 10, 1862. For the *Charleston Daily Courier*, see Mel Young, *Where They Lie Someone Should Say Kaddish* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1991), 40.

CHAPTER 1

1. Sermon, November 29, 1860, James K. Gutheim, Manuscript Collection, No. 224, AJA, 23.

2. Abraham Barkai, *Branching Out: German-Jewish Immigration to the United States 1820–1914* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1994), passim; Hasia R. Diner, *A Time for Gathering: The Second Migration, 1820–1880* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 9.

3. Naomi W. Cohen, *Encounter with Emancipation: The German Jews in the United States, 1830–1914* (Philadelphia: JPSA, 1984), 11.

4. Sermon, November 29, 1860, J. K. Gutheim Manuscript Collection, No. 224, AJA.

5. Cohen, *Encounter*, 11.

6. Ibid., 13.

7. "Both sides in the American Civil War professed to be fighting for freedom," James M. McPherson wrote in *Battle Cry of Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). Jefferson Davis exclaimed in 1863 that the South was "forced to take up arms to vindicate the political rights, the freedom, equality, and State sovereignty which were the heritage purchased by the blood of our revolutionary sires" (vii).

8. Benjamin's farewell speech is described by all of his biographers. See Pierce Butler, *Judah Benjamin* (Philadelphia: W. G. Jacobs & Co., 1907), 205–13; Robert Douthat Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin: Confederate Statesman* (London: Oxford University Press, 1943), 152–55; Eli N. Evans, *Judah Benjamin: The Jewish Confederate* (New York: Free Press, 1988), 109–12 (Mrs. Davis's quote).

9. Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 116.

10. Thompson, "David Yulee," 494; Joseph G. Adler, "The Public Career of Senator David Levy Yulee" (Ph.D. diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1973), 160.

11. Davis, *A Government*, 223.

12. Malcolm M. Stern, *Americans of Jewish Descent* (Reprint, New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1971); Walter E. Burke Jr., *Quartermaster: A Brief Account of the Life of Colonel Abraham Charles Myers, Quartermaster General C.S.A.* (February 14,

1976), 24 (copy in possession of author and available from the city of Fort Myers and the Fort Myers Historical Museum).

13. Louis Schmier, “Georgia History in Pictures. This ‘New Canaan’: The Jewish Experience in Georgia,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 73, no. 4, pt. 2 (winter 1989): 820 (Cohen quote); Isaac Hermann, *Memoirs of a Veteran Who Served as a Private in the 60s in the War between the States, Personal Incidents, Experiences, and Observations* (Atlanta: Byrd Printing Co., 1911), 192–93. Hermann’s CSR; see also chapter 3 below.

14. See CSRs of Kaminski, Emanuel, the Levy brothers, and Proskauer. As to Leon, see his CSR and his memoir, *Diary of a Tar Heel Confederate Soldier* (Charlotte: Stone Publishing Co., 1913); Morris U. Schappes, ed., *Documentary History of the Jews in the United States, 1654–1875*, rev. ed. (New York: Citadel Press, 1952), 709n. 17; Herbert Ezekiel and Gaston Lichtenstein, *The History of the Jews of Richmond from 1769 to 1917* (Richmond: Herbert Ezekiel, 1917), 161. As to Kempner, see Harold M. Hyman, *Oleander Odyssey: The Kempners of Galveston, Texas, 1854–1980s* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1990), chap. 1.

15. Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *The History of the Jews*, 148–93; Myron Berman, *Richmond’s Jewry, 1769–1976: Shabbat in Shockoe* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1979), 175–77; John H. Neblett and Roberta C. Neblett, “Emanuel Gerst—A Gentleman of Virginia,” *Generations: Journal of Congregation Beth Ahabah Museum and Archives Trust* 5, no. 1 (November 1992); Louis Ginsberg, *History of the Jews of Petersburg, 1789–1950* (Petersburg, Va.: privately printed, 1954), 42–56; Allan Schoener, *The American Jewish Album: 1654 to the Present* (New York: Rizzoli, 1983), Guggenheimer on 44–45.

16. Yates Levy to J. C. Levy, March 16, 1865, Phillips-Myers Papers, # 596, UNC.

17. Elzas, *Jews of South Carolina*, 18–19; Richard Gergel of Columbia pointed out to the author that South Carolina’s constitution was the first to guarantee freedom of religion to the Jews.

18. Hagy, *This Happy Land*, 9, 34–36; Elzas, *Jews of South Carolina*, 68–77; Leonard Dinnerstein, *Anti-Semitism in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 6.

19. Abram V. Goodman, “South Carolina: From Shaftesbury to Salvador,” in Leonard Dinnerstein and Mary Dale Palsson, eds., *Jews in the South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973); Ira Rosenwaike, “The Jewish Population of the United States as Estimated from the Census of 1820,” *AJHQ* 53, no. 2 (December 1963): 131–19; Rev. Isaac Leeser, “The Jews in the United States—1848,” *AJA* 7, no. 1 (January

1955): 82–84; Uriah Z. Engelman, “Jewish Statistics in the U.S. Census of Religious Bodies (1850–1936),” *Jewish Social Studies* 9 (1947): 127–32.

20. Rubin, *Third to None,* 1–25; Berman, *Richmond's Jewry,* chap. 1;, Melvin I. Urofsky, *Commonwealth and Community: The Jewish Experience in Virginia* (Richmond: Virginia Historical Society and Jewish Community Federation of Richmond, 1997), 1–16, 30, 36, 55.

21. Eli Faber, *A Time for Planting: The First Migration, 1654–1820* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 127–28.

22. Samuel Proctor, “Jewish Life in New Orleans 1718–1860,” *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 40 (1957): 110–32.

23. Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War,* 15–31, and *Jews and Negro Slavery in the Old South, 1789–1865* (Elkins Park, Pa.: Reform Congregation Kenesseth Israel, 1961), published also as a chapter entitled “Jews and Negro Slavery in the Old South, 1789–1865,” in Leonard Dinnerstein and Mary Dale Palsson, eds., *Jews in the South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973), 89–134; Hagy, *This Happy Land,* 93; Barkai, *Branching Out,* 109–11.

The 1850 census, which records all slaveholders and the number of slaves they owned, gives the names of 51 Jewish Charlestonians who owned a total of 288 slaves. Twelve Jewish Charlestonians owned 10 slaves or more. David Lopez owned 14, and, as he was a builder, he likely employed his slaves in construction work. Abraham Ottolengui owned 13, Hannah Myers, 15, and Morris Goldsmith, 16. There were approximately 500 Jews living in Charleston in 1850. In the same year, there were 3, 441 free blacks in Charleston, of whom 266 owned 1,087 slaves, more than three times the number owned by Charleston Jewry. Some free blacks, like Louisa R. DaCosta and William Penceel, owned a substantial number of slaves. “Indeed, so widespread was black slaveholding in the City of Charleston,” Larry Koger wrote, “that the majority of free black heads of household owned slaves from 1820 to 1840.” See Larry Koger, *Black Slaveowners: Free Black Slavemasters in South Carolina, 1790–1860* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 1985), 23; Bernard E. Powers Jr., *Black Charlestonians: A Social History, 1822–1885* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1994); Hagy, *This Happy Land,* 91–93. See also Michael Johnson and James L. Roark, *Black Masters: A Free Family of Color in the Old South* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1984); and Michael Johnson and James L. Roark, ed., *No Chariot Let Down: Charleston's Free People of Color on the Eve of the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984). A Northern visitor to Charleston noted that “a number [of blacks] are free and own slaves themselves. This may seem strange to many Northern people, especially to that class who cannot understand nor appreciate that system of labor known as slave labor" (Koger, *Black Slaveowners,* 23). Both the free black and Jewish slave owners of Charleston utilized slaves as domestic servants, as artisans, and in small commercial and manufacturing businesses. Many free blacks were engaged in the garment trade and utilized slave labor to sew and make clothes. Jewish Charlestonians sold clothing and dry goods, and it is possible there was an economic tie between the two antebellum minority communities. Mark Greenberg points out that the Jews of Savannah generally utilized slaves as domestics or hired them out. Henry and Isaac Meinhard put most of their sixteen slaves to work in their wholesale dry goods business. Solomon Cohen and Dinah Minis, the largest Jewish slaveholders in the city, with 23 and 18, respectively, hired most of them out. (Greenberg, "Becoming Southern," 61).

For a discussion of the minor role played by Jews in the slave trade in the colonial era, see Eli Faber, *Jews, Slaves and the Slave Trade* (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

24. Greenberg, "Becoming Southern," 57–58 and passim.

25. Richard C. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities: The South, 1820–1860* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 20, appendix and passim; Robert N. Rosen, *A Short History of Charleston* (Columbia: University South Carolina Press, 1997), 67–79.

26. Korn, "Jews and Negro Slavery," 111–13. He was apparently a kindly master. After the war, his former slave came with his family to Philadelphia. See Korn, *American Jewry,* 29.

27. Korn, *American Jewry,* 29; Berman, *Richmond Jewry,* 163, 166. Frederick Law Olmsted described blacks in Richmond wearing "the cast-off clothes of the white people … purchased of the Jews, whose shops show that there must be considerable importation of such articles, probably from the North." Olmsted, who was blatantly anti-Semitic, wrote that Jews in the South engaged in "an unlawful trade with the simple Negroes, which is found very profitable" (Korn, *American Jewry,* 104). The Ezekiels operated a dry goods store in Richmond, which Moses Ezekiel recalled "was filled with Negro clothing [including] ready-made dresses of all sizes." Moses's grandparents, the store owners, "were monopolists in the sense that every Negro who was brought to Richmond from the South to be sold at auction was, on the morning of the sale, brought to our store to be dressed" (Zebulon Vance Hooker II, "Moses Jacob Ezekiel—The Formative Years," *Virginia Historical Magazine* 60 [April 1952]: 241–54, 243).

28. Barkai, *Branching Out,* 1–31; I. J. Benjamin, *Three Years in America, 1859–1862,* edited by Oscar Handlin and translated from the German by Charles Reznikoff (Philadelphia: JPSA, 1956), 1:75. The history of German Jewry is rich and complicated. See Michael A. Meyer, ed., *German-Jewish History in Modern Times,* 4 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996–1998).

29. Barkai, *Branching Out,* 93–94; Malcolm M. Stern, "Preface," *Americans of Jewish Descent* (New York: reprint KTAV Publishing House, 1971). Ironically, American German Jews were proud of their German heritage, culture, and language. One writer observed that "nowhere [exists] a truer tribe for Germany than in the Jews…. On the prairies of America we hear the Jew speaking German; he carries the German fatherland along everywhere and can never leave it" (Howard M. Sacher, *A History of the Jews in America* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992], 61). Hasia Diner points out in *A Time for Gathering* that many so-called German Jews actually came from Poznan (Posen) or Silesia, which were part of Poland annexed by Prussia. Joseph Proskauer always said his parents were German, but they actually came from Hungary and Breslau in Silesia. German ancestry was clearly more prestigious than Polish ancestry (see pp. 9, 49–50). In her autobiography, Kitty Carlisle Hart said that her mother, who was born in Shreveport, falsely claimed that her family came from Alsace-Lorraine "because she thought it was more exotic. (She would have preferred France, but since [her father's] name was Holtzman, Alsace was as near as she dared get.)" *Kitty: An Autobiography* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 3. It seems her mother and father both tended to exaggerate a bit. Her grandfather Holtzman claimed to have been a gunner on the *Merrimack*, to have sold a tie to President Lincoln after the war, and to have been at Ford's Theater when Lincoln was shot. Kitty Hart's father did, however, marry Stella Baer (pronounced "Barr"), the daughter of Max Baer, who signed the pro-Confederate letter of the Shreveport congregation, which denounced *The Jewish Messenger*. For a detailed history of nineteenth-century anti-Semitism in Germany, see Klaus Fischer, *The History of an Obsession: German Judeophobia and the Holocaust* (New York: Continuum Publishing Co., 1998).

30. Marcus, *United States Jewry, 1776–1985*, 4 vols. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989–93), 3:14–15.

31. Reznikoff and Engelman, *Jews of Charleston*, 148, 208; Jacob Rader Marcus, *To Count a People: American Jewish Population Data, 1585–1984* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1990), 208, 204; Ford's Census, Charleston, 1860, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston. The condescending attitude of the Jewish elite at Beth Elohim and elsewhere toward the newer Polish immigrants is reflected in a statistical report of Jewish congregations that dismissed Berith Shalome as "a Polish congregation … numbering a few foreigners" (Reznikoff and Engelman, *Jews of*

Charleston, 148). In 1905 Rabbi Elzas wrote that Charleston had "a Polish congregation," but it had "no history, communal or otherwise, worth recording" (Elzas, *Jews of South Carolina*, 261n. 1). Solomon Breibart has pointed out that Berith Shalome was the first Ashkenazi congregation in the South. Belinda Gergel and Richard Gergel, *In Pursuit of the Tree of Life: A History of the Early Jews of Columbia, South Carolina, and the Tree of Life Congregation* (Columbia, S.C.: Tree of Life Congregation, 1996), 8–34.

32. Marcus, *To Count a People*, 204–5; Steinberg, *United for Worship and Charity: A History of Congregation Children of Israel* (Augusta, Ga.: privately printed, 1982). The demographics of this era is a maddening subject. Modern historians still rely on contemporary estimates of the Jewish population made by the eminent rabbi and editor Isaac Leeser of Philadelphia. Steven Hertzberg, in *Strangers within the Gate City: The Jews of Atlanta, 1845–1915* (Philadelphia: JPSA, 1978), claims that some of Leeser's estimates "may have been high" (281n. 18). Elliott Ashkenazi in *The Business of Jews in Louisiana, 1840–1875* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1988), states that Leeser's figures "are little more than estimates, and I believe that they err on the low side" (183n. 15). Jacob Rader Marcus, in *To Count a People*, continues to give Leeser's estimates as the only information available. Like Hertzberg and Ashkenazi (in the "absence of more concrete data"), I have accepted Leeser's numbers as estimates, but like Ashkenazi, I believe them to be low.

33. Joseph B. Mahan, *Columbus: Georgia's Fall Line "Trading Town"* (Northridge, Calif.: Windsor Publications, 1986), 48.

34. Rabbi Newton J. Friedman, "A History of Temple Beth Israel of Macon, Georgia" (Ph.D. diss., Burton College and Seminary, 1955), 11–25.

35. Hertzberg, *Strangers within the Gate City*, 10–18; interview with Jacob Haas, Atlanta; Franklin M. Garrett, *Atlanta and Environs: A Chronicle of Its People and Events*, reprint, 3 vols. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1969–1987; originally published New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1954), 1:214–55. Apparently, Sarah was pro-Union. The family recorded a story that after the battle on the Columbus bridge on April 16, 1865, friends ran to her to compliment her on a conspicuous act of courage of her son, Julius M. Alexander. She is said to have replied, "Pity it was not done in a better cause" (Henry Aaron Alexander, *Notes on the Alexander Family of South Carolina and Georgia and Connections* [privately printed, 1954], Atlanta Jewish Federation Archives and CC, 59).

36. *Pittsburgh Evening Leader*, Merz file, Pittsburgh, March 31, 1875, AJA; Fannie Herzberg, "Pioneer Members and History of Temple Beth-El, 1859–1959,"

Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society Bulletin, November 1959 (reprinted in the *Newsletter of the Southern Jewish Historical Society*).

37. The Moses family were prominent, prosperous, and cosmopolitan for the place and times. When Hannah, a Moses daughter, married Isaac I. Moses, the Moseses had a large wedding with more than three hundred guests, thirty of whom spent the night at the plantation. Moses's children visited relatives and friends in South Carolina and Pennsylvania. One daughter, Penina, met the famous rabbi Dr. Isaac Leeser on a visit to Philadelphia. She was expecting her brother, Lea, when Rabbi Leeser arrived. "I rushed to the door," she later recalled, "and finding my mistake was much embarrassed and said 'Oh! I thought you were Lea, sir' to which he laughingly replied 'It is Lee—ser'" (Moses, *Last Order*, 70–82).

38. Isaac Wheeler Avery, *The History of the State of Georgia* (1881; reprinted New York: AMS Press, 1972), 155–56.

39. Berman, *Richmond's Jewry*, 10, 36–50; *Second Annual Directory for the City of Richmond* (1860), microfilm, VSL.

40. Urofsky, *Commonwealth*, 63–65; *Our First Century and a Quarter, 1844–1969*, a history of Ohef Sholom Temple by Elise Levy Margolius (privately printed, 1970). My thanks to Jennifer Gregory Priest, Ohef Sholom's archivist, for her kind assistance in sending me this work. *Hazzan* is Hebrew for cantor. In the nineteenth century, hazzan sometimes meant "reader" as well as "cantor." It even meant "rabbi" at times, because there were few ordained rabbis.

41. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*, 440; *Washington Daily National Intelligencer*, August 27, 1861, front page, quoting the *Richmond Enquirer*. The *Enquirer* pointed out that *Manassa* and *Manassas* were both corruptions of *Manasseh*. In 1991 the town of Manassas debated the question of whether or not it was named for a Jewish innkeeper or an Indian (Native American). Although there was little or no evidence for the Indian origin, in the interest of political correctness, the town put up a marker saying it could be either (*Washington Jewish News*, December 5, 1991).

42. Marcus, *To Count a People*, 204–5; Urofsky, *Commonwealth*, 79.

43. Moses, "Jews of Mobile," 120, 121–22; Robert J. Zietz, *The Gates of Heaven, Congregation Sha'arai Shomayim: The First 150 Years, Mobile, Alabama, 1844–1994* (Mobile: Congregation Sha'arai Shomayim, 1994), 11–33.

44. Elliot Ashkenazi, *A Centennial, Lehman Brothers, 1850–1950* (New York: Lehman Brothers, 1950); Harry's name change courtesy of Kenneth Libo; Cotton quote in Harriet

E. Amos, *Cotton City: Urban Development in Antebellum Mobile* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1985), xiii. On Civil War Montgomery, see William W. Rogers, Jr., *Confederate Homefront: Montgomery during the Civil War* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999).

45. Allan Nevins, *Herbert H. Lehman and His Era* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), 7–8.

46. Leo E. Turitz and Evelyn Turitz, *Jews in Early Mississippi* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, [1983]), 12, 18, 35–36, 43, 121; Carolyn Gray LeMaster, *A Corner of the Tapestry: A History of the Jewish Experience in Arkansas, 1820s-1990s* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1994), 7; Clara L. Moses, *Aunt Sister's Book* (New York: privately printed, 1929), 2–3.

47. William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South* (Boston, 1863), 242.

48. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:104.

49. Ashkenazi, *Business of Jews*, 9–11, citing Hertzberg, *Strangers within the Gate City* (see note 49); Wade, *Slavery in the Cities*, appendix ("Population of Major Southern Cities, 1820–1860"). Norfolk's population was 14, 620.

50. Eric Brock, preface to "The Jewish Cemeteries of Shreveport, La." (privately printed, 1995); Proctor, "Jewish Life," 123. Rabbi Max Heller states in "Jubilee Souvenir of Temple Sinai, 1872–1922" (New Orleans: Temple Sinai, 1922) that the second Touro synagogue was opened in 1857 on Carondelet near Julia. Cathy Kahn says 218 (old numbering system) Carondolet, river side, between Julia and St. Joseph (letter to author).

51. Bobbie Malone, "New Orleans Uptown Jewish Immigrants: The Community of Congregation Gates of Prayer, 1850–1860," *Louisiana History* 32, no. 3 (summer 1991): 239–65; Proctor, "Jewish Life," 126; Malone, "New Orleans Uptown," 242–56.

52. Ashkenazi, *Diary of Clara Solomon*, 142, illustrations and captions between pages 342 and 344. Drew Gilpin Faust describes the Solomons in *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996). Indeed, the title of her book is taken from Clara's diary ("Necessity & war is the mother of invention," *Diary* [May 18, 1862]; see page 2 for epigram). Ironically, Clara Solomon was atypical of Jewish Southern women because, first, she was not an immigrant and, second, she came from a more affluent segment of society (as Faust acknowledges). Faust points out that Clara's emotional extravagance, her fantasy life, and her interest in other women were not unusual or deviant in the

1860s. Such expressions, she writes, “represented a sensitivity and authenticity of feeling celebrated in this sentimental mid-Victorian era as appropriate to true friendship as much as true love” (144).

53. “The Story of the Jewish Orphan’s Home of New Orleans” (New Orleans: Louisiana State Museum, 1905); Malone, “Uptown,” 242.

54. Ashkenazi, *Business of Jews*, 8–11; Malone, “Uptown,” 242–43.

55. Ashkenazi, *Business of Jews*, 13; Rabbi Martin I. Hinchin, *Fourscore and Eleven: A History of the Jews of Rapides Parish, 1828–1919* (Alexandria, La.: McCormick Graphics for Congregation Gemiluth Chassodim, 1984), 2–4; my thanks to Nancy Greenberg and Rabbi Task of Alexandria for providing me with this local history. Korn, *Early Jews*, 189; Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:104.

56. Brock, “Shreveport,” 57, preface and passim; Schappes, *Documentary History*, 439–40.

57. Bernard Postal and Lionel Koppman, “Tennessee,” in *A Jewish Tourist’s Guide to the U.S.* (Philadelphia: JPSA, 1954), 585–95; Rabbi James A. Wax, “The Jews of Memphis: 1860–1865,” *West Tennessee Historical Society Papers* 3 (1949): 39–89; Selma S. Lewis, *A Biblical People in the Bible Belt: The Jewish Community of Memphis, Tennessee, 1840s–1960s* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1998), 1–54; Fedora Small Frank, “Nashville Jewry during the Civil War,” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 39, no. 3 (fall 1980): 310; Frank, *Five Families and Eight Young Men (Nashville and Her Jewry, 1850–1861)* (Nashville: Tennessee Book Co., 1962), 9.

58. Cecilia Felsenthal, *The Felsenthal Family*, 2nd ed. (Memphis, Tenn: Goldberger Printing & Publishing, 1939), 13–42. In 1732 a Felsenthal ancestor named Isaac (so the family legend goes) went to a local meeting. When he announced “Isaac” to a roll call, he was asked “From where?” He answered, “Ich komme uber fels und thal” (I came over rock and dale). He became Isaac Felsenthal.

59. Ruthe Winegarten and Cathy Schechter, *Deep in the Heart: The Lives and Legends of Texas Jews* (Austin: Eakin Press and Texas Jewish Historical Society, 1990), 7, 12–13; Juliet George, “By the Brazos and the Trinity They Hung Up Their Harps: Two Jewish Immigrants in Texas” (master’s thesis, Texas Christian University, 1991), 4.

60. Harold M. Hyman, *Oleander Odyssey: The Kempners of Galveston, Texas, 1854–1980s* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1990), 3–13.

61. Winegarten and Schechter, *Deep in the Heart,* 16–22; George, "By the Brazos," passim; Frances R. Kallison, "100 Years of Jewry in San Antonio" (master's thesis, Trinity University, 1977).

62. Sacher, *A History of the Jews in America,* 72.

63. Elzas, *Jews of South Carolina,* 244; Rubin, *Third to None,* 119; I. J. Benjamin, "Introduction," *Three Years in America, 1859–1862,* vol. 1, edited by Oscar Handlin and translated from the German by Charles Reznikoff (Philadelphia: JPSA, 1956).

64. Benjamin, *Three Years,* 76.

65. Greenberg, "Becoming Southern," 72–74. Greenberg astutely points out that, by every indicator, Jews were more accepted in antebellum Savannah than the Irish. ("Nativism directed primarily against Irish immigrants restricted their access to political office to a far greater degree than anti-Semitism affected Savannah Jews.")

66. Woodward, *Mary Chesnut,* 288.

67. Ibid., 459: "They say," Mary quoted a Mrs. Goodwyn,"there has never been a fallen woman among them." "Rachel—a shining light to the contrary," Mary jokingly replies, referring to the beautiful Rachel Lyons.

68. Ibid., 317, 346, 359.

69. Mary was attracted to Mem's lively personality and enjoyed her many stories. She recorded one in her diary:

> Some man was terribly angry with his son, who had a weakness for some beautiful Jewess, swore at all Jews, and used bad language freely. Being high church and all that, he read the service for them on Sunday.
>
> Son: "I do not want to hear anything from Isaiah or Solomon or Moses and the prophets—or Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John."
>
> "Silence, sir—with your ribaldry."
>
> "But, my father—you know they are only damned old Jews' anyhow." (359)

70. Oscar S. Straus, *Under Four Administrations* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1922), 10. "In the Bible Belt," Selma S. Lewis writes in *A Biblical People,* "the dominant community felt more tolerant of Jews" (33).

71. William R. Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character* (New York: George Braziller, 1961), 325. See, generally, Eugene D. Genovese, *A Consuming Fire: The Fall of the Confederacy in the Mind of the White Christian South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 9, 38–39 ("we have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger"; "bless our future Zion" [55]), ("The divines preached the model of the Abrahamic household" [70]; Heb. 6:4–8, the fate of Babylon).

72. Woodward, *Mary Chesnut,* 217, 233, 548.

73. "The Civil War Music Collector's Edition," notes by Charles K. Wolfe (Alexandria, Va.: Time-Life Music, n.d.): "And lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out the hand over the sea and divide it," God commands Moses (Exod. 14:15). Moses, of course, was a hero to the Union as well. "O, Let My People Go" was sung by the freed slaves ("O, go down Moses / Away down to Egypt land / and tell King Pharaoh / to let my people go").

74. "Civil War Music Collector's Edition," notes by Charles K. Wolfe.

75. Rev. J. William Jones, *Personal Reminiscences of General Robert E. Lee* (reprint, Richmond: U.S. Historical Society Press, 1989), 419.

76. Capt. R. E. Lee, *Recollections and Letters of General Robert E. Lee* (Garden City, N.Y.: Garden City Publishing Co., 1904), 105–6; Jonathon Kirsch, *Moses: A Life* (New York: Ballentine Books, 1998), 187–89.

77. See "Biographical Sketches of Jews Who Have Served in the Congress of the United States," in *The American Jewish Yearbook*, vol. 2, 1900–1901 (Philadelphia: JPSA), 517–24. (The Southerners were Benjamin of Louisiana, Yulee of Florida, Philip Phillips of Alabama, and, for added measure, likely David S. Kaufman of Texas. The *Jewish Year Book* included him as a Jew.)

78. Bertram Wallace Korn, *Eventful Years and Experiences: Studies in Nineteenth Century America Jewish History* (Cincinnati: AJA, 1954), 114–15; Frederic Cople Jaher, *A Scapegoat in the New Wilderness: The Origins and Rise of Anti-Semitism in America*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 177.

79. Abraham J. Peck, “The Other Peculiar Institution: Jews and Judaism in the Nineteenth Century South,” *Modern Judaism* 7, no. 1 (February 7, 1987): 106. Hammond was, to say the least, a curmudgeon of the highest order. He disliked Jews—but then, Hammond disliked everyone.

80. Carol Bleser, ed., *Secret and Sacred: The Diaries of James Henry Hammond, a Southern Slaveholder* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 94–95 (June 1842); Jaher, *Scapegoat*, 187.

81. John F. Marszalek, ed., *The Diary of Miss Emma Holmes, 1861–1866* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 162, 209, 306; Carol Bleser, ed., *Tokens of Affection: The Letters of a Planter’s Daughter in the Old South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 343. Bleser refers to this remark as anti-Semitic, which it does not appear to be. After all, the family had a Jewish houseguest, and the letter was simply a private expression of the writer’s surprise at what was a strange custom in the South—or the Western world generally—refusing to eat pork and ham.

82. Jaher, *Scapegoat*, 91. “The guilt of the bloud [*sic*] of the Lord of Heaven and Earth lyeth upon that Jewish nation,” Increase Mather bellowed in 1669 (Marcus, *Colonial American Jew*, 3:1113–14). Rhode Islander John Bannister referred to Moses Lopez as “a Jew, the offscouring of the human species” (Rubin, *Third to None*, 10).

83. See, generally, Jacob Rader Marcus, *Early American Jewry* (Philadelphia: JPSA, 1951), 1: chap. 5 (“it is … a matter of record that the New Englanders, with rare exception, had no use for Jews. The original Puritans were interested in Hebrew and in ancient Hebrews … but not in their descendants as long as they remained Jews”). Unlike Southerners, the Puritans “frowned at the thought of tolerating or assimilating others” (103). Rabbi Marcus correctly refers to “the bigots of Massachusetts” (116) in *The Jews in America: Four Centuries of an Uneasy Encounter, a History* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989). Arthur Hertzburg points out that the Massachusetts Bay colony “had chased professing Jews out of Boston” (34). Of course Puritans *hanged* Quakers (see John T. Noonan, Jr., *The Lustre of our Country* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998]). Lee Friedman tries to whitewash early Massachusetts anti-Semitism in *Early American Jews* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934), and succeeds at muddying the water somewhat. Friedman apparently did not know that the South existed, as he fails to mention colonial South Carolina, Georgia, or Virginia. In 1821, Massachusetts narrowly approved a constitutional revision removing a declaration of belief in Christianity as a qualification for election to public office. Old New Englanders like Leverett Saltonstall, true to their anti-Semitic ancestors, objected that “jews, mahometans, deists, and atheists” were “opposed to the common religion of

the Commonwealth and believe it an imposition, a mere fable, and that its professors are under a wretched delusion." Jews, he thought, were not "suitable members of a Christian state" (Jaher, *Scapegoat*, 131). Leonard Dinnerstein agreed with this general assessment in *Anti-Semitism in America*, 8.

84. Charles Francis Adams, ed., *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, 12 vols. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1874–77), 10:483; 11:155, 162, 500; 12:164; Jaher, *Scapegoat*, 131, 190; Korn, in *Jews in the South*, 139; Dinnerstein, *Anti-Semitism*, 11. Adams wrote in 1780 that the Jews of Amsterdam "would steal your eyes out of your head if they possibly could."

85. Korn, *Eventful Years and Experiences*, 104; Dinnerstein, *Anti-Semitism*, 31–32.

86. Gergel and Gergel, *Tree of Life*, 33–35.

87. *Confederate Veteran*, 23:8, 343, August 1915. This is in a letter from Simon Baruch to *The Confederate Veteran*.

88. Samuel Proctor and Louis Schmier, eds., with Malcolm Stern, *Jews of the South: Selected Essays from the Southern Jewish Historical Society* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1984), 37; Schmier, "Georgia History in Pictures."

89. Greenberg, "Becoming Southern."

90. Lewis, *A Biblical People*, 34.

91. The lithograph of Lilienthal is at the Judah L. Magnes Museum (Western Jewish History Center), Berkeley, California; see p. 36. The lithograph was purchased for $110,000 in 1996. See *Maine Antique Digest*, "Pacific Currents," *Pacific Book Auction Galleries Quarterly* (April 1996): 8-A.

92. Lewis, *A Biblical People*, 32; Frank, *Five Families*, 87.

93. *Sinai 7* (1862), 158–63, AJA; Korn, *Jews and Negro Slavery*, 26, 56–57; Berman, *Richmond Jewry*, 372n. 77. The author acknowledges the kind assistance of Andrea Mehrländer in translating this article, which has been cited by previous historians but has never been accurately translated into English. As to Jewish abolitionists, see Jayme A. Sokolow, "Revolution and Reform: The Antebellum Jewish Abolitionist," *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 9, no. 1 (1981): 26–41.

94. Korn, "Jews and Negro Slavery," 123.

95. Ibid., 131–32; Korn, *American Jewry*, 17. The American Jewish community generally avoided the debate over slavery in the antebellum years. Too small, vulnerable, and foreign to affect the outcome; too insecure in their social, political, and economic strength; suspicious of the abolitionist movement; and anxious to assimilate, neither organized Jewry and few Jews individually had anything to say on the controversy, North or South. National Jewish publications such as Isaac Leeser's *Occident* maintained a policy of silence or strict neutrality. National organizations, such as they were, took the same position: these were political issues and inappropriate for official Jewish comment. B'nai B'rith, a Jewish fraternal organization, ignored the issue. The American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society issued an Annual Report in 1853 in which it found that the "Jews of the United States have never taken any steps whatever with regard to the Slavery question." Korn, *American Jewry,* 15–16.

When Rabbi David Einhorn of Baltimore's Har Sinai congregation preached the abolition of slavery, he was forced to flee Baltimore. In May 1861 he was threatened during riots between Confederate and Union mobs. His board advised him that he should avoid "the excitable issues of the time" (Barkai, *Branching Out,* 110; Cohen, *Encounter,* 135). Another abolitionist rabbi, Bernard Felsenthal of Chicago, preached against the evils of slavery (Barkai, *Branching Out,* 113).

Numerous rabbis and Jewish leaders in the North answered Rabbi Raphall's defense of slavery. The majority of Jews in the North opposed slavery, and there were a number of Northern Jewish abolitionists. Michael Heilprin, a Polish Jewish-American writer, was outraged by Raphall's "sacrilegious words." "Have we not had enough of the 'reproach of Egypt?' Must the stigma of Egyptian principles be fastened on the people of Israel by Israelitish lips themselves?" (Felsenthal felt so strongly about slavery that he refused to even apply for a position at the Mobile congregation; Korn, *American Jewry,* 18–23.)

96. Solomon Cohen to "My Dear Aunt," transcription courtesy of Lewis Schmier, copy in possession of author.

97. Marcus, *Memoirs,* 2:295.

98. Schappes, *Documentary History,* 436–41.

99. Korn, *American Jewry,* 250n. 48; Jaher, *Scapegoat,* 138, 200–203, 215. For a different view of the abolitionists, see Louis Ruchames, "The Abolitionists and the Jews," *PAJHS* 42 (September 1952–June 1953): 131–55. Ruchames moderated his views in "The Abolitionists and the Jews: Some Further Thoughts," in *A Bicentennial Festscrift for Jacob Rader Marcus* (Waltham, Mass: AJHS, New York KTAV, 1976), 505–17. (See "The Abolitionist and the Jews," 145.) Jaher concedes that the abolitionists occasionally had positive things to say about the Jews. See page 310. See

also Dinnerstein, *Anti-Semitism,* 16. Of course, white Southerners generally detested New Englanders and abolitionists. “Nothing on earth shall ever induce us to submit to any nation,” one South Carolinian said in 1861, “with the brutal, bigoted blackguards of the New England States” (*Battle Cry of Freedom,* 234–35).

100. John Weiss, *Life and Correspondence of Theodore Parker* (New York: D. Appleton, 1964): Theodore Parker, “Journal,” March 1843, 1:214, and Parker to Dr. Francis, May 26, 1844, 1:236, “Letter to the Members of the 28th Congregational Society of Boston” (1859), 2:497, and “Some Thoughts on the Charities of Boston” (1858), 1:397, and to Bev. David Wasson, December 12, 1857, 1:395–96. See also Egal Feldman, *Dual Destinies: The Jewish Encounter with Protestant America* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 56–59; Jaher, *Scapegoat,* 200–203.

101. *Liberator* 15 (May 20, 1842): 1; 19; (May 18, September 21, 1849): 77, 751; Jaher, *Scapegoat,* 201.

102. Edmond Quincy, “A Jew and a Christian,” *Liberator* 18 (August 11, 1848): 126; *Liberator* 15 (May 20, 1842): 1; 19 (May 18, September 21, 1849): 77, 751. Quincy, a Boston Brahmin and a cousin of John Quincy Adams, was an officer of the Massachusetts and American Anti-Slavery Society, editor of the Massachusetts *Abolitionist,* and a contributor to the *Liberator.* He wrote a novel, *Wensley: A Story without a Moral,* published in 1854, in which the villain is a forger and cheat named Aaron Abrahams. The book is laced with every cliché of old-fashioned Boston anti-Semitism: the Jew as a liar, cheat, and coward (see pages 275–91). See also Jonathon D. Sarna, “The ‘Mythical Jew’ and the ‘Jew Next Door’ in Nineteenth-Century America,” in David A. Gerber, ed., *Anti-Semitism in American History* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 57–78; for a detailed treatment of Child, James Russell Lowell, and others; and David A. Gerber, “Cutting Out Shylock: Elite Anti-Semitism and the Quest for Moral Order in the Mid-Nineteenth Century American Market Place,” *Journal of American History* 69, no. 3 (December 1982): 615–37, for the anti-Semitic credit reporting of Arthur and Lewis Tappan, leading abolitionists and merchants. Of course, not all New England intellectuals were anti-Semites. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, for example, wrote philo-Semitic works, including “Tales of a Wayside Inn” and “Judas Maccabaeus.”

Lydia Maria Child, *Letters from New-York* (New York: Charles Francis, and Boston: James Munroe, 1843), 12–13, 26–29, 31, 33–34, 217–18, 225 (Judaism was rife with superstition, vengeance, blindness; its ceremonies “strange … spectral and flitting”). Child, of Boston, was one of the most famous female writers of her time and a vocal abolitionist. Her husband was a member of the Massachusetts legislature and an early member of the New England Antislavery Society. She wrote numerous antislavery tracts and edited the “Anti-Slavery Standard.” Her *Letters from New-York* was a best-seller in the 1840s. See also Patricia G. Holland and Milton Meltzer, eds., *Guide to the Collected Correspondence of Lydia Maria Child, 1817–1880* (New York: Kraus Microform, 1980), s.v. “Jews,” especially letters to Louisa Gilman Loring (September 4, 1846) and Ellis Gray Loring (March 5, 1854).

As to Henry Wilson’s views, see *The Congressional Globe*, 36th Cong., 2d sess., February 21, 1861, 1091; and 37th Cong., 2d sess., February 13, 1862, 789; Korn, *American Jewry*, 168 (“The race that stoned Prophets and crucified the Redeemer of the World”; “the Jew brokers”; “curbstone Jew broker”); Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 139; Marcus, *U. S. Jewry*, 3:36.

103. Ibid. See notes 84 and 102, above.

104. Sacher, *A History of the Jews of America*, 73.

105. *History of the Jews of Louisiana, Their Religious, Civic, Charitable and Patriotic Life* (Jewish Historical Publishing Company of Louisiana, 1903), 33; Scherck to J. L. Meyer, Columbus, Ga., September 9, 1864, AJA; *Charleston Daily Courier*, March 11, 1861.

106. Dauber, 2, 927.

107. Harry Simonhoff, *Jewish Notables in America, 1776–1865: Links of an Endless Chain* (New York: Greenberg, 1956), 297–300; Woodward, *Mary Chesnut*, 11.

108. Edwin DeLeon, *Thirty Years of My Life on Three Continents* (London: Ward and Downey, 1890), 1:13.

109. William L. King, *The Newspaper Press of Charleston, S.C.* (Charleston, 1872), 159–61.

110. Avery, *History of Georgia*, 115.

111. Greenberg, “Savannah Jews,” 238; *Journal of the Public and Secret Proceedings of the Convention of the People of Georgia* (Milledgeville, Ga., 1861), Georgia Historical Society, Savannah.

112. Some sources claim that Hyams presided over the Louisiana Secession Convention, but this is erroneous. *Louisiana History* 2 (winter 1961): 7–105 (*Journal*

of the Convention); *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, March 26, 1861; John D. Winters, *The Civil War in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1963), 9.

113. Bernard Lemann Diary, Lemann Family Papers, Tulane Special Collections, TU; Ashkenazi, *Business of Jews*, 31–38, 42–43.

114. Thus, while one can barely find a single opponent of the war among Charleston, Savannah, or Richmond Jewry, there was identifiable opposition to secession in New Orleans. Clara Solomon, for example, was highly critical of one immigrant: "Mr. E. [Elburger] is a very intelligent, well informed man, full of information. He expressed *strong* union sentiments. He said that Lincoln was *our* President, and if not we then were 'Rebels,' thus endorsing Lincoln's words. His interests are with the North, and had better be guarded in his speech." (75)

These sentiments were more likely to be expressed by the most recent German and Polish immigrants.

115. Ralph A. Wooster, *The Secession Conventions of the South* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1962), 101.

116. John Frederick Nau, *The German People of New Orleans, 1850–1900* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1958), 38.

117. Weil's views were not shared by his brother Henry, who took a more moderate view. Henry did not even enlist in the Home Guard, although he did purchase Confederate bonds, an investment Jake thought unwise. His friends Lehmann and Durr also felt that Jake was unwise to involve himself in the controversy. (Jake Weil to Josiah Weil, May 16, 1861, Jake Weil Papers, Alabama Dept. of Archives & History, Montgomery, Ala., copy in possession of author, courtesy of Bert Fischel, and at Touro Infirmary Archive, courtesy of Catherine Kahn.) A second copy in the author's possession states as follows: "This is a copy of a letter made by the Father of Peter Weil (a student at the University of Texas) from an original in private hands in Montgomery, Alabama, and loaned to Dr. Barnes F. Lathrop, December 1, 1961." This copy is at the LBJ Library, University of Texas, according to Bert Fischel. Maurice Kahn Weil of Shreveport has the original, according to Catherine Kahn.

118. Berman, *Richmond's Jewry*, 177–78.

119. Ibid., 172–74; Stanley L. Falk, "Divided Loyalties in 1861: The Decision of Major Alfred Mordecai," *PAJHS* 48:3 (March 1959), 168.

120. Phoebe Yates Pember, *A Southern Woman's Story: Life in Confederate Richmond*, ed. Bell Irvin Wiley (Jackson, Tenn.: McCowat-Mercer Press, 1959; reprint, Wilmington, N.C.: Broadfoot Publishing Co., 1991), 24; Phillips-Meyers Papers, Philip Phillips Diary, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 38; Jacob Rader Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:151.

121. Rosen, *Confederate Charleston* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), chap. 4; I. Valentine obituary, *Charleston Daily Courier*, June 21, 1862; Young, *Where They Lie*, 1–2, 41; Hagy, *This Happy Land*, 200–201; Samuel Wylie Crawford, *The Genesis of the Civil War: The Story of Sumter, 1860–1861* (New York, 1887), 429. Lieutenant Valentine's report is in OR, ser. 1, 1:53; Elzas, *Jews of South Carolina*, 236. Col. Roswell S. Ripley also cited Valentine for his prompt and energetic performance of duties. (OR ser. 1, 1:30–53; see page 39, "Operations Charleston Harbor"). Gen. Samuel W. Crawford, an eyewitness, described the enfilade battery in *The History of Fort Sumter*, published after the war. "Taking the most important battery upon the parapet reverse, its guns were so actively worked, and at such short intervals of fire, that six hundred and eleven shots were fired from it alone. 'The object of our firing,' said the officer who immediately commanded it, Lieutenant Jacob Valentine, in his official report, 'was to sweep the crest of the parapet, the roofs of the quarters within Fort Sumter, to dismount the barbette guns, if practicable, and to drive the enemy from the parapet.' The latter object was accomplished." Crawford, *The Genesis of the Civil War*, 429; Young, *Where They Lie*, 1-2. Lieutenant Valentine's report is in OR, chap. 1, 53; Elzas, *Jews of South Carolina*, 236. Beauregard agreed that Valentine's battery had been effective and prevented the use of the Sumter's barbette guns. In his official report of April 27, 1861, the general praised his men and mentioned, "in the highest terms of praise," two captains and the eight commanders of batteries of Sullivan's Island, including Lieutenants Wagner, Rhett, Yates, and Valentine.

122. Crawford, *Genesis*, 434; OR, ser. 1, vol. 1, 31, 53–54.

123. OR, ser. 1, vol. 1, 32, 34; Elzas, *Jews of South Carolina*, 205; Dorothy Bultman, *The Story of a Good Life* (Sumter, S.C, 1963).

124. On Sunday afternoon, after Governor Pickens, General Beauregard, and their staffs had started from Sullivan's Island to take possession of Fort Sumter, they were told that a fire had broken out. Their boat returned to Sullivan's Island and took two fire engines on board. Later that day, more equipment was sent to the fort "in charge of our very efficient chief, M. H. Nathan, Esq.," the local press reported. ("The Battle of Fort Sumter and First Victory of the Southern Troops," pamphlet, 1861 [1961 reprint], 24.)

The local press also reported that the first Palmetto flag was raised over Fort Sumter by Colonels Franklin J. Moses Jr. and J. L. Dearing of Governor Pickens's staff (pamphlet, 27). Although he was raised as a Jew and never converted to Christianity, young Moses's father, Franklin J. Moses Sr., married a Christian and raised his son in the Protestant faith. Franklin Jr. was born and raised in Sumter, studied at South Carolina College, and began his career as the Civil War began, as private secretary to Gov. Francis W. Pickens. He was fervent for secession (*DAB*, 112). His service during the war was varied. He was private secretary and/or the aide to the governor, but was terminated by the Executive Council because he was unable to perform satisfactorily (Charles E. Cauthen, ed., *Journals of the South Carolina Executive Councils of 1861 and 1862* [Columbia: S.C. Archives Dept., 1956], passim; John B. Edmunds, Jr., *Francis W. Pickens and the Politics of Destruction* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986], 166, 168, 220n. 26; Woodward, *Mary Chesnut*, 406). He served at Fort Moultrie and at Battery Gregg on Morris Island as second lieutenant in Company F, 1st Regiment of South Carolina Regulars, which served as an artillery unit. He was absent from his unit for extended periods of time because of illnesses, and he apparently ended the war as a colonel, serving as "an enrolling officer" pursuant to the Conscription Act. He was almost certainly under fire on Morris Island, as the records show him reporting in August 1863 "with special instructions to receive and forward ordnance stores" and, by September, he was "mounting the Dahlgren gun at Gregg" (OR, ser. 1, vol. 28, pt. 1, 468–69, 479–80, "Operations on Morris Island").

After the war, Franklin J. Moses Jr., whose father had been a respected member of the prewar general assembly, turned his back on his community and became a Radical Republican, a scalawag, and, in 1872, governor of South Carolina. Known to American history as "the Robber Governor," he was, according to R. H. Woody, "the most perfect scalawag, perhaps in all the South" (R. H. Woody, "Franklin J. Moses, Jr.: Scalawag Governor of South Carolina, 1872–74," *North Carolina Historical Review* [April 1933]: 111). The Jews of South Carolina were so mortified by Moses that the Moseses of Sumter changed their names to Harby and Moses's wife resumed her maiden name, Richardson, and renamed their children Richardson (Herbert A. Moses, "Pertaining to the Moses Family" ["The less said of him the better. He was dishonest, dishonorable, and dissolute"]); interview, Belinda Gergel, Columbia, August 1999).

125. Henry Steele Commager, *The Blue and the Gray* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1950), 1:607. See Cauthen, *South Carolina Goes to War, 1860–1865*, chap. 5, for a full treatment of the reasons South Carolina seceded.

126. Wooster, *The Secession Conventions of the South*, 131. For the relationship between secession and slavery, see McPherson, *Battle Cry*, 242, 255, 283–84.

127. Winters, *The Civil War in Louisiana*, 8.

128. Letter of Solomon Cohen to "My Dear Aunt," transcription courtesy of Louis Schmier, Valdosta, Georgia; copy in the possession of the author.

129. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:308–9; see James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), for the motivation of Civil War soldiers, especially 108–10, 309.

130. April 17, 1864, letter, Simon Mayer Papers, Box 1, TU; see chapter 7, note 48, below, for the details of Mayer's military service. He became a lieutenant late in the war.

131. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, chap. 1

132. *Charleston Mercury* obituary, June 19, 1862, 1; *Charleston Daily Courier* obituary, in Young's *Where They Lie*, 39–40.

133. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 23; Young, *Where They Lie*, 39.

134. Letter dated July 8, 1863, addressed to "Dear Brother Isaac and Sister Amelia" (Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Meinnart) in Richmond from Philip Rosenheim, AJA.

135. Turitz and Turitz, *Jews in Early Mississippi*, xvii.

136. Typewritten autobiography of Sir Moses Ezekiel, 75–76, BA. See also Joseph Gutman and Stanley F. Chyet, eds., *Moses Jacob Ezekiel: Memoirs from the Baths of Diocletian* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1975); *VMI Alumni Review* (Spring 1973): 1; Stanley F. Chyet, "Moses Jacob Ezekiel: A Childhood in Richmond," *PAJHS* 62 (1973): 286–94.

137. *VMI Alumni Review* (Spring 1973): 1.

138. Berman, *Richmond's Jewry*, 194–95.

139. J. Gottlieb to Mr. J. Abeles, Philadelphia, June 12, 1861, Personal Papers, Confederate Miscellany, Acc. 22812, VSL (Gottlieb may be listed in the *Roster* as Isaac Gottlieb, a corporal in Company H, 14th Mississippi).

140. Autobiography of Moses Ezekiel, BA.

141. Woodward, *Mary Chesnut*, 350.

142. Pember, *A Southern Woman's Story*, 24.

143. Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *History of the Jews of Richmond*, 186; Schmier, *Reflections of Southern Jewry*, 4–7.

144. Helen Kohn Hennig, *August Kohn: Versatile South Carolinian* (Columbia: Vogue Press, 1949), 9–10. Philip Kohn evidently had strong pro-Union views: "If I think about the fact that your eager demagogues, parsons, hussies and wenches neglect nothing to make you inexperienced boys afraid for their failure, then I can only regret that I have a son among them" (10); William Valmore Izlar, *A Sketch of the War Record of the Edisto Rifles, 1861–1865* (Columbia: The State Co., 1914; reprint, Camden, S.C.: J. J. Fox, 1990), 53.

145. Gary W. Gallagher, *The Confederate War*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 28.

146. Bernard M. Baruch, *My Own Story* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1957), 5.

147. Lewis Leon, *The Diary of a Tar Heel Confederate Soldier* (Charlotte: Stone Publishing Co., 1913), 1; Schappes, *Documentary History*, 481. *The Diary of a Tar Heel Confederate Soldier* was kept during the war, or, at least according to Lt. Col. James T. Morehead, "kept by [Leon] from the organization of the regiment [which was a year after the war commenced] up to May 1864, when he was captured." It was published when Leon was seventy-two years old and still an unreconstructed Confederate. There is additional information on Lewis Leon in J. R. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:197, and Schappes, *Documentary History*, 481, 707–8. My research assistant, Lt. Col. James A. Gabel, an experienced Civil War researcher, writes of Leon's book, "I must say that his little volume is one of the best accounts of life in the ranks I have read." I have also utilized Lewis and Morris Leon's service records at the National Archives. Men were paid a fifty-dollar bounty to join the army. See Albert B. Moore, *Conscription and Conflict in the Confederacy* (New York: Hillary House Publishers, 1963), 7, 14, 308.

148. Schmier, "Reflections of Southern Jewry," 11. The spelling of Wessolowsky obviously created transcription problems. An A. H. Wessalowsky is shown in 1st Georgia (Ramsey's) Company E as well as an A. H. Wessolowsky in Company E, 32d Georgia. There is an A. B. Wessalowsky in Companies E and G, 32d Georgia. Asa Wessolowsky, then, likely joined the 1st Georgia (Ramsey's) in March 1861, served at Pensacola, then went to (West) Virginia before being mustered out in Augusta, Georgia, in March 1862, just in time to reenlist in the 57th/32d Georgia in May 1862.

149. Gerald Sorin, *A Time for Building: The Third Migration, 1880–1920*, vol. 3 of *The Jewish People in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 49–50, as to Castle Garden; Schappes, *Documentary History*, 495–96, 86; Hermann, *Memoirs*, 192–93. Isaac Hermann's *Memoirs of a Veteran Who Served as a Private in the 60s in the War Between the States* is full of braggadocio, boasting, and outlandish and blatantly untrue tales. There is no way to prove or disprove many of these stories written nearly fifty years after the war. "After reading Isaac Hermann's *Memoirs of a Veteran*," James Gabel wrote, "I came away with the impression that he was the Forrest Gump of the War Between the States, but with a really bad attitude. He was everywhere, and despite the fact that he was a lowly private, he was frequently in the company of the colonels and generals who often relied on his advice and counsel." *Civil War Books: A Critical Bibliography*, volume 1, notes that "much of the material is of questionable accuracy." Jacob Rader Marcus wrote more generously in *Memoirs of American Jews:* "Were only half of the adventures which Isaac Hermann [1838–1917] relates true—and there is no reason to discount his narrative—then he was indeed a hard-bitten Confederate soldier." Marcus, in a rare lapse of judgment, let his sympathies get the better of him. Harry Simonhoff in *Jewish Participants in the Civil War* (New York: Arco Publishing Co., 1963) is equally forgiving: "Cautious readers may suspect that some of the adventures might have been exaggerated, yet they cannot be dismissed merely as tall tales." Bell I. Wiley in *The Life of Johnny Reb* warns that memoirs must be used with great care "on account of the caprices of recollection, particularly its tendency to minimize weaknesses and to magnify virtues." He categorizes Hermann's memoirs with those "surcharged with romanticism." The story of Hermann's meeting with Judah Benjamin, for example, is not credible, not to mention all of Hermann's brushes with military justice and his close personal relationships with generals and colonels; his military records do not corroborate his memoirs. Unlike Rabbi Marcus, I think there is good reason to discount much of the memoir and, unlike Simonhoff, I think there are many tall tales. Nevertheless, it is known that Hermann did serve in the Washington Rifles (Company E, 1st [Ramsey's] Georgia) and Martin's Light Artillery Company, and much of the essentials of his military career is corroborated by his military records at the National Archives. There is additional information on Hermann in Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:236, and Schappes, *Documentary History*, 495–96, 712–13.

150. Jaher, *Scapegoat*, passim, especially 3–4, 117–18, 135–36; *Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*, s.v. "Wandering Jew," 718. Many German Jews welcomed World War I, Klaus Fischer wrote in *The History of an Obsession*, "for the same reasons as their fellow Germans, but perhaps especially because it provided them with the opportunity to prove convincingly that, by laying their lives on the line for Germany, they were loyal German citizens" (120). "All Jews," one German Jewish group stated during World War I, "must do their duty, but the German Jews must do more than their duty" (120). Fischer points out that German Jews sacrificed more in World War I than

other Germans. One hundred thousand Jews served in the army; two thousand became officers; twelve thousand were killed (120). The same was true for the Jews of Alsace-Lorraine, who were "more French than the French" (Vicki Caron, *Between France and Germany: The Jews of Alsace and Lorraine 1871–1918* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1988), 192.

151. Letter dated April 17, 1864 to "My dear Parents, Bros. & Sisters," Simon Mayer Papers, Box 1, TU.

152. Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *History of the Jews of Richmond*, 183.

153. Philip Whitelock, MS, autobiography, Virginia Historical Society, 92.

154. Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *History of the Jews of Richmond*, 183, 16, 175.

155. Jonathon D. Sarna, "American Jewish Political Conservatism in Historical Perspective," *AJH* 87 (June and September 1999), 113–22.

156. Bertram W. Korn, introduction to "The Jews of the Confederacy," *AJA* 13, no. 1, "Civil War Centennial Southern Issue" (April 1961): 4. Korn felt that the old Jewish families of the South, both in cities and small towns, "achieved a more genuinely integrated status with their neighbors than has seemed possible in any other part of the United States then or now" (4–5).

CHAPTER 2

1. Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 4; Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 4–5.

2. Benjamin Kaplan, “Judah Philip Benjamin,” in Dinnerstein and Palsson, eds., *Jews in the South*, 76; Butler, *Judah Benjamin*, 24.

3. Butler, *Judah Benjamin*, 22–24; Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 5; Burton J. Hendrick, *Statesmen of the Lost Cause* (New York: Literary Guild, 1939), 169; Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 11; Ernest B. Kruttschnitt, Benjamin’s nephew, to Pierce Butler, November 3, 1905, Manuscript Department, TU; draft of a letter dated August 13, 1897, from Kruttschnitt to F. C. Lawley TU. Remarkably, Malcolm Stern’s genealogy is incorrect.

4. Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 11–14; Richard S. Tedlow, “Judah Benjamin,” in *“Turn to the South,” Essays on Southern Jewry*, edited by Nathan M. Kaganoff and Melvin I. Urofsky (Charlottesville: AJHS, University Press of Virginia, 1979), 64–65.

5. Leon Hühner, “David L. Yulee, Florida’s First Senator,” *PAJHS* 25 (1917), 1–29, 18; 18; Joseph Gary Adler, “The Public Career of Senator David Levy Yulee” (Ph.D. diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1973), 2.

6. George R. Fairbanks, “Moses Elias Levy Yulee,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 18, no. 3 (January 1940): 165–67; Arthur W. Thompson, “David Yulee: A Study of Nineteenth Century American Thought and Enterprise” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1954), 4; Mills B. Lord, “David Levy Yulee: Statesman and Railroad Builder” (master’s thesis, University of Florida, 1940), 1–3. In another version, he was quartered alive and burned, and, in a third version, he was imprisoned. See Heller, “Yulee,” 2–4. The vizier’s name was Jacob Attal or Attar but was given the name Yulee, which may have been an honorary title or official name of some kind. In one version of the facts, the family had always been known as Yulee. In another version, the vizier’s widow used her own maiden name, Levy. In 1846 Moses Levy wrote a Florida newspaper, “sirnames [*sic*] are little thought of by orientals;… a Levite with the Jews is called but Levy.” See Thompson, “David Yulee,” 4–5. It may well be that the entire story is fictional. In the Bible, Joseph was freed from prison and made vizier, second in command of all Egypt (see Cahill, *The Gift of the Jews*, 96–97); this story may be the origin of the Yulee tale. Chris Monaco clarifies the facts in “Moses E. Levy of Florida: A Jewish Abolitionist Abroad,” *AJH* 86, no. 4 (December 1998): 377–96. He cites Norman A. Stillman and Yedida K. Stillman, “The Jewish Courtier Class in Late Eighteenth Century Morocco as Seen Through the Eyes of Samuel Romanelli,” in *Essays in Honor of Bernard Lewis: The Islamic World from Classical to Modern*

Times (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989), 845–51, and other sources to show that Eliahu Levy was "an influential Jewish courtier of Sultan Sidi Muhammad (1757–90)." See 382n. 27.

7. Adler, "Public Career," 158; Thompson, "David Yulee," 5. David Yulee's mother, Hannah Abendanone, was also Sephardic, a member of the large St. Thomas Jewish community. In addition to their son David, the couple had three other children, Elias, Rahma, and Rachel. Yulee's parents separated in 1815 and divorced in 1818. (This required the approval of the king of Denmark, as St. Thomas was then a Danish colony.) The children stayed with their mother on St. Thomas. The sons eventually were sent to schools in North America; the daughters stayed and married. In 1816 Moses Levy moved to Havana, where he secured military contracts, and it was there that he became interested in settling in Florida. See Thompson, "David Yulee," 5.

8. Leon Hühner, "Moses Elias Levy: An Early Florida Pioneer and the Father of Florida's First Senator," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (April 1941). Moses Elias Levy was also an author and speaker on religious subjects and controversies, and the friend of prominent Jews in America, Europe, and the Caribbean. Fairbanks, in a sketch written in 1901, recalled that "His whole name was Moses Elias Levy Yulee. Moses designated his personal name, Elias a race name, Levy his tribal name and Yulee his father's name." Because this name was too cumbersome for business, he shortened it. See note 6 above.

9. Joseph Gary Adler, "Moses Elias Levy and Attempts to Colonize Florida," in *Jews of the South: Selected Essays from the Southern Jewish Historical Society*, edited by Samuel Proctor and Louis Schmier, with Malcolm Stern (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1984), 21. Moses Levy became a member of the Kariate sect, which rejected the Talmud but believed the literal interpretation of the Scriptures. Mrs. Levy remarried and lived in St. Thomas. In her later years she was forced to rely on financial assistance from her two sons, who supplemented the support she received from her former husband. The two daughters married Sephardic Jewish husbands and continued to live on St. Thomas. Adler, "Moses Elias Levy," 4; Thompson, "David Yulee," 226.

10. Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 31–33.

11. Louis Gruss, "Judah Philip Benjamin," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (October 1936): 988; Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 43–45.

12. Charles Curran, "The Three Lives of Judah Benjamin," *History Today* 17, no. 9 (September 1967): 583–85; Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 34–36.

13. Gruss, "Judah Philip Benjamin," 987; Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 47–48.

14. Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 28–29.

15. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:306.

16. Butler, *Judah Benjamin*, 44–47.

17. Butler, *Judah Benjamin*, 47; Bertram W. Korn, “Judah Benjamin as a Jew,” *PAJHS* 38 (September 1948): 153–71, quote at 168, emphasis in original.

18. Butler, *Judah Benjamin*, 99.

19. Thompson, “David Yulee,” 7–8; Hühner, “Florida’s First Senator,” 8.

20. Thompson, “David Yulee,” 17–25; Lord, “Yulee,” 121. Yulee had a talent for making enemies, and his enemies pursued him with unusual zeal. When he was first elected to the constitutional convention, his foes raised the issue of his citizenship, a problem that haunted him throughout his early political career. He was challenged again upon his election as territorial delegate, and extensive hearings were held on the matter. At issue was the citizenship of Moses Levy on July 17, 1821. Although he was onboard a ship in sight of land off the Florida coast at the time (the date set for the exchange of Florida to the United States, on which date all residents were declared U.S. citizens), Moses Levy was not actually on land and residing in Florida. Because Moses Levy was not legally a citizen, his children, then minors, were not citizens either. A strict interpretation of the law would leave Yulee a noncitizen. The spirit of the law prevailed, however, and Yulee was seated.

It appears from the congressional record that although Yulee’s father cooperated and supplied necessary testimony, he was completely estranged from both of his sons. The reason apparently was David’s and his brother’s rejection of the Jewish faith, or at least his father’s peculiar version of it. This is the explanation given by Yulee’s daughter, Florida Yulee Neff. It may have been due also to the father’s unorthodox ideas about life in general, what his son called “the peculiar character of his opinions.” Thompson, “David Yulee,” 223–26.

21. Thompson, “David Yulee,” 220–21. Moses Levy lived to see his son elected to high office. It is ironic that David Levy Yulee, the first person of Jewish ancestry elected to the U.S. Senate, did not acknowledge his Judaism, and yet was raised in a traditional Jewish family by an observant Jewish father whose goal was to provide a homeland for Jews in Florida, the state which sent Yulee to the Senate. Clearly, Yulee’s marriage to a non-Jew was fatal to the relationship between father and son. Moses Levy wrote, “Every Jew who contributes knowingly to the … amalgamation of the House of Israel is an enemy to his nation, to his religion, and consequently, to the world at large.” Quoted

in Monaco, “Moses E. Levy,” 12; Jacob Toury, “M. E. Levy’s Plan for a Jewish Colony in Florida—1825,” in *Michael: On the History of the Jews in the Diaspora*, edited by Lloyd Gartner (Ramat-Aviv, Tel Aviv: ha-Universitah ha-petuhah, 1975), 23.

22. C. F. Adams, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, 10:304, 483; 11:62, 155, 162, 294, 500–2; Jaher, *Scapegoat*, 190; Hühner, “Florida’s First Senator,” 14–17; Thompson, “David Yulee,” 40. In Leon Hühner’s view, Yulee’s “most important work … on which his whole heart and soul centered, was that of obtaining the admission of Florida into the Union.” Another historian, Joseph G. Adler, calls him the “architect of Florida Statehood.” Arthur Thompson, a professor of history at the University of Florida, agrees, stating that Yulee was one of Florida’s two major leaders from the 1840s to 1861 and that Yulee spearheaded the drive for the admission of Florida to the Union. Thompson, “David Yulee,” 17, 28, 749; Adler, “Public Career,” 20.

23. Hühner, “Florida’s First Senator,” 19; Adler, “Public Career,” 38–39; Thompson, “David Yulee,” 605n. 21.

24. Adler, “Public Career,” 38–39; Thompson, “David Yulee,” 749.

25. Adler, “Public Career,” 38, 39; Lord, “Yulee,” 121–22.

26. C. Wickliffe Yulee, “Senator David L. Yulee,” *Florida Historical Society Quarterly* 2, no. 1 (April 1909): 35–36; 2, no. 2 (July 1909): 3–22; Adler, “Public Career,” 87. See, for example, Clyde N. Wilson, ed., *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*, vol. 20, 1844 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), 15–16, 48, 56.

27. Dorothy Dodd, “The Secession Movement in Florida, 1850–1861,” pt. 1, *Florida Historical Society Quarterly* 12, no. 1 (July 1933): 4; Proctor and Schmier, *Jews of the South*, 163–64; Adler, “Yulee,” 63–64.

28. Hühner, “Florida’s First Senator,” 22; Dodd, “Secession,” 6, 10; Adler, “Public Career,” 67.

29. Thompson, “David Yulee,” 73; Robert L. Clarke, “The Florida Railroad Company in the Civil War,” *Journal of Southern History* 19, no. 2 (May 1953): 180–92. (“More than a decade before the Civil War,” Clarke wrote, “Senator David L. Yulee of Florida had envisioned a railroad that would cross the state from a point on the Atlantic just north of Jacksonville to Cedar Keys on the Gulf of Mexico. His plan was to provide a short land route that would eliminate the tricky passage through the Florida Keys and tap the lucrative trade between New Orleans and New York.”) For an excellent discussion of the Whig and Democratic Party rivalry in this period, see Michael F. Holt,

The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), chap. 16 (Yulee's defeat at 564).

30. Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 84–85; Jacob R. Marcus, "Jew Who Refused Supreme Court Seat," *Jewish Advocate*, January 13, 1972 (also at AJA in typescript).

31. Gruss, "Judah Philip Benjamin," 1003, 1018–28. By Southern lights, Sumner deserved the beating because in a speech on the Senate floor he, in effect, called the older, courteous, and popular senator Andrew P. Butler of South Carolina a liar. The speech was tasteless, deplorable, and "pure rant." See Allan Nevins, *Ordeal of the Union: A House Dividing 1852–1857* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1947), 437–44.

32. Butler, *Judah Benjamin*, 62.

33. Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 96.

34. Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 93.

35. Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 100–104.

36. Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 96–97.

37. Adler, "Public Career," 119–20, 161.

38. Robert W. Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 721; Thompson, "David Yulee," 121; Adler, "Public Career," 121, 129–32

39. Yulee, "Senator David L. Yulee," 1:38; Thompson, "David Yulee," 481.

40. Dorothy Dodd, "The Secession Movement in Florida, 1850–1861," pt. 2, *Florida Historical Society Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (October 1933): 45–66, at 52–53, 64; Hühner, "Florida's First Senator," 23–24.

41. Hühner, "Florida's First Senator," 25–26.

42. Adler, "Public Career," 149.

43. Ibid., 151, 154–55.

44. Ibid., 155–57; OR 52:15.

45. Adler, "Public Career," 113; Clarke, "Railroad Company," 182; Bertram Korn Collection, no. 99, folder 34, p. 8, AJA. (The undated clipping is from a Jewish

periodical, which quotes the *New York Times* in an article entitled "Attacks on the Jewish Name."). The *New York Times* article appeared on the front page of the "Supplement to the New York Times" on Saturday, March 15, 1862. It is the last paragraph in an article entitled "From the Southern Coast."

46. Dorothy Dodd, "The Secession Movement in Florida, 1850–1861," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 12, no. 1, pt. 1 (July 1933), and 12, no. 1, pt. 2 (October 1933), 53; Adler, "Public Career," 165.

47. Butler, *Judah Benjamin*, 193.

48. Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 139.

49. Ibid., 145.

50. S. I. Neiman, *Judah Benjamin: Mystery Man of the Confederacy* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1963), 101; Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 153.

51. Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 159–60; Butler, *Judah Benjamin*, 226–28.

52. See note 102, chap. 1; Thomas Cooper DeLeon, *Belles, Beaux, and Brains of the '60s* (New York, 1909), 91–93.

53. Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 110–11; Hans L. Trefousse, *Andrew Johnson*, 414n. 22; Johnson quoted in *Charles Francis Adams, 1835–1915: An Autobiography* (1916; reprint, New York, Russell and Russell, 1968), 94; Jaher, *Scapegoat*, 190–91.

54. Neiman, *Judah Benjamin*, 88.

55. Butler, *Judah Benjamin*, 231; William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South* (Boston, 1863), 175.

56. Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 161.

57. Butler, *Judah Benjamin*, 234.

58. DeLeon, *Belles, Beaux, and Brains*, 91–93; Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 175.

59. Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 177–79; *DAB*.

60. Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 179–81; Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 134.

61. Neiman, *Judah Benjamin*, 124–33; Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 185–207.

62. Butler, *Judah Benjamin*, 232–53; Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 219–27.

63. Neiman, *Judah Benjamin*, 131, 134; Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 220–37.

64. Tedlow, “Benjamin,” 46; Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 147–49.

65. Neiman, *Judah Benjamin*, 145–46; Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 235; George C. Rable, *The Confederate Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 130.

66. Thompson, “David Yulee,” 558; Yulee, “Senator David L. Yulee,” 2:4.

67. Yulee, “Senator David L. Yulee,” 1:38; Mrs. Clement C. Clay Jr. (Virginia Clay-Compton), *A Belle of the Fifties* (New York: Doubleday, 1904), 202. The records of the Washington (Georgia) Rifles show no Elias Yulee. There is an Elias Yulee, captain and commissary, and a Lt. E. Levy, an ordnance officer in Lee’s Corps, either of which could be Yulee’s brother.

68. Robert C. Black III, *The Railroads of the Confederacy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1952), 209; Thompson, “David Yulee,” 560.

69. Black, *Railroads*, 37, 200.

70. Thompson, “David Yulee,” 519, 526; Lord, “Yulee,” 150.

71. Thompson, “David Yulee,” 150–53; 525–58; OR I, 6:292–93.

72. Thompson, “David Yulee,” 525–28; OR I, 53:214; Lord, “Yulee,” 150.

73. Thompson, “David Yulee,” 153–56, 533, 556; ORN I, 12:573–76; Lord, ‘Yulee,” 151.

74. A. J. Hanna, *Flight into Oblivion* (Richmond, Va.: Johnson Publishing Co., 1938), 194.

75. Gruss, “Judah Philip Benjamin,” 1046; Butler, *Judah Benjamin*, 332; Robert Selph Henry, *The Story of the Confederacy* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1931), 85, 87.

76. Roland, *The Confederacy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 83, 111.

77. Neiman, *Judah Benjamin*, 112; Butier, *Judah Benjamin*, 332.

78. Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 261.

79. Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 175–97; Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 253–69.

80. Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 196–97.

81. Ibid., 196–97; *Statesmen of the Lost Cause*, 222–23; Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 253–69.

82. Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 197.

83. Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 258–59; Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 156, 196.

84. Roy Z. Chamlee Jr., *Lincoln's Assassins: A Complete Account of Their Capture, Trial, and Punishment* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 1990), 401.

85. Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 297–305. For more on Henry J. Leovy, see p. 412, n. 195 below; Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 193.

86. Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 301–4; William A. Tidwell, *Come Retribution: The Confederate Secret Service and the Assassination of Lincoln* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1988), chap. 8; Tidwell, *April '65: Confederate Covert Action in the American Civil War* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1995), 127–9.

87. *Yulee v. Canova*, 11 Florida 9; *Florida Reports*, xi, 11–17.

88. Thompson, "David Yulee," 154–55.

89. Black, *Railroads*, 137, 209; Clarke, "Railroad Company," 182–84.

90. Black, *Railroads*, 208, 210; Thompson, "David Yulee," 546 (quote is incorrect in Black).

91. Black *Railroads*, 211–12, 190; Clarke, "Railroad Company," 189–91.

92. Black *Railroads*, 201; Yulee, "Senator David L. Yulee," 2:7–8; Thompson, "David Yulee," 64.

93. Yulee, "Senator David L. Yulee," 2:7–9; Thompson, "David Yulee," 164.

94. Joseph G. Adler, "The Public Career of Senator David Levy Yulee," 171.

95. Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 279–80.

96. Ibid., 282.

97. Ibid., 284–85; Meade *Judah P. Benjamin*, 307.

98. Chamlee, *Lincoln's Assassins*, 403, 532; William Hanchett, *The Lincoln Murder Conspiracies* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 52; Tidwell, *Come Retribution*, 419, 430, and passim; Tidwell, *April '65*, chap. 5; Chamlee, *Lincoln's Assassins*, 403 ("the evidence linking the Confederate leaders to the kidnap plot is undeniable").

CHAPTER 3

1. Letter dated April 17, 1864, to “My Dear Parents, Bros. & Sisters,” TU, Simon Mayer Papers, Family Papers, #815, Box 1; CSR, Simon Mayer. Mayer served officially as a private for most of the war. He served as a clerk in the assistant adjutant general’s office in Chalmers’s brigade and became acting assistant adjutant general of Sharp’s Brigade by war’s end. He was promoted to first lieutenant, and his parole records show him as a first lieutenant in the Consolidated 9th Mississippi. Nevertheless, he may have been unofficially promoted to major in the field as befitted the position of division AAG, as Sharp’s Brigade was composed of the consolidated remnants of three brigades. Local histories refer to him as major, but this rank is not reflected in his CSR.

2. Berman, *Richmond’s Jewry*, 126.

3. Gallagher, *The Confederate War*, 96–111, 144.

4. Adolph’s grandfather, Mayer Ben Halevey Proskauer, was, according to family tradition, a professor at the University of Proskau. Prior to Napoleon’s edict that all Jews should have surnames (or “Christian names”), the professor’s name was Joseph Mayer Ben Halevey (Hah-LAY-vey). One day, so the family story goes, the professor stopped at a toll gate to talk to one of his fellow members of the goldsmith and silversmith guild, who called each other “brother” (Brudder). The keeper of the tollgate asked who the professor was, and, as he had failed to comply with the law requiring a surname, his fellow guild members said “almost in unison, that is brother Proskauer, because he was known for teaching at the University of Proskau. So the tollman wrote down, Joseph Mayer Proskauer.” (Jenny Proskauer Recollections, October 28, 1948, St. Louis, Mo., AJA, p. 2); see note 59, p. 406.

5. As to Triest, see note 131, p. 410; Baruch, see note 180, pp. 411–12; Kursheedt, see note 72, p. 407; Fischel, see Turitz and Turitz, *Jews in Early Mississippi*, 48–49.

6. Simonhoff, *Jewish Participants in the Civil War*, 193; Young, *Where They Lie*, passim; as to Hyams, see notes 226–235, pp. 413–14; E. J. Levy, notes 29–32, p. 403; Moise, note 86, p. 408; Valentine, note 2, ch. 1, p. 392; Yates Levy, notes 33–40, pp. 403–5; Luria, note 3, prologue, p. 380; n. 137, ch. 3, p. 410.

7. Jewish officers undoubtedly encountered some anti-Semitism. One Jewish officer, according to Bell I. Wiley, encountered so much resistance he could not effectively command the unit to which he was assigned. “Although there were many foreigners in

the Rebel Army," Wiley wrote, "prejudice against officers on the score of non-nativity was sometimes a factor in their unpopularity." The Jewish officer was a colonel, assigned command of a Texas regiment sent east to Richmond. The men began making remarks in his presence, "What?" said one. "What is it? Is it a man, a fish, or a bird?" "Of course it is a man," said another, "don't you see his legs?" The men opposed him on a daily basis, until he awoke to find his horse without his tail, when he gave up. See Bell I. Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb*, 236–37, citing Nicholas A. Davis, *The Campaign from Texas to Maryland with the Battle of Fredericksburg* (Richmond, 1863), 18–19. But there is very little evidence of anti-Semitism in the Confederate army, and this one example is atypical.

8. Robert K. Krick, *Lee's Colonels: A Biographical Register of the Field Officers of the Army of Northern Virginia* (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside House, 1992), introduction (14–18); Gary Gallagher, *Confederate War*, 98.

9. Karl H. Grismer, *The Story of Fort Myers: The History of the Land of the Caloosahatchee and Southwest Florida*. ([Fort Myers, Fla.]: Southwest Florida Historical Society, 1949; reprint, Fort Myers Beach, Fla.: Island Press Publishers, 1982, 60–61); Burke, "Quartermaster," 13–19; see note 90 below.

10. Grismer, *Fort Myers*, 60–61; *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War*, 767; Burke, "Quartermaster," 22 and 40.

11. Elzas, *Jews of South Carolina*, 207, 236; Wolf, *American Jews*, 380.

12. Krick, *Lee's Colonels*, 236.

13. Leonard G. Dauber, M.D., "David Camden DeLeon, M.D.: Patriot or Traitor," *New York State Journal of Medicine*, December 1, 1970 (2927–33), 2929; and *Twentieth Century Biographical Dictionary*.

14. Young, *Where They Lie*, 175–270.

15. CSR of Michael Levy (6th Arkansas, Company E, and M. Levy General & Staff, Lt. Ord. Off.; Roster of Company A, 6th Arkansas [J. H. Levy]).

16. Young, *Where They Lie*, 23, 214, 223.

17. CSR of Michael Levy. Gen. Braxton Bragg's chief of ordnance, Lt. Col. Hypolite Olandowski, wrote Maj. J. T. Champney, "Lieut. W. M. Levy [*sic*] is ordered to report to you for duty. I cannot say he is entirely posted in ordnance manual, but permit me to introduce him as an intelligent and energetic young officer, and I hope, with your

instructions and teachings he will be efficient." Presumably, Levy had served under Olandowski and was therefore a part of Bragg's staff. By September 1862 Levy was post ordnance officer. By December 1862 he was stationed in Bridgeport, Alabama, where he was an ordnance officer. He wrote Olandowski requesting an examination by a board so that he could be promoted to first lieutenant of artillery. He apparently had substantial responsibilities, as he sent carloads of ordnance to Brig. Gen. John Hunt Morgan and Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest. Levy remained at Bridgeport until March 1863 and was promoted to first lieutenant of artillery in September 1863. His salary was ninety dollars per month plus ten dollars in "hazardous duty pay." He was on detached duty with Brig. Gen. Gideon Pillow's Volunteer and Conscription Bureau from October to December 1863. (His military records end in December 1863, but his family referred to him as a captain after the war, so he may very well have been promoted to captain.) See *Confederate Veteran* 18, no. 6 (June 1910): 265, and his CSR.

18. All of these letters are contained in the CSR of Octavus Cohen.

19. June 10, 1862 letter from Octavus Cohen, Phillips-Myers Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

20. July 5, 1862 letter, Phillips-Myers Papers, UNC; CSR, O. Cohen.

21. CSR, O. Cohen; John Johnson, *The Defense of Charleston Harbor, including Fort Sumter and Adjacent Islands, 1863–1865* (Charleston, 1890), 256.

22. June 13, 1863 letter, Phillips-Myers Papers, UNC.

23. Letter dated July, 1863, Phillips-Myers Papers, UNC.

24. Wise, *Gate of Hell*, 93, 11, 115–16, 175.

25. Letter dated August, 1863, Phillips-Myers Papers, UNC.

26. Letter dated February 25, 1863, Phillips-Myers Papers, UNC; 545, *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War; The Atlas of the Civil War*, 147.

27. Phillips-Myers Papers, UNC; CSR of O. Cohen.

28. James I. Robertson Jr., *Tenting Tonight* (Alexandria, Va: Time-Life Books, 1984), 48.

29. John A. Cutchins, *A Famous Command: The Richmond Light Infantry Blues* (Richmond: Garrett & Massie, 1934), 130; CSR, E. J. Levy.

30. Isaac Levy, letter, AJA; CSR, E. J. Levy.

31. Cutchins, *A Famous Command*, chap. 19; CSR, E. J. Levy.

32. *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War*, 190; James M. Day, *Death in the Trenches* (Alexandria, Va: Time-Life Books, 1986), 75–78; CSR of E. J. Levy.

33. CSR, S. Y. Levy.

34. September 29, 1862, letter, Phillips-Myers Papers, UNC.

35. Ibid., 1–2.

36. Ibid., 4.

37. CSR, S. Y. Levy.

38. Levy to Jacob C. Levy, September 29, 1862, Phillips-Myers Papers, UNC; CSR, S. Y. Levy. Levy's eloquent Prayer for Peace is set forth below in its entirety:

A Prayer for Peace

Captain Samuel Yates Levy

Savannah, November 2, 1863

Almighty God! Eternal sire and king!

Ruler supreme who all things did'st create,

Whose everlasting praise the angels sing,

Whose word is mercy and whose thought is fate:

Trembling before thy awful throne we kneel,

Beseeching mercy at thy gracious hand,

Praying that in compassion thou wilt heal

The bleeding wounds of this most suffering land.

We know our sins are manifold, oh Lord,
And that thy wrath against us is but right,
For we have wandered wildly from thy word
And things committed wrongful in thy sight.
But thou, oh Lord, art powerful to save
And full of mercy, full of love art thou;
Else had we not the courage thus to brave
Thy righteous wrath — thus at thy feet to bow.
O’er all our fields, where late the joyful air
Struck rustling music from the waving grain,
Now the sad earth is lying stark and bare,
or groaning ‘neath the burden of our slain.
In sackcloth robed, disconsolate and wild,
With ashes strewed upon her lovely breast,
The Country mourns her hearths and homes defiled,
Weeps for her bravest and bewails her best.
From the cold hearths where lately genial fires
Beamed upon scenes of innocent delight,
The little children vainly call their sires
Or fly their burning homes with wild affright.
Our punishment is very hard to bear:
We droop and faint beneath thy chast’ning rod:

Oh list in mercy to our earnest prayer

And move thy anger from us, oh, our God.

Throw, Lord, thy buckler thick ‘twixt us and harm.

Bid the destruction and the carnage cease.

Outstretch in power thy all protecting arm,

Roll back the clouds of War and give us Peace.

And as thou led’st thy chosen people forth

From Egypt’s sullen wrath, oh King of Kings!

So smite the armies of the cruel North

And bear us to our hopes “on eagles’ wings.”

But should thy wisdom still defer the day —

The wish’d for day our freedom shall be won —

Oh grant us the humility to say,

Not human will but Thine, oh Lord, be done.

(*AJA*, 10, no. 2 [October 1950]: 133–34).

The allusion to “bear us to our hopes ‘on eagles’ wings’” is from Exodus 19:4–6 (“Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you unto Myself”).

39. *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War*, 115, 117.

40. Letter dated March 16, 1865, from Johnson’s Island, Phillips-Myers papers, UNC; CSR, S. Y. Levy.

41. Eric J. Brock, “An Exhaustive Study of Hebrew Rest Cemetery Number One, Shreveport, Louisiana,” 1992, HNOC; “The Jewish Cemeteries of Shreveport, Louisiana,” 1995; Maude Hearne O’Pry, *Chronicles of Shreveport and Caddo Parish*

(Shreveport: Journal Publishing Co., 1928), 166; as to Mrs. Grant: *Southwestern*, March 16, 1859.

42. Louisiana Ordinance of Secession and Minutes of Secession Convention (see note 112, ch. 1, p. 391); O'Pry, *Chronicles*, 169; W. N. King, "Journal of W. N. King: A Private Soldier in the La. Infantry," MS, Texas State Archives; *Shreveport (La.) Times*, September 24, 1863; *Confederate Veteran*, 29:357. The author wishes to thank Eric Brock of Shreveport for his kind assistance and his file on Colonel Marks.

43. Maj. Alexander Hart's military record is derived from his compiled service record, which is quite extensive; Hart Diary (July 6, 1864–May 7, 1865), AJA; Andrew B. Booth, *Records of Louisiana Confederate Soldiers and Louisiana Confederate Commands*, 3 vols. (New Orleans, 1920; reprinted Spartanburg, S.C.: Reprint Co., 1984), "Hart, Alexander," 210; Hart obituary in the *Norfolk Landmark*, September 22, 1911; Krick, *Lee's Colonels*, 159; *Confederate Veteran*, December 1911, 589; Arthur W. Bergeron Jr., *Guide to Louisiana Confederate Military Units, 1861–1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996), 82–84; Jones, *Lee's Tigers*, 128–31, 150–60, 214–17; Stephen W. Sears, *Landscape Turned Red: The Battle of Antietam* (New Haven: Ticknor & Fields, 1983; reprinted Norwalk, Conn.: Easton Press, 1988), 188–89; Jeffry D. Wert, *From Winchester to Cedar Creek: The Shenandoah Campaign of 1864* (Carlisle, Pa.: South Mountain Press, 1987; reprinted New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989), 47–101. Mel Young kindly provided the author with copies of Special Order No. 16 and Report dated January 25, 1864, relative to Hart's brief service in the Department of Henrico (the military prison unit in Richmond).

44. Jones, *Lee's Tigers*, 236–38.

45. Sears, *Landscape Turned Red*, 188; Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *History of the Jews of Richmond*, 157.

46. Hart Diary, August 1864, AJA.

47. Jones, *Lee's Tigers*, 216.

48. Hart Diary, November 12, 13, 1864, AJA.

49. Hart Diary, November 16–20, 1864, AJA; CSR, Hart.

50. This sketch of William Mallory Levy is based almost entirely on his compiled service record, the OR (ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 1, 420–21, "Report of Col. Wm. M. Levy, April 18, 1862"); and a few letters in the Levy Family Papers, 1840–1889, Box 2, MSS 408, Williams Research Center, Historic New Orleans Collection: April 23, 1862, and

July 5, 1862, to his wife. See also Gen. Richard Taylor's article "The Last Confederate Surrender," in *Southern Historical Society Papers* (1877) and his memoir, *Destruction and Reconstruction* (1879).

51. Levy to his wife, letter dated April 23, 1862, Levy Family Papers, 1840–1889, Box 2, MSS 408, Williams Research Center, HNOC.

52. Levy to his wife, July 5, 1862, HNOC.

53. Letter, June 12, 1862, in compiled service record of W. M. Levy.

54. Letter dated May 1, 1862, in CSR.

55. Letter dated July 5, 1862, in CSR.

56. *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War*.

57. Report of General Taylor, April 18, 1864 (Red River Campaign). OR I, 34, part I, 569–70.

58. Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction* (1879); Taylor described his surrender as "The Last Confederate Surrender" in an 1877 article in the *Southern Historical Society Papers:* "Accompanied by a staff officer, Colonel William M. Levy (now a member of Congress from Louisiana), and making use of a 'hand car' I reached the appointed spot, and found General Canby with a large escort."

59. There is very little written about Adolph Proskauer. His nephew Judge Joseph Proskauer wrote a brief account of his uncle's life in his memoir, *A Segment of My Times* (New York: Farrar, Straus, 1950). Adolph Proskauer's daughter Jenny Proskauer wrote an unreliable recollection in 1948, which is at the AJA. The chief source of this material is Robert Emory Park, *Sketch of the Twelfth Alabama Infantry of Battle's Brigade, Rodes Division, Early's Corps, of the Army of Northern Virginia* (Richmond: W. E. Jones, 1906), originally printed in *Southern Historical Society Papers* 33, pp. 193–296. This work is generally reliable and well written, but Park erred in his description of Proskauer at Gettysburg. Proskauer was neither wounded nor captured at Gettysburg. He was wounded three times, and each is referred to in Proskauer's compiled service record, which also includes a letter from Proskauer himself in 1865 stating that he had been wounded three times. The details of Proskauer's military career are derived from his compiled service record as well as the OR, where his name is misspelled "Proskaner." See ser. 1, vol. 25, pt. 1, 960 (Reports of Col. Samuel B. Pickens, 12th Alabama, May 5, 1863); ser. 1, vol. 36, pt. 1, 1083 (May 9, 1864); 1:27, 563; 1:25, 950–53 (Reports of Col. Edward A. O'Neal, May 12, 1863); 1:29, 891–92

(Reports of Maj. A. Proskaner, January 22, 1864). Also see Young, *Where They Lie*, 76, 78–79; Krick, *Lee's Colonels*, 266; Korn, *American Jewry*, 176; obituary of Adolph Proskauer, AJA (the AJA has an extensive file on Proskauer); Park, *Sketch*, 5.

60. Park, *Sketch*, 16–17.

61. Ibid., 31.

62. *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War*, 18.

63. Park, *Sketch*, 10.

64. Korn, *American Jewry*, 176.

65. Park, *Sketch*, 53–54; Champ Clark, *Gettysburg* (Alexandria, Va.: Time-Life, 1985), 53–54.

66. Park, *Sketch*, 54; Foote, *The Civil War: A Narrative* (New York: Random House, 1974) 2:488, 528.

67. Clark, *Gettysburg*, 127–28; *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War*, 196.

68. Park, *Sketch*, 55.

69. Park, *Sketch*, 62–69, CSR, Adolph Proskauer.

70. CSR, Adolph Proskauer.

71. Joseph H. Crute Jr., *Units of the Confederate Army*, 2d ed. (Gaithersburg, Md.: Olde Soldier Books, 1987), passim.

72. Edwin I. Kursheedt's career is described in his compiled service records, the OR (ser. 1, vol. 11, pt. 11, chap. 23, 925–26; chap. 63, 39–40, 222–24); William Miller Owen, *In Camp and Battle with the Washington Artillery of New Orleans* (Boston: Ticknor & Co., 1885), 17, 134–35, 180–191, 308–9, 314–17, 361; Napier Bartlett, *Military Record of Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, 1875; reprint, New Orleans: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 225–31 (Muster Roll of Washington Artillery); and Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *History of the Jews of Richmond*. Both the OR and the CSR erroneously refer to Kursheedt as E. J. Kurshudt or R. J. Kursheedt.

73. Ashkenazi, *Diary of Clara Solomon*, 86, 89; see muster roll of First Company in Napier Bartlett, *A Soldier's Story of the War; Including the Marches and Battles of*

the Washington Artillery and of Other Louisiana Troops (New Orleans, n.p., 1874), 228–29.

74. Ashkenazi, *Diary of Clara Solomon*, 79.

75. Report of Lt. Charles W. Squires, September 4, 1861, OR I, 151, 39–40, part 1, chap. 63, (Skirmish at Great Falls, Md.); CSR, E. J. Kursheedt.

76. April 27, 1862, letter, Edwin I. Kursheedt papers #2805Z, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

77. Undated letter, probably May 1862, to “Miss Sallie” (“Bivouac 1 mile from Lebanon Church”), Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

78. Letter to “My Dear Miss Sarah,” June 25, 1862, Kursheedt Papers, UNC.

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid.

81. Owen, *Washington Artillery*, 134–35.

82. Ibid., 189–91.

83. Eshleman may have been born a Jew, or he may have had Jewish ancestors. He was well known in the New Orleans Jewish community, and the name Eshleman is a German-Jewish name. He married Fanny H. Leverich, who also had a possible Jewish name. Elliot Ashkenazi, the editor of Clara Solomon’s diary, states that Eshleman was “one of several Jewish members of the Washington Artillery,” but Eshleman was a member of the Episcopal Church after the war and served on the vestry of Christ Church for twenty-seven years (*Diary of Clara Solomon*, 81n. 21); biography of Col. B. F. Eshleman in “Historical Military Data of Louisiana Militia, Washington Artillery, July-Dec. 1861,” Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University Collection. All genealogical research to date has failed to prove Eshleman was Jewish. Box 1 of the Craig, Fanny Leverich Eshleman Collection (#225) at Tulane’s Special Collection yielded a 1770 edition of *The Book of Common Prayer*. Fanny and her siblings were confirmed in the church in April 1861. Clara Solomon, however, generally wrote about Jews in her diary, and Eshleman’s initial romance was with a Jewish woman, Charlotte da Ponte or Brooks. Letter from Elliott Ashkenazi to Mel Young dated February 20, 1997. Kursheedt may have known Eshleman before the war, as the major asked the young sergeant to become his adjutant. “I am under especial obligations,” Eshleman reported after Gettysburg, “to Sergeant Major E. J. [*sic*] Kursheedt, who (having no

adjutant) acted as my aide. He was always at hand, frequently under the heaviest fire, performing his duty with coolness and efficiency.”

84. Owen, *Washington Artillery*, 314.

85. Korn, *American Jewry*, 90; letter, December 28, 1864, AJA; see Korn, note 105, 265.

86. This sketch of E. W. Moise is based primarily on *The Moise Family*, 75, 108–26, as well as his compiled service record. His records are cataloged under Company A, 7th Confederate Cavalry, and the 10th Georgia Cavalry.

87. William Frayne Amann, ed., *Personnel of the Civil War* (New York: Yoseloff, 1961), 100; Marcus Wright, *Local Designations of Confederate Troops* (1876).

88. *Supplement to OR, Record of Events*, vol. 5, *Georgia Troops (Confederate) Cavalry*, 553–54; Sifakis, *Compendium of the Confederate States Armies*, 170–71, 159; Crute, *Units of the Confederate States Army*, 70, 90; OR, 1:18 chap. 30, 142 (February 4, 1863); OR Navy, 1:9, 424–34 (February 2, 1864) (*Smith Briggs* incident); OR, 1:33 chap. 65, 103 (January 29-February 1, 1864); OR, 1:33, chap. 65, 273–74; Richard W. Lykes, “The Great Civil War Beef Raid,” *Civil War Times Illustrated* (February 1967): 4; OR, 1:36; 3:421 (May 1864); Mark L. Bradley, *Last Stand in the Carolinas: The Battle of Bentonville*, 92–104, 376–96; John G. Barrett, *Sherman’s March through the Carolinas* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1956), 204. While the family history shows Moise as a major, his compiled service record does not. He was never officially promoted to major, or if he was, the records do not reflect it.

89. “The Great Civil War Beef Raid,” 47.

90. The best source on Abraham C. Myers is Richard D. Goff, *Confederate Supply* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1969), an excellent scholarly work on the Confederate supply bureaus. Walter Burke Jr. has written a useful pamphlet entitled “Quartermaster: A Brief Account of the Life of Colonel Abraham Charles Myers, Quartermaster General C.S.A,” published in 1976. William C. Davis, *Breckinridge: Statesman, Soldier, Symbol* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974); Davis, *Jefferson Davis: The Man and His Hour* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991); and Davis, A *Government of Our Own: The Making of the Confederacy* (New York: Free Press, 1994). Thomas Cooper DeLeon, the irrepressible author of *Belles, Beaux, and Brains of the ’60s* and *Four Years in Rebel Capitals: An Inside View of Life in the Southern Confederacy, from Birth to Death* (Mobile: Gossip Printing Co., 1890), knew Myers personally and was well acquainted with his family, as both DeLeon and Myers

had been born and raised in the Jewish community in South Carolina, DeLeon in Columbia and Myers in Georgetown. The same was probably true of Mary Chesnut, who was also from South Carolina and knew the Jewish community through her close friendship with Miriam DeLeon Cohen. Thus, her diary, *Mary Chesnut's Civil War*, is a good source on Myers.

See also Grismer, *Fort Myers;* Samuel Bernard Thompson, *Confederate Purchasing Operations Abroad* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1935); Clement Eaton, *A History of the Southern Confederacy* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1954); Patricia L. Faust, ed., *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991); Ellsworth Eliot Jr., *West Point in the Confederacy* (New York: G. A. Baker and Co., 1941); Frank E. Vandiver, ed., "Proceedings of the First Confederate Congress [1723–1726]," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 50 (1953): 109–12; Black, *Railroads;* DeLeon, *Four Years* and *Belles, Beaux, and Brains;* John Beauchamp Jones, *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary at the Confederate States Capital*, 2 vols., edited by Howard Swiggett (New York: Old Hickory Bookshop, 1935); Elzas, *Jews of South Carolina*. I wish to thank Diane Kremski of the City of Fort Myers for providing material on Col. Abraham C. Myers, and my mother-in-law, Mrs. Joyce Ann Corner of Naples, Florida, for finding Ms. Kremski.

91. Goff, *Confederate Supply*, 6–10.

92. Ibid., 3–4.

93. DeLeon, *Belles, Beaux, and Brains*, 120; Goff, 16–21.

94. Woodward, *Mary Chesnut*, 271, 428–29, 496–97.

95. Goff, *Confederate Supply*, 127–30; Burke, "Quartermaster," 27–28.

96. Geoffrey C. Ward, *The Civil War: An Illustrated History* (New York: Knopf, 1990), 62.

97. Goff, *Confederate Supply*, 23–26; Woodward, *Mary Chesnut*, 124.

98. DeLeon, *Four Years*, 114.

99. Goff, *Confederate Supply*, 50–51; Pollard, *Southern History of the War*, 1:535–56.

100. Goff, *Confederate Supply*, 27, 29, 33, 34, 52, 72–75.

101. Ibid., 54–62.

102. Ibid., 69–71.

103. Ibid., 75–76, 85–86; “Tax in Kind,” in *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War*, 74.

104. Richard E. Beringer, *Why the South Lost the Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 14–16.

105. Goff, *Confederate Supply*, 40.

106. Ibid., 104–7, 110–11, 41–42.

107. Ibid., 44–46.

108. Ibid., 132, 142.

109. McPherson, *Battle Cry*, 319; Goff, *Confederate Supply*, 143–44.

110. Burke, “Quartermaster,” 29–30.

111. *DAB*; Charles Roland contends that Davis rightly declared the Senate’s action unconstitutional (Roland, *The Confederacy*, 133).

112. James G. Randall and David Donald, *The Civil War and Reconstruction*, 2d ed. (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath & Co., 1969): 253.

113. Quoted in Eaton, *A History of the Southern Confederacy*, 138.

114. Goff, *Confederate Supply*, 186.

115. Ibid., 142.

116. Eaton, *A History of the Southern Confederacy*, 138; Davis, *Jefferson Davis*, 537–38.

117. Davis, *Jefferson Davis*, 537; Goff, *Confederate Supply*, 142.

118. Woodward, *Mary Chesnut*, 437n. 5.

119. Ibid., 437, 447.

120. Ibid., 438.

121. Ibid., 524.

122. Goff, *Confederate Supply*, 142.

123. Woodward, *Mary Chesnut*, 532; Sallie B. Putnam [A Richmond Lady], *Richmond during the War: Four Years of Personal Observation* (New York, 1867; reprinted in Collector's Library of the Civil War, Alexandria, Va.: Time-Life Books, 1983), 275.

124. Jones was a native of Baltimore. *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary*, condensed edition, edited by Earl Schenck Miers (New York: Sagamore Press, 1958); see 1:186; 2:8; Berman, *Richmond's Jewry*, 187.

125. Woodward, *Mary Chesnut*, 551.

126. Goff, *Confederate Supply*, 150–51.

127. *DAB*.

128. Burke, "Quartermaster," 34.

129. *DAB*.

130. Burke, "Quartermaster," 35–36.

131. CSR, Maier Triest; William J. Rivers, *Rivers' Account of the Raising of Troops in South Carolina for State and Confederate Service 1861–1865* (Columbia: Bryan Publishing Co., 1899), 29–30.

132. Elzas, *Jews of South Carolina*, 235. The compiled service record neither corroborates nor contradicts this statement.

133. Jerry Korn, *War on the Mississippi* (Alexandria, Va.: Time-Life, 1985), 109.

134. Eugene W. Jones Jr., *Enlisted for the War: The Struggles of the Gallant 24th Regiment, South Carolina Volunteers, 1861–1865* (Hightown, N.J.: Longstreet House, 1997); on Triest, see 15, 91, 214; Capers letter dated May 17, 1863, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina; Elzas, *Jews of South Carolina*, 171, 235.

135. Elzas, *Jews of South Carolina*, 235.

136. Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants*, 2:439; G. Moxley Sorrell, *Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer*, 126.

137. Moses's three sons all served in the Confederate armed forces. The youngest, Raphael J. ("Lea") Moses Jr. joined the Confederate navy. Albert Moses Luria joined the Columbus Light Guards, transferred to the 13th/23rd North Carolina, and served and died in the Army of Northern Virginia. The oldest, Israel Moses Nunez, born in Florida in 1838, was nicknamed "Major." Major took care of the family plantation and businesses when his father and younger brother Albert went off to war. By virtue of the Confederate "Twenty-Negro Law," a plantation owner with twenty slaves or more was

entitled to an exemption allowing one white male to stay at home, which Major did until 1863. The Confederate Congress revised the law in May 1863 and required planters to pay $500 for the exemption. In December 1863, "Major" Nunez enlisted as a private in Parker's Virginia Battery of Artillery in his father's corps and reported for duty at Bean Station, Tennessee, near Knoxville. Probably on account of his father's influence, Major was sent to corps headquarters; he rejoined Parker's battery in the summer of 1864 and served in the trenches with the artillery defending Petersburg, Virginia. At the end of the war in May 1865, Major had rejoined his father in Georgia. See, generally, Moses, *Last Order*, xiv, 77, 220; McPherson, *Battle Cry*, 611–12.

138. Nevins, *Emergence*, 2:434.

139. Rosen, *Confederate Charleston*, 66.

140. Nevins, *War*, 1:98; Marcus, *Memoirs*, 1:146–47; Moses, *Last Order*, 113–14; CSR, R. J. Moses.

141. Moses, *Last Order*, 157–59.

142. Ibid., 161–62.

143. Ibid., 114–15, 175.

144. Wert, *Longstreet*, 208–9; Moses, *Last Order*, 170.

145. Wert, *Longstreet*, 211.

146. Moses, *Last Order*, 170–71.

147. Ibid., 174.

148. Ibid., 175.

149. Wert, *Longstreet*, 224.

150. Moses, *Last Order*, 178.

151. D. S. Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants*, 2:477–78.

152. Moses, *Last Order*, 180–82.

153. Fremantle, *Three Months in the Southern States: April-June, 1863*.

154. Ibid.

155. Ibid.

156. Moses, *Last Order*, 185–86.

157. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 1:4; G. Moxley Sorrel, *Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer* (New York: Smithmark Publishers, 1994), 126, 178.

158. Wert, *Longstreet*, 83.

159. Moses, *Last Order*, 115–16.

160. CSR, R. J. Moses.

161. Moses, *Last Order*, 187.

162. Fremantle, *Three Months*, 240.

163. Ibid., 271.

164. Moses, *Last Order*, 188.

165. Ibid., 201–4.

166. Ibid., 206–7.

167. Wert, *Longstreet*, 393.

168. H. H. Cunningham, *Doctors in Gray: The Confederate Medical Service* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1958), 27.

169. DeLeon, *Belles, Beaux, and Brains*, 121.

170. Woodward and Muhlenfeld, *The Private Mary Chesnut*, 29–31.

171. Dauber, 2932; catalog, *AJHS* (1962): 406.

172. Cullop, *Confederate Propaganda*, 80n. 40 (DeLeon to Benjamin January 8, 1863 [Pickett Papers]).

173. Dauber, 2932n. 40.

174. C. Vann Woodward and Elisabeth Muhlenfeld, eds., *The Private Mary Chesnut: The Unpublished Civil War Diaries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 29.

175. Ibid., 78.

176. Ibid., 114.

177. Dauber, 2929.

178. Baruch, *My Own Story*, 5.

179. Ibid., 1–12.

180. Baruch's war record is based on his compiled service record, and his recollections contained in *Confederate Veteran Magazine* 12 (December 1914): 22, 545–48; and "Bernard Baruchs Father Recounts His Experiences as a Confederate Surgeon," a reprint of a newspaper account in the Long *Branch Record* of an address Baruch made on September 23, 1915, before a historical society in Long Branch, New York. The reprint is titled "Experiences as a Confederate Surgeon" in *Civil War Times Illustrated* 4, no. 6 (October 1965): 40–47. Simon Baruch's service records are cataloged under the 13th Mississippi, Surgeon (where his name is sometimes "S. Barnet"); 3rd S.C. Battalion; and "General & Staff Surgeon, 3rd S.C. Battalion," which yielded a typewritten summary and correspondence.

181. Baruch, "Experiences as a Confederate Surgeon," 40–47.

182. Ibid., 42.

183. Baruch, *My Own Story,* 7–9; Baruch, "Experiences as a Confederate Surgeon," 42.

184. Baruch, *My Own Story,* 8.

185. Simon Baruch, "A Surgeon's Story of Battle and Capture," *Confederate Veteran* 22, no. 12 (December 1914): 545–48; Baruch, "Experiences as a Confederate Surgeon," 43.

186. Baruch, "Experiences as a Confederate Surgeon," 43.

187. Baruch, "A Surgeon's Story," 545.

188. Baruch, "Experiences as a Confederate Surgeon," 43.

189. Ibid., 44–45.

190. Baruch, “A Surgeon’s Story,” 546–47.

191. Baruch, *My Own Story,* 10; Baruch, “Experiences as a Confederate Surgeon,” 45–46.

192. Baruch, “Experiences as a Confederate Surgeon,” 46.

193. Ibid., 46–47.

194. William M. Robinson, Jr., *Justice in Grey: A History of the Judicial System of the Confederate States of America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1941), 408, 460.

195. Col. Henry J. Leovy’s activities are briefly described in Robinson, *Justice in Grey,* 409–11. His activities as a special commissioner are described in the OR IV, 4: 802–15 and Kenneth W. Noe, “Red String Scare: Civil War Southwest Virginia and the Heroes of America,” *North Carolina Historical Review 69,* no. 3, July 1992, 301–22. Noe has Leovy’s name as “Leory” because the OR made the same mistake. On the flight of the cabinet, see Hanna, *Flight into Oblivion.* See Leovy’s obituary, *Daily Picayune,* October 4, 1902; 10, col. 2; letters from Jefferson Davis to Leovy dated May 26, 1877, and November 10, 1883, Historic New Orleans Collection (Henry J. Leovy Papers, 1859–1900).

196. Letter dated October 31, 1863, to Leovy, Henry J. Leovy Papers, HNOC.

197. Noe, “Red String Scare,” 301–22. Charles Frazier mentions the Red Strings in his popular novel, *Cold Mountain.*

198. Noe, “Red String Scare,” 315–16.

199. OR IV, 3:802–15, 805, 812. The OR refers to him as “Leory.”

200. OR IV, 3,:802.

201. Robinson, *Justice in Grey,* 411.

202. Ledger book of Confederate commissions in the National Archives, chap. 1, vol. 94 (confirmed January 12, 1865, to rank from December 26, 1864). My thanks to Bruce Allardice for providing this information on Leovy.

203. *Register of Officers of the Confederate States Navy, 1861–1865* (Washington: GPO, 1931), 48.

204. OBN, I, 2:822–24; Raimondo Luraghi, *A History of the Confederate Navy* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1996), 312.

205. *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War,* 5; Luraghi, *History of the Confederate Navy,* 277–78, 291–99, 329–31.

206. “Military Record of the DeLeon Family and of Captain Perry M. DeLeon,” *PAJHS* 1, no. 4 (June 1961).

207. Harby’s military career is confusing. He trained troops in artillery in Harrisburg, Texas, near Galveston early in the war. (H. S. Lubbock to Col. X. B. Debray, October 15, 1862, has Lieutenant Harby stationed at Harrisburg. Debray to Lieutenant General Pemberton, November 12, 1862, has Harby training men in artillery practice. OR I, 15:830–31; 864–65.) He was an officer, not in the Confederate army or navy, but in the Texas Maritime Department or Service. He apparently was commissioned a lieutenant and was later promoted to captain. Harby did not turn the *Henry Dodge* over to the Confederates; he may have resigned and allowed Lt. William F. Rodgers to do so. See ORN I, 16:867–68; 18:85; *Confederate Military History Extended Edition*, vol. 6, *South Carolina* (Wilmington, N.C.: Broadfoot Publishing Co., 1987), 628–29; Charles W. Hayes, *History of the Island the City of Galveston* (Cincinnati, 1879), 550–77. Henry J. Harby and J. O. Harby are listed in *The Roster of Confederate Soldiers; The Jewish Texans*, 7; Simonhoff, *Jewish Participants in the Civil War*, 261; Simonhoff, *Deep in the Heart*, 24. Harby was married to Leonora R. DeLeon of Savannah (*Confederate Military History*, 629).

208. Edward T. Cothan Jr., *Battle on the Bay* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), 108–11; Donald S. Frasier, *Cottonclads! The Battle of Galveston and the Defense of the Texas Coast*, (Fort Worth, Tex.: Ryan Place Publishers, 1996), 46–77; Sharf, *History of the Confederate Navy*, 506–13; *Confederate Veteran* 2 (1998); Campbell, “Victory at Galveston,” 16–26.

209. Magruder’s official report dated February 26, 1863; OR Series I, 15:211–20 (chap. 27).

210. Frasier, *Cottonclads!*, 73.

211. Cothan, *Battle on the Bay*, 124.

212. Ibid., 125.

213. Frasier, *Cottonclads!*, 75.

214. OR I, vol. 15, chap. 27, p. 211.

215. OR I, vol. 15, chap. 27, p. 217.

216. Letter to F. R. Lubbock from J. B. Magruder, February 11, 1863; OR I, vol. 15, chap. 27, p. 974–75.

217. *Confederate Military History*, 629.

218. Moses, *Last Order*, xiv–xv.

219. Ibid., 119–21; Civil War Dictionary, "Tattnall."

220. *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War*, 304; Luraghi, *History of Confederate Navy*, 231–32. In May 1864, the ship was sold at Liverpool. Moses, *Last Order*, 223; 1909 obituary.

221. Moses, *Last Order*, 223–24.

222. Ibid., 224.

223. Luraghi, *History of Confederate Navy*, 60. Simonhoff, *Jewish Participants in the Civil War*, 259. Solomon Breibart contends that this was "wishful thinking" on Simonhoffs part.

224. Ruth H. Duncan, *The Captain and Submarine C.S.S.* Hunley (Memphis, Tenn.: S. C. Toof & Co., 1965), 60.

225. Ibid., 79.

226. The Hyams family has a remarkably undocumented history. Even Simon Wolf misspelled their names in his listing of Confederate soldiers. There is not a biographical essay on Lt. Gov. Henry M. Hyams, who was one of the most prominent *practicing* Jews of nineteenth-century America. The glaring omission of Hyams and Benjamin F. Jonas in American Jewish historiography is curious. Korn gives a sketch of Hyams in *The Early Jews of New Orleans* (188–89), as does Elzas in *Jews of South Carolina* (191). See also Young, *Where They Lie*, 6–7, 38–9, 158–62; Ashkenazi, *Diary of Clara Solomon;* Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:104 (Rothschild letter); Malcolm H. Stem, *Americans of Jewish Descent* (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1971), 87; *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York, 1901–5), 1:512; AJA (obituaries, Korn files, Elzas manuscript, and Judith Hyams Douglas material); obituary, *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, June 26, 1875; *Dictionary of Louisiana Biography*, vol. 1 (Louisiana

Historical Association). Rabbi Task and Nancy Greenberg of Alexandria, Louisiana, kindly provided me with a brief typewritten recollection of Hyams family members.

The wartime activities of all of the Hyamses is derived from their extensive compiled service records at the National Archives, the Official Record, and various secondary sources on units and battles. A number of Hyamses appear in Andrew W. Booth's *Records of Louisiana Confederate Soldiers and Louisiana Confederate Commands*.

Despite the fact that Hyams was a lieutenant governor, his wartime career is difficult to reconstruct. He was not at the secession convention. Much of the material used herein is contained in obituaries, letters, and memoranda at the AJA. As to Hyams's life after the war, see letters at AJA and a letter to former Governor Moore, published in the *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 13 (January 1930): 20–22.

227. As to Isaac S. Hyams, see his compiled service record, which includes the Benjamin letter; OR I, 20:976; I, 20:762–767; OR Supplement, *Record of Events*, 23:660–61; Glen Tucker, *Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1961), 270; *History of the Confederate States Marine Corps*, 22–39, 184–225.

228. CSR, I. S. Hyams, letter of D. Coleman, January 1863.

229. CSR, I. S. Hyams.

230. CSR, Samuel Myers Hyams; William H. Tunnard, *A Southern Record: A History of the Third Regiment, Louisiana Infantry* (reprint, Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1997), 28–39, 64–67, 108–18, 184–85, 324–25, 529; OR Supplement, *Record of Events*, vol. 23, Louisiana Troops (Confederate), 740; *Guide to Louisiana Military Units*, 77; OR IV, 1:748–9; I, 53:808–9; I, 3:113–16; I, 3:588–89; *Louisiana History* 2 (winter 1961): 7–105 (Journal of Proceedings).

231. Tunnard, *A Southern Record*, 29–30.

232. Ibid., 64.

233. Ibid., 36, 108.

234. Ibid., 324.

235. CSR, Samuel M. Hyams Jr.; OR Supplement, *Record of Events*, vol. 32, *Mississippi Confederate Troops*, 345, 339 (Confederate); 38:149, 140; Robert Selph Henry, *"First with the Most" Forrest* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1944), 312–15;

OR I, 49:1030–31 (Forrest to Taylor, March 6, 1865); I, 49:956; I, 39:315, 609, 648, 676, 805–6, 809; I, 3:113–16; I, 30:496–97; I, 23:23, 191; I, 16:827–28; I, 8:293–94; I, 41:171. OR Supplement, *Record of Events*, vol. 32, *Mississippi Troops (Confederate)—Cavalry*, 141–49; 338–45; Report of Col. Louis Hebert, August 10, 1861.

236. Young, *Where They Lie*, 7.

237. Abraham Jonas followed his brother Joseph from England to America. Joseph, a native of Exeter, arrived in Cincinnati in 1817 at the age of twenty-five, the first Jew in that town and, indeed, the first Jew in Ohio. The leaders of the congregation in New York warned him that "in the wilds of America and entirely amongst Gentiles, you will forget your religion and your God." An old Quaker woman came to see him. She asked: "Art thou a Jew? Thou art one of God's chosen people. Wilt thou let me examine thee?" She turned, him around and finally said, with a tinge of disappointment in her voice: "Well, thou art no different to other people." Joseph prospered as a watchmaker, silversmith, and mechanic. He was elected to the Ohio legislature and was a founder of the first synagogue in the west, K. K. B'nai Israel. Despite his move to the "wilds of America," he continued to be an observing Orthodox Jew. When the Civil War was over, Joseph moved to Mobile, Alabama, where his son practiced law and where he died in 1869 (*Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, 179; Marcus, *Memoirs*, 1:203–13).

Joseph's brother Abraham Jonas was a Henry Clay Whig. He believed in the national government and disliked the "Slave Oligarchy." Like many pioneers of the West, he moved about. He followed his brother to Cincinnati in 1819 with a group of Jews from Plymouth and Portsmouth and aided in the founding of the synagogue. His first wife was Lucia Orah Seixas, the daughter of Rabbi Gershom Seixas of New York, the Revolutionary War hero and friend of George Washington (Ira L. Harris, "Abraham Jonas, Lincoln's Most Valued Friend," paper at AJA). She died tragically in 1826. To escape his grief, Jonas moved to Williamstown, Kentucky, in 1827 (Simonhoff, *Jewish Notables in America*, 348–52.). There he met and married Louisa Block.

Jonas was elected four times to the Kentucky House of Representatives in the late 1820s and 1830s (Korn, *American Jewry*, 189–91). He knew Henry Clay and believed in him. Writing in 1858 to Sen. John K. Crittenden, whom Jonas had known when Crittenden was Speaker of the House of Representatives in Kentucky, he said, "Permit an old friend to express his satisfaction and delight, at reading your recent able speech on Kansas affairs … I am quite sure that had Mr. Clay been alive and by your side in the Senate, he would have spoken as you did" (Korn Papers, AJA, letter dated March 22, 1858). Half of the Jonas children were born in Kentucky in the 1830s and 1840s.

238. Rabbi Bertram Korn was particularly interested in Abraham Jonas and his family. He appended the Jonas-Lincoln correspondence to *American Jewry and the Civil War* and hoped one day to publish a "sizable monograph" on the patriarch. He regarded Abraham Jonas as "one of the most fascinating Jewish figures of the period" and found it "exceedingly significant that Mr. Jonas's sons achieved positions of importance" (letters in Korn manuscript collection, AJA, no. 99, folder 13/15 to H. E. Pratt, 3–19-52 and Mrs. S. A. Jonas, 3–18-52). On Abraham Jonas and the family generally, I have relied on the following: Korn, *American Jewry* and *The Early Jews of New Orleans* (Waltham, Mass.: American Jewish Historical Society, 1969), as well as Korn's manuscript collection at AJA (Collection 99, folder 13/15 Jonas, Abraham; folder 13/18 Jonas Family; Jonas Family and Abraham Jonas Nearprint Box—Biographies; Carl Landrum's series in *The Quincy Herald-Whig* [especially 1–31-1971, "Lincoln and the Jonas Family"; 2–12-67, "Quincy men helped Lincoln"; 2–6–77, "Lincoln and his friends in Quincy"; 8–29-82, "Abraham Jonas—early leader here"]). While there are entries for both Abraham and Benjamin Franklin Jonas in the *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, there is nothing of substance on Benjamin F. Jonas, the first practicing Jew in the U.S. Senate. This reflects the lack of scholarly work on Louisiana Jewry generally.

239. David C. Mearns, *The Lincoln Papers*, 3:516; see also Isaac Markens, "Lincoln and the Jews," *AJHS* 17 (1909): 123–28. *Quincy Herald*, February 12, 1867, Carl Landrum Series, Korn Papers, AJA.

240. David C. Mearns, *The Lincoln Papers* (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1998), 1:203–4 (June 4, 1857).

241. Korn, *American Jewry*, 228–29. The letter is reproduced in Isidor S. Meyer, ed., *The American Jew in the Civil War: Catalog of the Exhibit of the Civil War Centennial Jewish Historical Commission* (New York: AJHS, 1962), entry 160.

242. Korn, *American Jewry*, 194.

243. CSR, Charles H. Jonas; Korn, *American Jewry;* AJA, Korn Papers.

244. On Benjamin Franklin Jonas, I have utilized his compiled service record, standard references such as the *National Cyclopedia of American Biography* 4:544; *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–1949* (1950); *A Dictionary of Louisiana Biography*, 1:442; *Confederate Military History*, 459–60; *American Jewish Yearbook* ("Biographies of Members of Congress"), 1901; and *Who Was Who in America, 1897–1942: A Component of Who's Who in American History* (Chicago: Marquis Publications, 1968).

Jonas's military record is confusing. His compiled service records conflict with his obituary in essential areas. The records show that he enlisted in September 1862, although perhaps he enlisted sooner.

245. The firms were Farrar, Jonas & Kruttschnitt; Farrar, Jonas, Kruttschnitt & Goldberg; and later Farrar, Jonas, Kruttschnitt & Gurley. The firms are mentioned in more than two hundred reported cases. See, for example, *Edrington v. Louisville, N.O. & T.R. Co*., 6 So. 19 (La., 1889); *State v. Meyer*, 6 So. 590 (La., 1889); *Stackhouse v. Zuntz*, 6 So. 666 (La., 1889)(dealing with Judah Benjamin's former plantation, Belle Chase). My thanks to prominent Nevada attorney Leigh Goddard, Esq., for this information. Korn, *Early Jews*, 334n. 28. Jonas was likely a member of the Dispersed of Judah congregation, and, when that synagogue went out of existence, he joined the new Reform Temple Sinai, where he served as a member of the Board of Governors and vice president from 1894 to 1904. He was described as "an Israelite by nationality and religion" and was a member of the prestigious Boston Club of New Orleans and the Manhattan Club of New York. He married Josephine Block, whose parents were both Virginians. Many members of the Block family married members of the Cincinnati–Quincy–New Orleans Jonas family, according to Rabbi Korn. Korn, *Early Jews*, 228; *National Cyclopedia of American Biography*, 4:544; *American Biography* (but *Confederate Military History* says of New Orleans, 459); Korn, *Early Jews*, 326.

246. Obituary, *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 22, 1911, p. 1; CSR, B. F. Jonas.

247. CSR, Julian J. Jonas. There are a number of listings on file for J. J. Jonas: Captain Greenleafs company (Orleans Light Horse), Louisiana Cavalry; Stewart's Corps, QMSgt; and LA. Inf. Crescent Regiment Company E. Sgt. They all represent Julian Jonas.

248. *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War*, 370.

249. S. A. Jonas is known to Civil War historians as the author of the famous poem "Lines on the Back of a Confederate Note." A biographical sketch in *Confederate Veteran* quotes it in its entirety. The Mississippi Department of Archives and History has a collection of biographical and autobiographical material on Jonas (Acc. No. 2109, Boxes 1–2; MS 60–2439 in Nat'l. Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections). The best source, which is repeated almost verbatim in *Confederate Veteran* and other summaries, is a letter he wrote to Mrs. Fred Cullum dated March 24, 1908, in response to a request for a sketch of his life (Box 2, folder 8, Acc. No. 2109, reprinted in *Aberdeen (Miss.) Examiner*, August 13, 1936, AJA). He closes with these words:

"Now if you had dreamed of the infliction impending, you would never have ventured the request for this life sketch."

The AJA has substantial material on S. A. Jonas in the Korn Collection and its Nearprint Box-Biographies (Jonas, Major S. A.). Korn's files contain letters about Jonas from descendants as well as newspaper clippings, especially from the *Aberdeen (Miss.) Examiner*. Major Jonas has an extensive service record at the National Archives, including a summary (marked "CARDED") of his record. See also John B. Hood's memoir, *Advance and Retreat: Personal Experiences in the United States and Confederate Armies* (New Orleans, 1880); Crute, *Confederate Staff Officers, 1861–1865;* Young, "The Sons of Abraham," *North and South Magazine* 1, no. 6, 94 (1999); "The Story of a Poem," *North and South Magazine* 1, no. 4 (April 1998): 44.

250. March 24, 1908, letter from S. A. Jonas, Miss. Dept of Archives and History Acct. 2109; reprinted in *Aberdeen (Miss.) Examiner*, August 13, 1936, AJA.

251. Hood, *Advance and Retreat*, 60.

252. CSR, George B. Jonas and George Jonas.

253. Obituary in Quincy newspaper attached to letter from Frederick Wells III, to Carl Landrum, February 16, 1868, Korn Papers, AJA; "Lincoln and the Jonas Family," *Quincy Herald-Whig*, January 31, 1871, Korn Papers, AJA.

254. OR, Series I, vol. 22, pt. 1, p. 385; CSR, Edward Jonas.

255. Stanley R. Brav, "The Jewish Woman, 1861–1865," *AJA* 17, no. 1 (April 1965): 61.

256. Ibid., 63

257. Daniel O'Flaherty, *General Jo Shelby, Undefeated Rebel* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1954), 18. The Gratz family was German, from Langensdorf in Upper Silesia. They had migrated in 1755 and settled in Pennsylvania. The legend of Rebecca Gratz is that one of her closest friends, Matilda Hoffman, was engaged to Washington Irving. When Matilda fell ill, Rebecca Gratz nursed her and spent considerable time with Irving. When Matilda died, Irving traveled to England. There he met Sir Walter Scott, who asked Irving to pen a description of a beautiful Jewess for Scott's use in *Ivanhoe*. Irving described Rebecca Gratz. Gratz Cohen's mother of Savannah was raised by her aunt, Rebecca Gratz. See David Philipson, ed., foreword, *Letters of Rebecca Gratz* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1929); *DAB; The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia;* Dianne Ashton in *Jewish Women in America* dismisses the *Ivanhoe*

connection as “a legend” and “a popular tale.” However, Stephen Birmingham in *The Grandees: America’s Sephardic Elite* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971) believes the story is “probably true” (178–80).

258. Young, *Where They Lie*, 4–6.

259. O’Flaherty, *General Jo Shelby*, vii.

260. Ibid., 79.

261. OR II, 2:1421.

262. OR I, 53:808–809.

263. James M. Day, *Jacob DeCordova: Land Merchant of Texas* (Waco: Texan Press, 1962), 124.

264. The best treatment of Edwin DeLeon’s mission to Europe is chapter 5, “The DeLeon Mission,” in Charles P. Cullop, *Confederate Propaganda in Europe, 1861–1865* (Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press, 1969), also published as “Edwin DeLeon: Jefferson Davis’ Propagandist,” *Civil War History* (State University of Iowa), 8, no. 4 (December 1962): 386. Cullop gives a detailed and balanced account. Frank Owsley treats the subject in *King Cotton Diplomacy: Foreign Relations of the Confederate States of America* (Chicago: University of Shicago Press, 1959), 2d ed. There are a number of references in the Official Records. See ORN II, 3:971–73.

There are numerous references to the DeLeons throughout Mary Chesnut’s diaries. See Woodward, *Mary Chesnut’s Civil War*, and Woodward and Muhlenfield, *The Private Mary Chesnut*. DeLeon wrote his memoirs, *Thirty Years of My Life on Three Continents* (London, 1890), which deal superficially with his service to the Confederate States. There are sketches of him in Elzas, *Jews of South Carolina*, 332 (Perry DeLeon); *DAB; Twentieth Century Biographical Dictionary; Universal Jewish Encyclopedia;* Simonhoff, *Jewish Notables;* and *National Cyclopaedia*.

265. Cullop, *Confederate Propaganda*, 67; DeLeon, *Thirty Years*, 320.

266. DeLeon, *Thirty Years*, 296–325.

267. Cullop, *Confederate Propaganda*, 68–72.

268. ORN II, 3:657, no. 3, January 16, 1863.

269. DeLeon, *Thirty Years*, 2:3.

270. Ibid., 2:7–8.

271. Owsley, *King Cotton*, 162–63.

272. DeLeon, *Thirty Years*, 2:24–31.

273. Ibid., 2:38–40; Cullop, *Confederate Propaganda*, 108–9; *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War*, 214.

274. Cullop, *Confederate Propaganda*, 74; DeLeon, *Thirty Years*, 2:47; Owsley, *King Cotton*, 163–64.

275. Cullop, *Confederate Propaganda*, 75–76.

276. Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 164–65.

277. ORN, I, 9:276, North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, November 11, 1863.

278. Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 165.

279. Cullop, *Confederate Propaganda*, 82–83.

280. ORN, II, 3:971, December 9, 1863.

281. Cullop, *Confederate Propaganda*, 83.

282. Gallagher, *The Confederate War*, 28–29.

283. Randall and Donald, *The Civil War and Reconstruction*, 545.

284. Muster Roll of Company I, 15th Georgia. Marcus commanded the 15th Georgia at the assault on Fort Gilmer. See *Confederate Veteran*, June 1905, 269.

285. Letter to Simon Wolf from Col. F. Hay Gantt, November 7, 1864, copy courtesy of Mel Young, in possession of author. W. M. Wolf's CSR is filed under Will Wolff.

286. Obituary ("Perry Moses Passes Away"), *Sumter* [S.C.] *Daily Item, 1916* in possession of author, courtesy of Anne F. Jennings; Arthur W. Bergeron, *Confederate Mobile* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1991), 193; Young, *Where They Lie*, 130–238.

287. “Diary of Eleanor Cohen Seixas,” in Penelope Franklin, ed., *Private Pages: Diaries of American Women, 1830s–1970s* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1986), 314.

288. Young, *Where They Lie*, 130.

289. Octavia Harby Moses, A *Mother’s Poems, A Collection of Verses* (privately printed, 1915), 54.

CHAPTER 4

1. Wolf, *The American Jew*, 102–4; Ezekiel and Lichenstein, *History of the Jews of Richmond*, 163. This remark, contained in a letter to Simon Wolf in the early 1890s, later became the basis of the “fact” that there were ten thousand Jews in the Confederate army, which there absolutely were not.

2. Wolf, *The American Jew*, 100–101.

3. Wolfs total for all states appears at page 424. The eleven Confederate states total 1, 216, which is approximately the number reached by counting each soldier in these states. At page 410 are 104 men unclassified as to commands. Three listed in an addenda at page 423 must be added, for a total of 1,323. Several Confederate staff officers, such as Abraham C. Myers, are listed at pages 114–15 and are not included in the state lists. Others are included. Finally, eleven naval officers are listed on pages 116. Wolf thus lists approximately 1,340 Confederate soldiers and sailors.

4. Wolf, *The American Jew*, 46; LeMaster, *A Corner of the Tapestry*, 46.

5. Letter to author from Eric Brock; list of Shreveport Jewish Confederate soldiers compiled by Eric Brock in possession of author; Eric Brock, “The Jewish Cemeteries of Shreveport, Louisiana” (available at Historic New Orleans Collection, AJA, and CC). Moses Rosenthal, as an example, was a member of “the Hebrew church,” according to *The History of Louisiana*, 588. Jonas Rosenthal was an immigrant from Alsace-Lorraine. Affidavit dated November 8, 1926, in possession of author courtesy of Nancy Greenberg, Alexandria, Louisiana. Ms. Greenberg identified Mires Rosenthal as her great-grandfather and Moses, Jonas, and Isaac as his brothers.

6. Elzas wrote, “The complete record of the part played by the Jews of South Carolina in the war between the States will never be known” (*Jews of South Carolina*, 122). He examined 70, 000 names and positively identified 167. The list, he noted, could be “largely extended, had accounts been taken of the sons of South Carolina Jews who fought in the war,” meaning that many, like Franklin J. Moses, had been raised as Christians (237n. 33). The list excluded dozens he could not positively identify, the Home Guard, the Regiment of Reserves, men listed by Wolf he could not verify, and men with Jewish-sounding names (David Jacobs, Isaac Abrahams) who were likely Jewish Confederates. There were forty-two in the artillery, seventeen in the cavalry, and two in the navy. Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *History of the Jews of Richmond*, 176–88. The authors, writing in 1916, believed their list of Jewish Confederate soldiers to

be “the best that has ever been printed, and it is safe to assume that no more complete or accurate one will ever be published” (176).

7. Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reh*, 331.

8. Roster, 37th Virginia; AHA, letter from Philip Rosenheim to the Meinnarts, July 8, 1863; Fannie Herzberg, “Pioneer Members and History of Temple Beth-El, 1859–1959,” paper published in *Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society Bulletin* 4 (November 1959), and by the Southern Jewish Historical Association. AJA file as *Pittsburgh Evening Leader*, March 31, 1875; Barkai, *Branching Out*, 112; Korn, *Civil War*, 121ff.

9. Korn, *Civil War*, xiii, preface, paperback ed., 119; Friedman, *Jews of Macon;* Louis Schmeir, “Diary of Louis Merz.”

10. OR Supplement, *Record of Events*, Louisiana Troops, 24:235. CSR, I. R. Hyams.

11. Amann, *Personnel of the Civil War*, 139; Brock, *The Jewish Cemeteries of Shreveport*, 57, and “Shreveport Jewish Confederate Soldiers,” in possession of author; *Roster of Georgia Troops in Confederate Service*.

12. Eigenbrun is listed erroneously as J. Engenbrun on the roster (Schappes, 708n. 9); Oppenheim is listed incorrectly as Oppenheimer in Wolf (Schappes, 707–8n. 6); as to Engle, see Schappes, p. 708n. 9, although he is not on the roster.

13. “Moons” for Morris is in Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *History of the Jews of Richmond*, 161; CSR, Lewis Leon, Company B, 53rd North Carolina; Morris Leon, Company I, 44th Infantry (Georgia); Leon, *Diary of a Tarheel Confederate*.

14. Wolf, *The American Jew; Encyclopedia of the Confederacy*, 266–67.

15. John H. and Roberta C. Neblett, “Emanuel Gerst—A Gentleman of Virginia,” *Generations, Journal of Congregation Beth Ahaba Museum and Archives Trust* 5, no. 1 (November 1992). See p. lln. 11.

16. Turitz and Turitz, *Jews in Early Mississippi*, 48.

17. Wolf, *The American Jew*, passim, as to Cohens, see 374; Ashley Halsey Jr., “The Last Duel in the Confederacy,” *Civil War Times Illustrated* 1, no. 7 (November 1962): 7; Elzas, *Jews of South Carolina*, 226; Crute, *Units of the Confederate States Army*, 271–72; Dorothy Phelps Bultman, “The Story of a Good Life” (November, 1963, Sumter, S.C.), 1 (Courtesy of Thomas Bultman, Esq.).

18. Ernest B. Furguson, *Ashes of Glory: Richmond at War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), 212.

19. Letter dated July 8, 1863, from Philip Rosenheim to the Meinnarts, Korn file, AJA.

20. Rev. A. Toomer Porter, *Led On! Step by Step* (1898).

21. Albert Moses Luria, Maj. Raphael J. Moses's son, joined the 2d Georgia Battalion on April 19, 1861, arrived in Portsmouth, Virginia, in May 1861, and fought in the Battle of Sewell's Point. On June 17, 1861, he was elected second lieutenant of his new company in the 13th North Carolina Volunteers (NCV). He had transferred to be with a fellow cadet from Hillsboro Military Institute in North Carolina. (The unit entered Confederate service on July 12, 1861. It was redesignated the 23d Regiment North Carolina State Troops in November 1861.) Luria was reelected second lieutenant on April 16, 1862. Wounded in the head on May 31, 1862, at the Battle of Seven Pines, he was treated at Byrd Island Hospital in Richmond (General Hospital No. 3).

22. CSR, Octavus Cohen. Octavus Cohen has an extensive and interesting CSR. There are files under Gallie's Company, 1st (Olmstead's) Georgia Infantry; Company G, 32d Georgia Infantry; Company C, 22d Battalion Georgia Heavy Artillery.

23. Kole, *The Minis Family*, 115–16.

24. Mac Wyckoff, *A History of the 2nd South Carolina Infantry: 1861–65* (Fredericksburg, Va.: Seargeant Kirkland's Museum and Historical Society, 1994), 218. The extended family included Franklin J. Moses, chief justice of the South Carolina Supreme Court during Reconstruction, and his son, the notorious "Robber Governor," Franklin J. Moses Jr.

25. Cutchins, *A Famous Command*, passim; Berman, *Richmond's Jewry*, 93–97; Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *History of the Jews of Richmond*, 129, 149–52; Collins, *46th Virginia Infantry*, 151.

26. Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *History of the Jews of Richmond*, 153; David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis 1898–1861* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 369–71; Furguson, *Ashes of Glory: Richmond at War* (New York: Knopf, 1996), chap. 1.

27. Whitelock MS, autobiography, 97–98, VHS.

28. Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *History of the Jews of Richmond*, 154.

29. Letters dated April 14, 1954, and February 3, 1954, from Charles B. Levy to J. R. Marcus, AJA.

30. Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *History of the Jews of Richmond*, 178, 186–87.

31. *VMI Alumni Review* (Spring 1973): 1.

32. Joyner, “Georgetown”; Walker, *Rolls and Historical Sketch of the Tenth Regiment, So. Car. Volunteers*, introduction and 9.

33. Elzas, *Jews of South Carolina*, 230; J. C. Hemphill, *Men of Mark in South Carolina* (Washington, D.C., 1907), 1:201–3.

34. Wycoff, *A History of the 2nd South Carolina Infantry*, 158; *Confederate Veteran* 22 (1914): 170, 221; Louis Ginsberg, *History of the Jews of Petersburg, 1789–1950* (Petersburg, Va., privately printed, 1954), 29, 41; Collins, *46th Virginia*, 30, 37–43.

35. *Confederate Military History* 4 (Va.): 914–15; J. Ambler Johnston, “Not Forgotten, Henry Gintzberger, Private, CSA,” paper, BA.

36. Ruth Friedman, *A Portrait of Jewish Life, Fredericksburg, Virginia 1860–1986* (copy at VHS), prologue and chap. 1.

37. LeMaster, *A Corner of the Tapestry*, 43; Turitz and Turitz, *Jews in Early Mississippi*, 3, 117–18, 29, 85–86, xvii, 109, 112.

38. LeMaster, *A Corner of the Tapestry*, 46, 45, 42–44; Felsenthal is listed as David “Felamthall” at the NA.

39. His family, according to Eli Evans, still has his two mess kits—one for meat and one for milk (Evans, *The Provincials: A Personal History of Jesus in the South* [New York: Athenaeum, 1974], 63). The author could locate no record of Gleitzman. Some of LeMaster’s information is not found in the various rosters.

40. Notes from family members provided by a descendant, Van Harte of Montgomery, Alabama (1995), in author’s file. Oppenheimer’s obituary on the front page of the *Memphis News Scimitar*, complete with a photograph of him in his Confederate uniform, called him “a picturesque character” who was one of the original California “Forty-niners,” fought the Indians with Custer in the Black Hills, and “Was With Gen. Beauregard at Shiloh,” all of which may or may not have been true. The story states that “Mr. Oppenheimer had served under [Gen. P. G. T.] Beauregard and [Gen. Albert Sidney] Johnston against Grant and Bull at Shiloh. He was captured by federal troops

and imprisoned in the courthouse at Trenton. Upon his release he went to Mobile in the latter part of 1863 and participated in the defense of that city against the terrific naval onslaughts of Admiral Farragut." Another newspaper account has him as "a personal friend of Gen. Custer and Buffalo Bill Cody." His family's tradition had him serving in Company D, 3d Alabama Cavalry at Shiloh, Murfreesboro, Chickamauga, Knoxville, and Atlanta, but army records do not confirm this.

41. Oppenheimer told his fellow Confederate Veterans in later years that he was near Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston when he was killed at the Battle of Shiloh and saw him fall. These stories were apparently credible to the Confederate Veterans of Montgomery, who asked him to attend their reunion (undated clipping from newspaper, dateline Montgomery). In his "Soldier's Application for Pension," dated October 13, 1908, Oppenheimer states that he enlisted in the army at Pensacola with the Georgia infantry but was soon transferred to Captain Judkin's Company of the 2d Alabama Cavalry, "where I remained until some time in 1863 when I came home on furlough from Gen. Joe Wheeler." He stated that he was captured at Bolivar, Tennessee, and imprisoned in Jackson, Tennessee. His brother secured his release, and he returned to Alabama to rejoin his command. Ben had a half-brother named Simon Oppenheimer who peddled during the war in the North and the South. It may have been this brother who rescued him from the Union army.

42. Juliet George, "By the Brazos and the Trinity They Hung Up Their Harps: Two Jewish Immigrants in Texas" (master's thesis, University of Texas, Austin, 1991), 88, 90–93. Berliner is listed as "Berlener" and Samuels as "Samuel" at NA.

43. Ibid., 99–100; John D. Winters, *The Civil War in Louisiana*, 212, 284–99; *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War*, 587.

44. Eric Brock, "The Jewish Cemeteries of Shreveport, Louisiana."

45. Leon, *Diary*, 11–4; Charles B. Levy to J. R. Marcus, February 3, 1954, Levy Family Papers, AJA.

46. CSR, Lewis Leon; "Regimental History, 1st Regiment, N.C. Infantry"; Crute, *Units*, 211–12, 238. Lewis Leon's record is filed under North Carolina 53d Infantry, Company B. Morris Leon's record is Georgia, 44th Georgia Infantry, Company I.

47. Leon, *Diary*, 1–4.

48. Ibid., 58; CSR, Morris Leon; Crute, *Units*, 109.

49. Leon, *Diary*, 29; Crute, *Units*, 238; CSR, Morris Leon.

50. Leon, *Diary*, 19–31, 59.

51. Ibid., 39, 28, 41, 56, 61.

52. Simon Mayer Papers, Letter, April 17, 1864, TU.

53. Leon, *Diary*, 13, 14, 33.

54. Ibid., 15–16, 26, 32.

55. Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb*, 244; Leon, *Diary*, 17, 27; letter to "Dear Friend" (probably Herman Heyman, September 23, 1862) Merz Papers, AJA; Herzberg, "Pioneer Members and History of Temple Bethel, 1859–1959."

56. Leon, *Diary*, 7, 76, 8, 25.

57. George, "By the Brazos," 101; Thomas Lowry, M.D., *The Story the Soldiers Wouldn't Tell: Sex in the Civil War* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1994), 28; Leon, *Diary*, 27.

58. Leon, *Diary*, 12.

59. Ibid., 27–28, 32–33; Crute, *Units*, 238.

60. Leon, *Diary*, 34–35; OR Series I, vol. 27, pt. 2, 342, 564–71, 576–77.

61. Ibid., 35–36.

62. Ibid., 36–39.

63. Ibid., 39, 41; *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War*, 307.

64. Ibid., 41.

65. Ibid., 43, 53–56.

66. Ibid., 58.

67. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 132; Schappes, *Documentary History*, 709n. 17; Leon, *Diary*, 59; Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *Jews of Richmond*, 16.

68. Leon, *Diary*, 72; Gordon C. Rhea, *The Battle of the Wilderness, May 5–6, 1864* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994), 164–65; Edward Steere, *The*

Wilderness Campaign: The Meeting of Grant and Lee (Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Co., 1960; reprinted Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1994), 162, 172–73.

69. Leon, *Diary*, 61–63.

70. The date one took the oath of allegiance was important to Southerners after the war. Obviously, if a soldier refused the oath, he was considered more patriotic. Thus Leon had a motive to write that, *after Lee surrendered* on April 9, he was among 400 Confederate prisoners at the Elmira Prison to take "the cursed oath." But Union prisoner of war records show that Leon took the oath and was released on February 7, 1865. A letter from the military archives dated August 3, 1953, to Dr. Jacob R. Marcus shows that Dr. Marcus was aware of the February date, but he chose to use Leon's version in *Memoirs of American Jews*. Of course, the military records could be wrong. See Leon's compiled service record; Leon, *Diary*, 62, 64; Schappes, *Documentary History*, 708.

71. Leon, *Diary*, 61–65.

72. Ibid., 61–65.

73. Ibid., 70.

74. Isaac Hermann, *Memoirs*, 12. His pension records show that he enlisted in Company E, 1st Regiment, Georgia Infantry, on June 30, 1861. Schappes, *Documentary History*, 712n. 4; Herman's records are filed under Georgia, Capt. Howell's Company, Georgia Light Artillery and 1st (Ramsey's) Georgia Infantry, Company E. His pension record is Confed. Arch., chap. 6, file 751, 58 (April 8, 1916).

75. Stan Cohen, *The Civil War in West Virginia: A Pictorial History* (Charleston, W.Va.: Pictorial Histories Publishing Co., 1982): 26, 28, 49, 77; OR, series 1, vol. 5, 389–96; Hermann, *Memoirs*, 15.

76. *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War*, 135; Hermann, *Memoirs*, 39, 19.

77. Hermann, *Memoirs*, 69–71.

78. Hermann, *Memoirs*, 74. According to Schappes, Hermann was discharged from the 1st Georgia on January 25, 1862, and reenlisted May 10, 1862, in Martins Battery, Georgia Light Artillery. The author's research shows September 1862. He was appointed a musician. Schappes, *Documentary History*, 712n. 4.

79. Hermann, *Memoirs*, 83, 86, 99; Schappes, *Documentary History*, 712. None of his claimed wounds are substantiated by the available records.

80. Hermann, *Memoirs*, 173, 233–34.

81. Ibid., 64, 89, 91–95, 138–41.

82. Ibid., 163–64.

83. James I. Robertson Jr., *Soldiers Blue and Gray* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 122–24; Leon, *Diary*, 24.

84. Hermann, *Memoirs*, 98.

85. Ibid., 227–28; 179; 118; 248; Schappes, *Documentary History*, 712.

86. Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Beb*, 108; Hermann, *Memoirs*, 121, 176.

87. Hermann, *Memoirs*, 67, 155; CSR, I. Hermann.

88. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:302–6.

89. Obituary says he joined the Donaldsville Artillery, later known as Dreux's Battalion, which is erroneous; Young, *Where They Lie*, 23, 223; Marcus, 3:299; Ashkenazi, *Diary of Clara Solomon*, 62, 69–73; Bergeron, *Guide to Louisiana Confederate Military Units*, 148–49; see CSR, the Levy brothers.

90. Ashkenazi, *Diary of Clara Solomon*, 62–73, 77.

91. Bergeron, *Guide to Louisiana Confederate Military Units*, 148; CSR, Eugene and Julian Levy.

92. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:301; Diary of Eugene Henry Levy, AJA, 17 (6–3–1864).

93. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:303; Levy Diary, AJA, 112–13 (December 26, 1864).

94. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:301; Levy Diary, AJA, 19 (June 6, 1884); 33–34 (July 2, 1864).

95. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:302–4.

96. Ibid., 3:304.

97. Levy Diary, 305.

98. Levy Diary, 16–17 (June 1, 1864).

99. Baruch, *My Own Story*, 36.

100. LeMaster, *A Corner of the Tapestry*, 43; *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War*, “Bloody Angle,” 68; “Spotsylvania,” 709; Simonhoff, *Jewish Participants in the Civil War*, 263–64. His name has had many other spellings in various writings: Frankenthal, Fahrentold, Fronthall. His CSR is under Mark Fraunthall.

101. Thomas T. Murford to Hortense G. Moses, March 22, 1905. The soldier was “Maurice” from Lynchburg, Virginia, Botetourt Dragoons, Company C, 2d Virginia Cavalry, AJA.

102. Gary R. Baker, *Cadets in Gray: The Story of the Cadets of the South Carolina Military Academy and the Cadet Rangers in the Civil War* (Columbia, S.C.: Palmetto Book works, 1989), 171. Moses was nicknamed “Lord Shaftsbury” because of his “scholarly style of composition.”

103. Obituary, *Charleston Daily Courier*, September 21, 1862; Wycoff, *A History of the 2nd South Carolina Infantry*, 218, 117; Turitz and Turitz, *Jews in Early Mississippi*, 87–88; Young, *Where They Lie*, p.111; *Confederate Veteran* 22 (1914): 170.

104. Gergel and Gergel, *Tree of Life*, 36; Young, *Where They Lie*, 57; Jack Steinberg, “United for Worship and Charity: A History of Congregation Children of Israel” (1982), 8.

105. Young, *Where They Lie*, 23–24, 27, 36, 46, 49, 222; OR Series I, vol. 10, pt. 1, 565 (Shiloh); Obituary, *Charleston Daily Courier*, July 12, 1864; OR I, 20, pt. 1, 799 (Stone’s River).

106. Young, *Where They Lie*, 54, 56; Merz file, AJA; Herzberg Papers, AJA; Merz Papers, Cobb Memorial Archives, Valley, Alabama; Herzberg, “Pioneer Members and History of Temple Bethel, 1859–1959.” Henry Blankenesee is listed on the granite monument in Washington Park in Charleston as a casualty. Robert Blankensee, Company A, Hampton Legion, was killed at First Manassas, not Second. Robert was confused with Henry, according to Kirkland, *Broken Fortunes*.

107. Young, *Where They Lie*, 68, 74, 76, 82, 100–101, 115, 128; Mel Young, “Jewish POWs Buries at Andersonville,” *The [Atlanta] Jewish Georgian*, November-December 1995, 27.

108. J. Ambler Johnston, “Not Forgotten, Henry Gintzberger, Private, CSA,” paper, BA. Johnston was chairman of the Richmond Civil War Centennial Committee and a descendent of Pvt. N. B. Johnston, who wrote about “the only Jewish soldier” being killed while peering over the breastworks. He was moved to write this paper by the pathos of the death of this poor Jewish peddler, who was then buried under the wrong name, Henry Gersberg, in the Hebrew Cemetery in Richmond. Through Mr. Johnston’s efforts in 1963, Gintzberger’s correct name was placed on a marker at the cemetery.

109. Ezekiel autobiography, 62–65.

110. Darrell L. Collins, *46th Virginia Infantry* ([Lynchburg, Va.]: H. E. Howard, 1992), 123.

111. Diary of Emma Mordecai, August 30, 1864; Berman, *Richmond’s Jewry*, 177.

112. Levy Family Papers, BA.

113. Brennan, *Assault on Charleston;* Young, *Where They Lie*, 39, 187, 245, 263.

114. Brennan, *Assault on Charleston*, 184; Young, *Where They Lie*, 40, 187, 245.

115. *Charleston Daily Courier*, June 18 and 21, 1862; Brennan, *Assault*, 185; Young, *Where They Lie*, 39–40; *Charleston Daily Courier*, June 21, 1862.

116. Saul Viener, “Rosena Hutzler Levy Recalls the Civil War,” *AJHQ* 62, no. 3 (March 1973): 306–13.

117. Young, *Where They Lie*, 57.

118. Young, *Where They Lie*, 21–22; Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *History of the Jews of Richmond*, 182.

119. Korn, *War on the Mississippi*, 63, 90; Marcus, *Memoirs*, 2:33–34.

120. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 2:39–41.

121. Ibid., 42–43.

122. Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb*, 83.

123. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:116–17.

124. Ibid, 117.

125. Ibid, 118–32.

126. Furguson, *Ashes of Glory*, 6, 12, 182–85. Whitlock's memoir, "The Life of Philip Whitlock," is at the Virginia Historical Society. These facts are understandably omitted from Berman's *Richmond's Jewry* and Ezekiel and Lichtenstein's *History of the Jews of Richmond* which states that Whitelock "was disabled in the service April, 1862 and transferred to the Quartermaster's Department" (188). Whitelock wrote his memoir after Ezekiel and Lichtenstein's book was published and he may not have been as candid with his contemporaries as he was in his memoir.

127. Whitlock MS, 122–24.

128. *Lynn Item*, August 3 or 8, 1918, clipping courtesy of Mel Young.

129. Morris Silverman, *Hartford Jews, 1659–1970* (Hartford: Connecticut Historical Society, n.d.), 247; Korn, *American Jewry*, preface, xvi; Jones, *Personal Reminiscences*, 443. There is no listing for Rosenblatt in the Confederate Roster.

130. CSR, Private Max Neugas (Company D, 1 [McCreary's] S.C. Inf. [1 S.C. Inf. Prov. Army]; Pee Dee Light Artillery, Zimmerman's Company, South Carolina Light Artillery; OR I, 2, pt. 2, chap. 23, 860 ("Private Neugas severely wounded"). My thanks to Tom Brooks of Ontario, Canada, for sending me material on Neugas from the Fort Delaware Society.

131. OR I, vol. 21, 649–50; OR I, vol. 25, pt. 1, 937–39.

132. *American Israelite* (October 16, 1863): 122; and 11 (October 14, 1864): 124; Bernard Postal and Lionel Koppman, *Jewish Delaware: History, Sites, Communal Services* (Wilmington: Jewish Federation of Delaware, 1976), 26; "Celebrating the Sites of Jewish Delaware," 26; letter from Dean E. Nelson, Delaware Bureau of Museum and Historic Sites to William Craven, president, Fort Delaware Society, enclosing Neugas's letter or petition to Lincoln (April 9, 1864), Archive of Fort Delaware Society. The Boston Athenaeum Library owns a number of prints by Neugas, who was an engraver. The library published a catalog titled "Citizens in Conflict" by Sally Pierce, which contains additional material on Neugas.

133. Young, *Where They Lie*, 53; *Confederate Veteran*, January 1908.

134. Leon, *Diary*, 18, 27, 46; *Pioneer Members and Diary of Louis Merz*, 31.

135. Korn, "Was There a Confederate Jewish Chaplain?," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 53, no. 1 (September 1963): 63–69; *AJA* 1, no. 1 (June 1948): 6–22; Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *History of the Jews of Richmond*, passim.

136. Korn, *American Jewry*, 57. "My suggestion … that the Confederate Congress was more liberal than its Federal counterpart has caused a few eyebrows to be raised fairly high," Korn wrote in his preface to the paperbound edition (page xiv). See his article, "Jewish Chaplains during the Civil War," *AJA* 1, no. 1 (June 1998): 7, for the same quote.

137. Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *History of the Jews of Richmond*, 187.

138. Simon Mayer Papers, letter dated May 3, 1865, TU.

139. Leon, *Diary*, 49; Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *History of the Jews of Richmond*, 155.

140. Herbert T. Ezekiel, "The Jews of Richmond during the Civil War," address delivered to Rimmon Lodge No. 68, International Order of B'nai B'rith (I.O.B.B.), February 28, 1915, 1 (Published Richmond, Va: Press of H. T. Ezekiel; copy at VHS).

141. Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *History of the Jews of Richmond*, 171; Leon Diary, 47–48.

142. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:306–7; Levy Diary, 107, December 17, 1864.

143. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*.

144. A photograph of the prayer is reproduced on page 212; Korn, *American Jewry*, 88–90.

145. Korn, *American Jewry*, 92.

146. Ibid., 92.

147. "Death of a Soldier" (Adolph Rosenthal) in "Civil War Centennial, Southern Issue," *AJA* 13, no. 1 (April 1961): 61–72; Berman, *Richmond's Jewry*, 180.

148. Wolf, *American Jew*, 100–101.

149. Ibid.; Clyde L. Cummer, *Yankee in Gray: The Civil War Memoirs of Henry E. Handerson* (Cleveland, Ohio: Press of Western Reserve University, 1962), 31.

150. Turitz and Turitz, *Jews in Early Mississippi*, xvii.

151. E. Merton Coulter, *The Confederate States of America*, vol. 1 of *A History of the South*, 6th ed. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 228; Elzas, *Jews of South Carolina*, 220.

CHAPTER 5

1. Jewish Southerners were more visible than their small numbers suggest. While it is true that of the 4 million of foreign-born in the United States, only 500,000 lived in the South, they clustered in the coastal and larger river towns. As Herbert Weaver has pointed out in “Foreigners in Ante-Bellum Towns of the Lower South,” *JSH* 13 (1947): 62–73, “They [all foreigners] comprised a considerable portion of the free population, and their impact upon the society in these centers of concentration produced some significant results.” For example, 67 percent of the foreign-born in South Carolina lived in Charleston; 63 percent in Alabama lived in Mobile. “The concentration in larger towns, such as Mobile, Savannah and Memphis,” Weaver concludes, “was so great that on the basis of total free inhabitants the percentage of foreigners in these cities was comparable to that in Philadelphia and Boston.” Weaver also points out (correcdy in my view) that the foreign-born tended to concentrate in specific neighborhoods. “In 1860,” he writes, “almost a third of the foreigners in Mobile, lived in a single downtown ward” (66–67). While Jews did live throughout all of the Southern cities, the immigrants did tend to cluster in the commercial district. In 1861, upper King Street in Charleston and parts of Main Street in Richmond were definitely Jewish neighborhoods.

There is an excellent bibliography and discussion of this issue in Mark I. Greenberg’s perceptive article, “Becoming Southern: The Jews of Savannah, Georgia, 1830–1870,” *AJH* 86, no. 1 (March 1998): 55–56. Greenberg points out that 350 Jews constituted 2.5 percent of Savannah’s white population in 1861.

2. Woodward, *Mary Chesnut*, 368–69.

3. Stern, *Americans of Jewish Descent*, 130; Gergel and Gergel, *Tree of Life*, 35,17–18.

4. DeLeon, *Belles, Beaux, and Brains*, 144; Gordon Grey, “The Ancestry of Nathalie Fontaine Lyons,” edited by Jo White Linn (Salisbury, N.C.: privately published, 1981), copy in possession of author, courtesy of Belinda Gergel.

5. Woodward, *Mary Chesnut*, 346.

6. Ibid., 91n. 5.

7. Ibid., 358, 387; Hagy, *Happy Land*, 299; Cohen is erroneously listed in the roster as Ludlow L. Cohen in Company A, 2d Cavalry. The unit did not become Company A, 2d

Cavalry until August 22, 1862.

8. Woodward, *Mary Chesnut*, 344.

9. Ibid., 366, 371.

10. Ibid., 346, 354, 359. In Exodus, Miriam, the prophetess, "took a timbrel in her hand" and led the Hebrew women in a celebratory dance. Her song, believed by many scholars to be the oldest part of the Hebrew Bible, at Exod. 15:20–21, is as follows:

Sing ye to the Lord for He is highly exalted;

The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.

See Jonathan Kirsch, *Moses: A Life*
(New York: Ballantine Books, 1998), 192–97.

11. Moise, *Moise Family*, 65; Solomon Breibart, "Penina Moise, Southern Jewish Poetess," in Proctor and Schmier, *Jews of the South*, 34–35.

12. "A Reverie," copy in possession of author, courtesy of Solomon Breibart. This poem was written during the Civil War and published in the Charleston *World* (June 21, 1891); "Cockades of Blue" was reprinted in *The American Jewish Yearbook* (1906) in an article titled "Penina Moise, Woman and Writer" by Lee C. Harby; Brav, "The Jewish Woman," 36.

13. Brav, "The Jewish Woman," passim; Korn, *American Jewry*, 99.

14. Brav, "The Jewish Woman," 35; Schappes, *Documentary History*, 707n. 3; Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:366.

15. Diner, *A Time for Gathering*, 12, 76, 81–85; Sue Eakin, *Washington, Louisiana* (Bossier City, La.: Everett Co., 1988), 105–7.

16. Zebulon Vance Hooker II, "Moses Jacob Ezekiel: The Formative Years," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 60 (April 1952): 241–43.

17. Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 7.

18. Diner, A *Time for Gathering*, 81–82.

19. Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996): 46–51.

20. Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 4–8; 134–38; Diner, *A Time for Gathering*, 81–82.

21. Ezekiel, “The Jews of Richmond during the Civil War,” 1.

22. Urofsky, *Commonwealth and Community*, 84; Berman, *Richmond’s Jewry*, 179–80.

23. Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 99.

24. Berman, *Richmond’s Jewry*, 193–94.

25. *Generations, Journal of Congregation Beth Ahabah* 3, no. 3 (May 1991).

26. Samuel Mordecai, *Virginia, Especially Richmond, in Bygone Days* (Richmond: West and Johnson, 1858), 246. All locations from *Second Annual Directory for the City of Richmond* (1860) on microfilm at the Library of Virginia Archives, Richmond.

27. Creeger, “Michelbacher”; *Generations* 5, no. 2 (April 1993): 3–4.

28. Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *History of the Jews of Richmond*, 162; Korn, *American Jewry*, 94.

29. Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *History of the Jews of Richmond*, 162.

30. Ibid., 162–63.

31. Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *History of the Jews of Richmond*, 164–65; Rev. J. William Jones, *Personal Reminiscences*, 442–44. This account also contains Lee’s letters to Michelbacher dated August 29, 1861, April 2, 1863, and September 20, 1864. Jones quoted the venerable Dr. White as to Lee’s Christian character. “His love for the truth, and for all that is good and useful, was such as to render his brotherly kindness and charity as boundless as were the wants and sorrows of his race” (445).

32. Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *History of the Jews of Richmond*, 156–57; Berman, *Richmond’s Jewry*, 202.

33. Reznikoff and Engelman, *The Jews of Charleston*, 163; Fass memoirs, CC.

34. Rosen, *Confederate Charleston*, chap. 6; Moise, *Moise Family*, 8.

35. Rosen, *Confederate Charleston*, 99, 144; Reznikoff and Engelman, *The Jews of Charleston*, 157.

36. Solomon Breibart, “BSBI Celebrates 140th Anniversary,” *Charleston Jewish Journal*, April 1995. Jeffrey Kaplan wrote a history of Berith Shalom Beth Israel in 1948 for its 130th anniversary booklet.

37. Reznikoff and Engelman, *The Jews of Charleston*, 152; Gergel and Gergel, *Tree of Life*, 42.

38. Moise, *Moise Family*, 8. Eleanor Cohen’s diary has also been printed in Penelope Franklin, *Private Pages: Diaries of American Women 1830s–1870s*.

39. William Fidler, “Henry Timrod: Poet of the Confederacy,” *The Southern Literary Messenger* 2 (Revised) (October 1940): 527–35; “Unpublished Letters of Henry Timrod,” *Southern Literary Messenger* 2 (November 1940): 605–11, and 2 (December 1940): 645–51.

40. *Southern Literary Messenger* 2 (November 1940), 608.

41. William Fidler, “Notes and Documents: Seven Unpublished Letters of Henry Timrod,” *Alabama Review* (April 1949): 146.

42. H. Timrod to his sister Emily, June 11, 1861, H. Timrod Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia (courtesy of Belinda Gergel).

43. *Southern Literary Messenger* 2 (December 1940): 645; *Charleston Daily Courier*, January 23, 1862.

44. Fidler, “Seven Unpublished Letters,” 148–49; Rosen, *Confederate Charleston*, passim.

45. Rebecca Ella Solomons Alexander Memoir transcript, Alexander Papers, Atlanta Jewish Federation Archives, p. 7.

46. Russell and Hines, *Savannah*, 104–10.

47. Rebecca Alexander transcript, 6–8.

48. *Confederate Veteran*, August 1921, 304.

49. Greenberg, “Creating Ethnic, Class, and Southern Identity,” 178.

50. Rubin, *Third to None*, 115–17; F. O. Lee and J. C. Agnew, *Historical Record of the City of Savannah* (Savannah, 1869), 171–73.

51. Greenberg, “Creating Ethnic, Class, and Southern Identity,” 165–68.

52. Rubin, *Third to None*, 135. It was formerly the Liberty Inn.

53. Greenberg, “Creating Ethnic, Class, and Southern Identity,” 164.

54. “Fanny Cohen’s Journal of Sherman’s Occupation of Savannah,” *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society*, 407–16.

55. Greenberg, “Creating Ethnic, Class, and Southern Identity,” 64, 236–38.

56. Russell and Hines, *Savannah*, 114; Rebecca Alexander transcript, 9–10; *Confederate Veteran* 8 (1921): 304.

57. Foreword to Proctor and Schmier, *Jews of the South*.

58. Rubin, *Third to None*, 213.

59. Mary A. DeCredico, *Patriotism for Profit: Georgia’s Urban Entrepreneurs and the Confederate War Effort* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 33; Joseph B. Mahan, *Columbus, Georgia’s Fall Line Trading Town* (Northridge, Calif.: Windsor Publications, 1986), 48–9, 52, 57.

60. DeCredico, *Patriotism*, 50.

61. *AJA* 13, no. 1 (April 1861): 73–74.

62. Ibid, 74.

63. Jack J. Steinberg, “The Jews of Augusta” (article in *Ancestoring* 12 in possession of author); “United for Worship and Charity: A History of Congregation Children of Israel.”

64. Chester G. Hearn, *The Capture of New Orleans, 1862* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 65.

65. Nau, *The German People*, 37.

66. Ashkenazi, *Diary of Clara Solomon*, 233, 273.

67. Ibid., 243, 263–64, 289–90.

68. Records of the Association for the Relief of Jewish Widows and Orphans, bound volume at Louisiana State Museum, New Orleans.

69. Ashkenazi, *Diary of Clara Solomon*, 325–26, 329, 332; Young, *Where They Lie*, 223; Congregation Book of Records of Dispersed of Judah, Howard Tilton Library, TU.

70. Ashkenazi, *Diary of Clara Solomon*, 325.

71. David Nevins, *The Road to Shiloh* (Alexandria, Va.: Time-Life Books, 1983); *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War*, 684–85.

72. Ashkenazi, *Diary of Clara Solomon*, 295, 310, 326, 331, 334n. 24, 340.

73. Ibid, 343–45.

74. Korn, *American Jewry*, 48.

75. Ibid.

76. Max Heller, "Jubilee Souvenir Booklet," 48–53, 71–75; Jewish Historical Publishing Company of Louisiana, comp., *The History of Jews of Louisiana: Their Religious, Civic, Charitable and Patriotic Life* (New Orleans: Jewish Historical Publishing Company of Louisiana, 1905), 29.

77. *The History of Jews of Louisiana*, 176.

78. Woodward, *Mary Chesnut*, 371–72.

79. Ashkenazi, *Diary of Clara Solomon*, 350–51.

80. Ibid., 354, 369–70, 395, 424, 419–20; Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 207–14.

81. Butler, *Judah Benjamin*, 336–38.

82. Joseph Benjamin is listed in the *Roster of Confederate Soldiers* in Benjamin's Company Cavalry, a company he formed in December 1863. The only record is the company muster roll for "Dec. 24, 1863 to Feb. 29, 1864," which shows that the company was enlisted on December 24, 1863, at Bapides, Louisiana, by Maj. William M. Levy. The supposition that it was a headquarters escort is based on comments by Judah Benjamin when Taylor gave up his command and moved east of the Mississippi in August 1864, and the fact that William M. Levy was on General Taylor–s staff from July 1862 until the end of the war. A notation on the surrender rolls for H. M. Hyams

says he was paroled with Lt. Gen. Simon Bolivar Buck-ner's escort, commanded by Capt. Joseph Benjamin at Natchitoches in June 1865.

83. James Parton, *General Butler in New Orleans* (New York, 1864).

84. Benjamin Butler, *Butler's Book: A Review of His Legal, Political and Military Career*, (Boston, 1892).

85. Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 381; Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 362.

86. Young, *Where They Lie*, 152.

87. The CSR for Solomon Cohen shows him in Company B (Thomas's), 28th Louisiana Infantry. His son's application for membership in the Sons of Confederate Veterans in 1951 shows Captain Sloan's Company. E. B. Sloan was commander of Company C. The story about the chicken, courtesy of Cathy Kahn and Cecile Levin of New Orleans, December 6, 1997. He is listed as "S. Cohen" in *Booth's*, 372. (The official 28th Louisiana was Gray's Regiment. Thomas's is listed as the 29th Louisiana, yet in the OR, Thomas's is designated as the 28th. This confusion was not uncommon in the Confederate Army.)

88. Memoir in possession of Cecile Levine of New Orleans, the great-granddaughter of Fanny Goldstein Cohen; copy at the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience.

89. "Life and Doings of Ferdinand Goldsmith," courtesy of Moise Steeg, Esq., of New Orleans; copy in the possession of the author.

90. A. Metz Kahn, "From the Rhine to Dixie and Beyond," 1992, TU, Metz Papers.

91. *The Story of the Jewish Orphan's Home of New Orleans* (New Orleans, 1905); Malone, "New Orleans Uptown," 245n. 11. This institution, funded in large part by Judah Touro, was necessitated by the death toll caused by the yellow fever epidemics of 1847 and 1853.

92. Heller, "Jubilee Souvenir Booklet," 11, 39.

93. Ashkenazi, *Diary of Clara Solomon*, 352.

94. William Tuckman, "Sigmund and Jacob Schlesinger and Joseph Bloch: Civil War Composers and Musicians," *AJHQ* 53, no. 1 (September 1963): 70–75. A Joseph Block is listed in Company C, Alabama State Artillery, stationed at Mobile.

95. Gov. T. H. Watts to Jefferson Davis, OR II, vol. 8, 1222–24; Nevins, *Herbert H. Lehman and His Era*, 10; Ashkenazi, *A Centennial;* Elliott Ashkenazi, "Jewish Commercial Interests between North and South: The Case of the Lehmans and the Seligmans," *AJA* 63, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1991): 25–39; "Mayer Lehman in Correspondence with General U.S. Grant, Jefferson Davis and Governor T. H. Watts of Alabama," *PAJHS* 20 (1911): 154–57 (also in OR II, 7, 1223–24 and II, 8, 69–70, 166, 365).

96. Postal and Koppman, *A Jewish Tourist's Guide to the U.S.*, 7.

97. Kenneth Libo, "The Moses of Montgomery: The Saga of a Jewish Family in the South," *Alabama Heritage* 35 (spring 1995): 18–25; Loeb book.

98. Owen, *History of Alabama*, 813.

99. Korn, *American Jewry*, 49.

100. Ibid., 49; *AJA* 13, no. 1 (April 1961): 40–42.

101. The Natchez Light Infantry was Company A of the 1st (Parton's) Mississippi, Army of 10,000. The Natchez Southrons was first Company O, then new Company B, 10th Mississippi. During the major reorganization of the Army of Tennessee, most of the 10th Mississippi became Company G, 9th Mississippi (consolidated).

102. ORN I, 19, 181–82. Report of Commodore Porter, commanding USS *Essex*, Blockading Squadron; *Aunt Sister's Book* (New York, 1929), 5–6; Turitz and Turitz, *Jews in Early Mississippi*, 11–12.

103. *Aunt Sister's Book*, 6.

104. Ibid., 8–12.

105. April 17, 1864, letter, Simon Mayer Family Papers, No. 815, Box No. 1, TU.

106. *Aunt Sister's Book*, 7–8, 15; Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 207.

107. Fedora Small Frank, "Nashville Jewry during the Civil War," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 39, no. 3 (fall 1980): 310–13; *Nashville Daily Gazette*, September 8, 1861.

108. Frank "Nashville Jewry," 313.

109. Rabbi James A. Wax, “The Jews of Memphis: 1860–1865,” *West Tennessee Historical Society Papers* 3 (1949): 39–43. Levy was a second lieutenant in the 1st Alabama, Tennessee and Mississippi infantry, also known as the 4th Confederate. He was second lieutenant of Company I, 42d Tennessee, and captain, AQM. He is referred to as a major, which he may have been late in the war.

110. Frank, “Nashville Jewry,” 315–16.

111. Ibid., 317–18.

112. *Children of Israel v. Peres*, 42 Tenn 620; Wax, “The Jews of Memphis,” 41; Lewis, *A Biblical People*, 24.

113. Frank, “Nashville Jewry,” 318–20.

114. Frank L. Byrne and Jean Powers Soman, ed., *Your True Marcus: The Civil War Letters of a Jewish Colonel* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1986), 175–203, 335. This book has been reissued as *A Jewish Colonel in the Civil War: Marcus M. Spiegel of the Ohio Volunteers*, edited by Soman and Byrne (Lincoln, Tenn.: University of Nashville Press, 1994).

115. Wax, “The Jews of Memphis,” 57, 61, 63, 64.

116. Ibid., 46, 48.

117. Iphigene Ochs Sulzberger, *From Iphigene: The Memoirs of Iphigene Ochs Sulzberger*, edited by Susan W. Dryfoos (privately printed, 1979); on Julius and Bertha Ochs see, generally, *Twentieth Century Biographical Dictionary of Notable Americans* [s.v. “Adolph Ochs”]; “Southern Jew as Businessman,” *AJH* 71, no. 3 (March 1982): 347; *Confederate Veteran* 36, no. 5 (1928): 164; Gay Talese, *The Kingdom and the Power* (New York: World Publishing Co., 1966); Gerald W. Johnson, *An Honorable Titan: A Biographical Study of Adolph S. Ochs* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1944); Susan E. Tifft and Alex S. Jones, *The Trust: The Private and Powerful Family Behind the New York Times* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1999).

118. Gay Talese, *The Kingdom and the Power*, 81–82; Susan E. Tifft and Alex S. Jones, “The Family,” *New Yorker* 75, no. 8 (April 19, 1999): 44–52.

119. Sulzberger, *From Iphigene*, 4.

120. Talese, *The Kingdom and the Power*, 83.

121. Sulzberger, *From Iphigene*, 3.

122. Ibid., 4; *Confederate Veteran* 36, no. 5 (1928): 164.

123. The 1864 date is given in G. E. Govan and J. W. Livingood, "Adolph S. Ochs: The Boy Publisher," *East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications* 17 (1945); other sources say the family moved in 1865.

124. John Y. Simon, ed., *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967–81), 7:58; Jaher, *Scapegoat*, 198–9; Korn, *American Jewry*, 122–25.

125. Korn, *American Jewry*, 122–25; Lewis, *A Biblical People*, 37–42; Schappes, *Documentary History*, 472–75. Schappes, a New Yorker who compiled this one-volume documentary history in the 1940s, omitted Grant's infamous Order Number 11, despite the fact that it was the most blatant anti-Semitic document ever issued by the U.S. government. Northern Jews of the 1950s were clearly embarrassed by this episode in American history. Schappes did, however, include documents relating to the revocation of Order Number 11 by President Lincoln. "Resembling a Czarist ukase more than an American governmental decree, Grant's order," Jaher wrote, "was the severest attempted official violation—civil or military, federal, state or local—of the rights of Jews in the history of this nation" (*Scapegoat*, 199).

126. Grant's order was not an isolated event, as his many apologists have argued. Earlier in November, he had issued two orders forbidding travel to all persons, "the Israelites especially," because they were "such an intolerable nuisance." Korn, *American Jewry*, 126; William S. McFeely, *Grant: A Biography* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1981), 123–24; Schappes, *Documentary History*, 472. One of Grant's orders instructed all railroad conductors "that no Jews are to be permitted to travel on the railroad." See Selma S. Lewis, *A Biblical People*, 38–43; Jaher, *Scapegoat*, 198–99; Joakim Isaacs, "Ulysses S. Grant and the Jews," in Johanthan D. Sarna, *The American Jewish Experience* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1986), 62–71; Brooks D. Simpson, *Ulysses S. Grant: Triumph Over Adversity, 1822–1865* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), 163–65 ("Some of his statements were clearly anti-Semitic").

Gen. William T. Sherman was, unlike Grant (who was simply reflecting the ignorance about Jews prevalent at the time), a genuine anti-Semite. "The country will swarm with dishonest Jews who will smuggle powder, pistols, percussion-caps, &c., in spite of all the guards and precautions we can give," he wrote in August 1862 (Korn, *American Jewry*, 148–49). See Sherman to Ellen Ewing Sherman, September 18, 1858, in *Home Letters of General Sherman*, edited by M. A. DeWolfe Howe (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), 155, 229–30, to Salmon Chase, August 11, 1862, in *Memoirs* *of General William T. Sherman* (New York: Appleton, 1875), 1:267, and to the adjutant general of the army, August 11, 1862, OR III, vol. 2, 350. One of Sherman's biographers, Michael Fellman, agrees that Sherman was a genuine anti-Semite. See his *Citizen Sherman: A Life of William Tecumseh Sherman* (New York: Random House, 1995), 153–54. The notorious Benjamin F. "Beast" Butler was also known to be an anti-Semite (see Jaher, *Scapegoat*, 192, 198, 200). Korn treats General Order No. 11 at length in chap. 6, "Exodus 1862," (*American Jewry*, 121–55). He does not believe that Grant was an anti-Semite and that he was instead the victim of unconscious prejudices. To his credit, Grant as president was a good friend to the Jews and had many Jewish supporters. Jewish Tennesseans, however, were not among them. Sacher provides a good summary of the episode in *A History of the Jews in America*, 78–80.

127. Coulter, *Confederate States*, 85.

128. CSR, Lewis Leon.

129. Louis Schmier, "An Act Unbecoming: Anti-Semitic Uprising in Thomas County, Georgia," *Civil War Times Illustrated* 23 (October 1984), 21–25; Louis Schmier, "Notes and Documents on the 1862 Expulsion of Jews from Thomasville, Georgia," *AJA* 32 (April 1980): 9; Mark I. Greenberg, "Ambivalent Relations: Acceptance and Anti-Semitism in Confederate Thomasviile," *AJA* 65, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1993): 13–29. Greenberg and Schmier disagree as to the seriousness of the incident.

130. Schmier, "Notes and Documents," 12–15.

131. Schmier, "An Act Unbecoming," 23.

132. Ibid., 15–16; Schmier, "An Act Unbecoming," 23.

133. Schmier, "An Act Unbecoming," 24.

134. Letter dated September 29, 1862, 4, Phillips-Myers Papers, UNC.

135. Schmier, "Notes and Documents," 15; Greenberg, "Ambivalent Relations," 15–18.

136. Schmier, "Notes and Documents," 17.

137. Ibid., 18.

138. Ibid., 25.

139. Friedman, "History of Temple Beth Israel," 35–39.

140. Jaher, *Scapegoat*, 200; Bertram Wallace Korn, "American Judeophobia: Confederate Version," in Dinnerstein and Palsson, *Jews in the South*, 147.

141. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 2:304.

142. Furguson, *Ashes of Glory*, 191; Emory M. Thomas, *The Confederate State of Richmond: A Biography of the Capitol* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971), passim.

143. Korn, "American Judeophobia," in *Jews in the South*, 135; Roland, *The Confederacy*, 89.

144. Henry S. Foote was a relative of the famed Civil War historian Shelby Foote, whose maternal grandfather was a Viennese Jew, Morris David Rosenstock, who immigrated to the South in the 1880s and worked as a plantation bookkeeper. See Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), 148.

145. Korn, "American Judeophobia," in *Jews in the South*, 139–44; Roland, *The Confederacy*, 99.

146. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:309.

147. Korn, in *Jews in the South*, 148–49.

148. Ibid., 137.

149. Jaher, *Scapegoat*, 224.

150. Berman, *Richmond's Jewry*, 185.

151. Jaher, *Scapegoat*, 224.

152. Putnam, *Richmond during the War*, 105; see also Coulter, *Confederate States*, 227.

153. Putnam, *Richmond during the War*, 105.

154. Earl Schenck Miers edited *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary* in 1958 and eliminated "Jones' constant harping on Jews," which, Miers wrote, "reaches a point of offensiveness," xxi. For the unedited, unexpurgated version, see John Beauchamp Jones, *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary at the Confederate States Capital* (New York, 1935; reprint, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993).

155. Jaher, *Scapegoat*, 197–98; Korn, *American Jewry*, 179, 184.

156. Coulter, *Confederate States*, 227.

157. Korn, *American Jewry*, 185; Korn, in *Jews in the South*, 153.

158. Korn, in *Jews in the South*, 144.

159. Berman, *Richmond's Jewry*, 188.

160. Ibid., 189; Korn, in *Jews in the South*, 150.

161. Korn, in *Jews in the South*, 150.

162. Ibid., 85.

163. Furguson, *Ashes of Glory*, 182–83.

164. Marszalek, *Diary of Miss Emma Holmes*, 209.

165. Korn, in *Jews in the South*, 142; Coulter, *Confederate States*, 223–29.

166. Coulter, *Confederate States*, 227.

167. Marszalek, *Diary of Miss Emma Holmes*, entry for August, 22, 1862.

168. Wax, "The Jews of Memphis," 73.

169. Korn, *American Jewry*, 186–87.

170. Korn, in *Jews in the South*, 143.

171. Korn, *American Jewry*, 185–86; 295n. 173; Korn, in *Jews in the South*, 152. In the Book of Joshua, seven priests bore seven rams' horns before the Ark of the Covenant and, when all the people shouted in unison, the wall of Jericho fell (Josh. 6:1–21).

172. Korn, *American Jewry*, xx; Young, *Where They Lie*, 185.

173. Butler to Edwin M. Stanton, October 1862, in James Parton, *General Butler in New Orleans* (Mason Bros., 1864); Jaher, *Scapegoat*, 198.

174. Parton, *General Butler in New Orleans*, 391–92; Jaher, *Scapegoat*, 192.

175. Korn, *American Jewry*, 163–66.

176. Coulter, *Confederate States*, 228n. 27.

177. Korn, in *Jews in the South*, 149n. 45; Moses, *Last Order*, 14.

178. Korn, *American Jewry*, 57–58.

179. Ibid., 57. In the introduction to the 1961 paperbook edition of this book, Korn revisited this conclusion, which had caused “a few eyebrows to be raised fairly high,” and found evidence “which ought to satisfy all but the most rabid anti-Confederate historians.” See also Korn, “Was There a Confederate Jewish Chaplain?” *AJHQ* 53, no. 1 (September 1963), 63–69, and “Jewish Chaplains during the Civil War,” *AJA* 1, no. 1 (June 1998): 6–22.

180. Preface to the paperback edition of Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War*, xiv.

181. Korn, *American Jewry*, 92–93.

182. Ibid., 112; Young, *Where They Lie*, 76.

183. Korn, *American Jewry*, 45–46, 112–13.

184. Ibid., 112–13. One enigmatic Northern Jew, Isachar Zacharie, President Lincoln’s chiropodist (he removed the president’s corns and bunions), took on special missions in the South. The press had a field day with Zacharie’s treatment of the president, the secretary of war, and prominent Union generals. How could the president “put his foot down firmly when he was troubled with corns?” they asked. Jackson’s “bare-footed rebels, who do not know the need or value of a chiropodist,” got the better of Zacharie’s patients, but “Dr. Zacharie has shown us precisely where the shoe pinches” (Korn, *American Jewry*, 194–96). Lincoln sent his chiropodist friend, whose family was in Savannah, on a number of secret missions, including a meeting with Judah Benjamin and other Confederate cabinet members to discuss possible cessation of hostilities in 1863 (197–200). Zacharie wrote Gen. Nathaniel Banks that “Benjamin said he was under many obligations to you for your kindness towards his *sister*.” Lincoln may have believed that Zacharie, being Jewish and having a Southern connection, could somehow reach an agreement with the Jewish Confederate secretary of state (198). Lincoln also sent Zacharie to occupied New Orleans to learn the state of affairs directly from a man he trusted, as he had done in 1861, when he sent friends to Charleston to learn the state of affairs there.

Zacharie took a special interest in the Jews of New Orleans. Some were Northerners trapped by the war. Most were Southerners who resented the occupying army. Zacharie apparently helped them cope with the Federal authorities. On another occasion, Zacharie came to the aid of Goodman L. Mordecai, who was arrested and imprisoned as a Confederate commercial agent. Goodman was the son of Benjamin Mordecai of Charleston, who had given $10,000 to the state of South Carolina when it first seceded. Zacharie went to Washington personally to ask the president to release young Mordecai, who was engaged to be married to the niece of a prominent New Yorker, Samuel A. Lewis. Upon his release, young Mordecai insisted on thanking President Lincoln personally. The president shook his hand and, in his humorous way, said, "I am happy to know that I am able to serve an enemy!" (Korn, *American Jewry*, 199).

185. Robinson, *Justice in Grey*, 418.

186. Philip Rosenheim to Amelia and Isaac Meinnart, July 8, 1863, AJA.

187. Emilie V. Jacobs, "Biography of George Jacobs," George Jacobs Papers, AJA.

188. *AJA* 10, no. 2 (October 1950): 150, 133–34.

CHAPTER 6

1. DeLeon, *Belles, Beaux, and Brains*, 178, 230; Phillips-Myers Papers, UNC.

2. K. K. Beth Elohim, *Centennial Booklet* (Charleston, 1924), 42–43.

3. Elzas, *Jews of South Carolina*, 194; K. K. Beth Elohim, *Centennial Booklet*, 42–43.

4. Biographical sketch by Solomon Breibart and Carolyn Rivers in possession of author; Hagy, *This Happy Land*, 245; Allison Demoff, “Phoebe Pember” (thesis, College of William and Mary, 1993).

5. DeLeon, *Belles, Beaux, and Brains*, 178; Woodward, *Mary Chesnut*, 707; Rubin, *Third to None*, 92.

6. David T. Morgan, “Eugenia Levy Phillips: The Civil War Experiences of a Southern Jewish Woman,” in Dinnerstein and Palsson, *Jews of the South;* Proctor and Schmier, *Selected Essays*, 95–106; David T. Morgan, “Philip Phillips: Jurist and Statesman” in Dinnerstein and Palsson, *Jews in the South*, chap. 8, p. 107–20; Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:133–60; Hagy, *This Happy Land*, 104.

7. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:161.

8. Ibid., 145.

9. Phillips Diary, Phillips-Myers Papers, UNC, 28–33; William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion: Secessionist at Bay, 1776–1854* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 553–56; Morgan, “Philip Phillips,” 117.

10. Woodward and Muhlenfeld, *The Private Mary Chesnut*, 186.

11. Caroline Myers, “Events Which Befell Us in 1861,” Phillips-Myers Papers, UNC.

12. Woodward and Muhlenfeld, *The Private Mary Chesnut*, 24.

13. Ibid., 24, 183.

14. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:134; Korn, *The Jews of Mobile*, 46–47. Korn points out that Phillips, unlike Benjamin and August Belmont, “the other two notable Jewish figures of the day,” identified with the Jewish people and religion. Temime Derech was a Polish

immigrant synagogue, yet Phillips, an acculturated Reform Jew, had no qualms about identifying himself with the congregation. See Korn, *The Jews of Mobile*, 46–47n. 30.

15. Ashkenazi, *Diary of Clara Solomon*, 290, 310.

16. Clay, *A Belle of the Fifties*, 104–5.

17. *UDC* [United Daughters of the Confederacy] *Magazine*, October 1993, 8.

18. *Spies, Scouts, and Raiders: Irregular Operations* (Alexandria, Va.: Time-Life Books, 1985), 23; Ishbel Ross, *Rebel Rose: Life of Rose O'Neal Greehow, Confederate Spy* (New York: Harper, 1954), chs. 10 and 11.

19. Pember, *A Southern Woman's Story*, 25–26.

20. Phillips Diary, 38. Mrs. Phillips states in her memoirs that her husband "had no sympathy with the Confederacy." "Mrs. Phillips: A Southern Woman's Story of Her Imprisonment in 1861 and 1862," Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, 4.

21. Ross, *Rebel Rose*, chaps. 10 and 11.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid., 169, 173.

24. August–September 1861, Journal of Eugenia Phillips, Philip Phillips Papers, Library of Congress.

25. Woodward and Muhlenfeld, *The Private Mary Chesnut*, 172.

26. Ibid., 172, 176.

27. Phillips Diary, 44; Caroline Myers, "Events Which Befell Us," Phillips-Myers Papers, UNC.

28. Phillips Diary, 49; Morgan, "Eugenia Levy Phillips," 99; Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:176–77.

29. Myers, "Events"; Morgan, "Eugenia Levy Phillips," 99.

30. Myers, "Events."

31. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:178, 179.

32. Ibid., 3:184; *Civil War Dictionary*, 109, 945.

33. Myers, “Events,” 4.

34. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:187.

35. Phillips Diary, 50.

36. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:187.

37. DeLeon, *Belles, Beaux, and Brains*, 177.

38. *UDC*, October, 1993, 9.

39. Phillips Diary, 50.

40. Myers, “Events,” 4.

41. Phillips Diary, 51.

42. Morgan, “Eugenia Levy Phillips,” 102–5; Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:189; Myers, “Events,” 4.

43. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:192–93; Morgan, “Eugenia Levy Phillips,” 104; Phillips-Myers Papers, UNC, letters dated July 10, 1862 and September 1, 1862.

44. Woodward, *Mary Chesnut*, 411.

45. Morgan, “Eugenia Levy Phillips,” 104; Ashkenazi, *Diary of Clara Solomon*, 430.

46. Phillips-Myers Papers, UNC, letter dated July 24, 1882; Philhps Diary, 52. For more on Phillips and his memoir, see p. 369.

47. William Garrett, *Reminiscences of Public Man in Alabama for Thirty Years* (reprint, Spartanburg, S.C.: n.p., 1972), 407.

48. Myers, “Events,” 4; Morgan, “Eugenia Levy Phillips,” 104–5.

49. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:194.

50. Ibid., 195.

51. Clavius Phillips to Eugenia Phillips, November 11, 1862, Phillips-Myers Papers, UNC.

52. DeLeon, *Belles, Beaux, and Brains*, 179; Phillips Diary, 51.

53. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:154.

54. Letter of Yates Levy to J. C. Levy, September 1862, Phillips-Myers Papers, UNC.

55. CSR, Clavius Phillips (Chatham Artillery, Weaton’s Co.; 2d Confederate Engineers, Co. E; 1st [Olmstead’s] Infantry).

56. Pember, *A Southern Woman’s Story*, 159; Coulter, *Confederate States*, 299; DeLeon, *Belles, Beaux, and Brains*, 179.

57. Phillips-Myers Papers, UNC, letter dated July 17, 1862.

58. Letter from Jacob C. Levy, July 1862, Phillips-Meyers Papers, UNC.

59. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:155.

60. Ibid., 155–56.

61. Ibid., 156.

62. Ibid., 158; Phillips Diary, 56–58.

63. Phillips Diary, 60.

64. Pember, *A Southern Woman’s Story*, 4.

65. Ibid., 149, 157–58.

66. Woodward, *Mary Chesnut*, 537n. 16; Pember, *A Southern Woman’s Story*, 4, 25.

67. Pember, *A Southern Woman’s Story*, 4–6, 26 (emphasis in original).

68. Phoebe Pember to Eugenia Phillips, September 13, 1863, Philip Phillips Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Phoebe Pember to Louisa Gilmer, October 20, 1863, Pember Papers, UNC.

69. Pember, *A Southern Woman’s Story*, 4–5, 23–24, 28; Robertson, *Tenting Tonight*, 95–97.

70. Pember, *A Southern Woman's Story*, 28–29.

71. Ibid., 6–7, 36–40.

72. DeLeon, *Belles, Beaux, and Brains*, 385.

73. Pember, *A Southern Woman's Story*, 42–44, 156.

74. Ibid., 66–68.

75. Ibid., 157–58.

76. Ibid., 56.

77. Ibid., 168.

78. Alison Demoff, "Phoebe Pember," 110.

79. Pember, *A Southern Woman's Story*, 137.

80. Ibid., 151–52.

81. Ibid., 151.

82. Ibid., 161–62.

83. Woodward, *Mary Chesnut*, 537.

84. Pember, *A Southern Woman's Story*, 164–67.

85. Ibid., 164–66.

86. Pember, *A Southern Woman's Story*, 82–83.

87. Ibid., 82–83.

88. Ibid., 185–92.

89. Ibid., 127–8, 136–41.

90. Ibid., 142–43.

91. Ibid., 143–44.

CHAPTER 7

1. Isaac Scherck to J. L. Meyer, Esq., September 9, 1864, Scherck Papers, AJA. A biographical sketch of Scherck appears in *History of the Jews of Louisiana*, 33.

2. Mayer Family Memoir, Atlanta Jewish Federation Archives.

3. Spencer B. King, “Fanny Cohen’s Journal of Sherman’s Occupation of Savannah,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 41 (December 1957): 414.

4. King, “Fanny Cohen’s Journal,” 410. According to Georgina L. Phillips, Mrs. Octavus Cohen’s granddaughter, General Sherman’s adjutant ordered the Cohen family out of their home within twenty-four hours so that it could be used by General Sherman as his headquarters. While Mr. Cohen was remonstrating with the adjutant, General Hazen happened by and recognized Mr. Cohen. He settled the dispute over the use of the Cohen home by using the front drawing room as his office. According to Miss Phillips, General Hazen used the drawing room as his office until he left Savannah. Note dated November 18, 1949, in the Cohen-Phillips Papers, Collection 162, Folder 2, GHS.

5. King, “Fanny Cohen’s Journal,” 412.

6. Rosen, *Confederate Charleston*, 133–34.

7. Ibid., 142.

8. Mrs. Lee Cohen Harby, quoted in *Voices of the Civil War: Charleston* (Alexandria, Va.: Time-Life Books, 1997), 158; Lee Cohen was born in 1849 and married Jacob De La Motta Harby in 1869. Hagy, *This Happy Land*, 322; front page, *New York Herald*, March 25, 1865, courtesy of Mel Young.

9. Gergel and Gergel, *Tree of Life*, 40–44.

10. Eleanor Cohen Diary, AJA, 8–9; see also Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:357–64; Gergel and Gergel, *Tree of Life*, 40; Franklin, *Private Pages*, 304–23.

11. Cohen Diary, 9; Charles Royster, *The Destructive War* (New York: Knopf, 1991), ch. 1.

12. Gergel and Gergel, *Tree of Life*, 40–41.

13. DeLeon, *Thirty Years*, 1:4–5.

14. Gergel and Gergel, *Tree of Life*, 41–42.

15. Cohen Diary, 9–10.

16. Gergel and Gergel, *Tree of Life*, 42n. 42; Korn, *American Jewry*, 53.

17. Cohen Diary, 10.

18. Gergel and Gergel, *Tree of Life*, 43.

19. Ibid., 42–43.

20. Ashley Halsey Jr., “The Last Duel in the Confederacy,” *Civil War Times Illustrated* 1, no. 7 (November 1962): 6–8, 31; *Confederate Veteran* 9 (1901): 500–501 (Hart’s Battery); Randolph W. Kirkland, Jr., *Broken Fortunes: South Carolina Soldiers, Sailors, and Citizens Who Died in the Service of Their Country and State in the War for Southern Independence, 1861–1865* (Charleston: South Carolina Historical Society, 1995), 69; Baker, *Cadets in Gray*, 192; *Roster of Confederate Soldiers;* Wolf, *American Jew*, 374.

21. Tidwell, *Come Retribution*, 24, 65, 89, 213, 337–41; Tidwell, *April ’65*, 12–13, 28, 162–64; Chamlee, *Lincoln’s Assassins*, 532; Hanchett, *Lincoln Murder Conspiracies*, 52.

22. A. A. Hoehling and Mary Hoehling, *The Day Richmond Died* (San Diego: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1981), 105–15.

23. Axelrod, *The War Between the Spies*, passim; Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 294.

24. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:327; Furguson, *Ashes of Glory*, 326–33.

25. Furguson, *Ashes of Glory*, 325.

26. Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 312; Hanna, *Flight into Oblivion*, 31.

27. Furguson, *Ashes of Glory*, 332.

28. Whitelock MS, 125–27; Furguson, *Ashes of Glory*, 328–29. Whitelock believed the fires were set by escapees from the penitentiary who did it to mask their crimes. “I saw this with my own Eyes” (127).

29. Whitelock MS, VHS 127–29.

30. Ibid., 130.

31. Furguson, *Ashes of Glory*, 344–46.

32. Whitelock MS, VHS, 131. He correctly describes Lincoln as being guarded by "a few marines or sailors."

33. *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 41 (October 1933): 318–22.

34. Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 314. Alfred, Lord Tennyson, wrote his famous ode in 1852.

35. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:312–15.

36. Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 308; Hanna, *Flight into Oblivion*, 45.

37. Long, *The Civil War Day by Day*, 679–80; Foote, *The Civil War*, 3: chap. 8.

38. Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 303, 306, 334; Gruss, "Judah Philip Benjamin," 999, 1002; John M. Taylor, *W. H. Seward: Lincoln's Right Hand* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 261.

39. Hanchett, *Lincoln Murder Conspiracies*, 72, 107.

40. Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 271–72.

41. Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 312–15; Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 318; *Neiman, Judah Benjamin*, 190.

42. Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 322.

43. Thompson, "Yulee," 556, 602, 567.

44. Ibid., 580.

45. A. J. Hanna, "The Confederate Baggage and Treasure Train Ends Its Flight in Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 24, no. 3 (January 1939): 158–80 (an introduction to the diary of Tench Francis Tilghman).

46. Alroy Jonas letter, November 19, 1936, Korn Papers, AJA.

47. See pp. 152–53 and n. 249, ch. 3, p. 416.

48. Mayer enlisted originally in the 5th Mississippi Army of 10,000, later redesignated Parton's 1st Mississippi. When his original enlistment expired, he joined the Natchez Southrons, Company O of the 10th Mississippi. Later, it was redesignated Company B. He served as a clerk in the assistant adjutant general's office of Brig. Gen. James R. Chalmer's brigade, then in the same capacity on the division staff. He was promoted to first lieutenant on April 8, 1865. Because of the various consolidations of regiments, Mayer ended the war in Company D, 9th Mississippi (consolidated). See CSR, Company O, 10th Mississippi, Company A, 1st Mississippi; *Military History of Mississippi*, 208–18. When he was paroled, he was officially recognized as a first lieutenant in the Consolidated 9th Mississippi. However, a provost marshall pass given him in Montgomery three weeks later shows him as a major and assistant adjutant of Sharp's brigade. In a letter dated May 3, 1865, he addresses himself as "Major" with the quotation marks. Thus, he may have been promoted to major unofficially in the field by General Sharp or assumed the rank temporarily, as befits an assistant adjutant general of a unit composed of the remains of three brigades.

49. Letter dated May 3, 1865, Sharp's Brigade, TU; Order of Provost Marshall, May 25, 1865, Simon Mayer Papers, Box 1, TU.

50. Jacobs, *Biography of George Jacobs;* Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *History of the Jews of Richmond*, 177; Berman, *Richmond's Jewry*, 196–98.

51. Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *History of the Jews of Richmond*, 158.

52. Bultman, "The Story of a Good Life," 2.

53. Moses, *Last Order*, 224, 249, 264, 265; obituary of Raphael Moses Jr., 1909.

54. Moses, *Last Order*, 249, 251, 252.

55. Ibid., 253.

56. Ibid., 255.

57. It could not have been the last order because the last significant land battle was fought at Palmito Ranch, Texas, on May 13; Stand Watie surrendered June 23; the Trans-Mississippi surrendered May 26; and the CSS *Shenandoah* surrendered at Liverpool, England, on November 6. Nevertheless, it was the last order of the Confederate army in the main theater of the war, and arguably the last order of the Confederate government.

58. Thompson, "David Yulee," 166.

59. Ibid., 172.

60. Yulee, “Senator David L. Yulee,” 2:2, 12–15; Thompson, “David Yulee,” 171, and n. 23.

61. Clarke, “Florida Railroad,” 191; Thompson, “David Yulee,” 169–70, 174, 575.

62. Clay, *A Belle of the Fifties*, 54; Mary Bernard Allen, “Joseph Holt, Judge Advocate General (1862–1875): A Study in the Treatment of Political Prisoners by the United States Government during the Civil War” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1927), 48, 66; on Holt, see also Roger J. Bartman, “The Contribution of Joseph Holt to the Political Life of the United States” (Ph.D. diss., Fordham University, 1958); David Donald, *Lincoln* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), 313, 325, 333, 550; Thompson, “David Yulee,” 173.

63. Thompson, “David Yulee,” 173.

64. OR II, 8, 668–893, especially 862.

65. Yulee, “Senator David L. Yulee,” 14.

66. Ibid., 594.

67. Thompson, “David Yulee,” 175; Hühner, “David L. Yulee,” 28.

68. Berman, *Richmond’s Jewry*, 196–97.

CHAPTER 8

1. Notes by Judith Hyams Douglas, October 19, 1936, AJA.

2. Moses, *Last Order*, 243–44, roster of Confederate soldiers.

3. Ibid., xvi, 268–69.

4. Letter from Hyams dated April 19, 1968, to "My Dear Caroline," AJA.

5. "Thomas O. Moore, Governor 1860–1," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 13 (January 1930): 20–22, Hyams letter dated September 10, 1865, to Moore.

6. The literature on Reconstruction is massive and controversial. E. Merton Coulter gives the traditional Southern viewpoint in *The South during Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1947).

The most recent revisionist view which rehabilitates (or tries to rehabilitate, depending on one's point of view) the carpetbaggers and scalawags is represented by Richard Current in *Those Terrible Carpetbaggers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988) and Eric Foner in *Reconstruction, 1863–1877: America's Unfinished Revolution* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988). Three works on South Carolina illustrate the debate: Francis Butler Simians and Robert Hilliard Woody give a balanced account in *South Carolina during Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1932); Richard Zuczek in *State of Rebellion Reconstruction in South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996) describes Reconstruction as a continuation of the war and emphasizes the white Redeemers' use of fraud, coercion, and terrorism. Edmund L. Drago gives the "postrevisionist" version in *Hurrah for Hampton! Black Red Shirts in South Carolina during Reconstruction* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1998), which argues that some blacks did indeed support the Redeemer movement. The historiography of Reconstruction reflects the emotions and politics of the times. See Zuczek's excellent introduction to *State of Rebellion*.

7. Letter from Hyams dated April 19, 1868, to "My Dear Caroline," AJA.

8. *New Orleans Daily Picayune* and the *New Orleans Times*, June 26, 1875.

9. See chapter 3, note 90, pp. 408–9.

10. Elzas, *Jews of South Carolina*, 231, 265; Penelope Franklin, ed., *Private Pages: Diaries of American Women, 1830s-1970s* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1986), 318–

21 (diary at 304–23); Moise, *Moise Family*, 7.

11. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:342–34.

12. Ibid., 3:346.

13. Ibid., 3:364.

14. Reznikoff and Engelman, *Jews of Charleston*, 303–4; Elzas, *Jews of South Carolina*, 223–37.

15. Reznikoff and Engelman, *Jews of Charleston*, 305n. 235; 163–67.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid., 163–64.

18. Ibid., 162–63.

19. Moise, *Moise Family*, 91; Jacob S. Raisin, *Centennial Booklet* (Charleston: KKBE, 1925).

20. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:341.

21. Saul Viener, "Rosena Hutzler Levy Recalls the Civil War," *AJHQ* 62, no. 3 (March 1973): 313.

22. Ibid., 200; Berman, *Richmond's Jewry*, 198.

23. Viener, "Rosena Hutzler," 202–3.

24. Herbert Ezekiel, "The Jews of Richmond during the Civil War"; Minutes of Beth Ahabah, BA.

25. Berman, *Richmond's Jewry*, 45; Furguson, *Ashes of Glory*, chap. 26.

26. Undated clipping, George Jacobs scrapbook, AJA. The circular is reproduced on page 339. See also Korn, *American Jewry*, 110–12.

27. Berman, *Richmond's Jewry*, 200, 206, 377n. 76.

28. Frank, "Nashville Jewry," 319.

29. Postal and Koppman, *A Jewish Tourist's Guide to the U.S.*, 587, 594.

30. Libo and Howe, *We Lived There Too*, 150–51.

31. Janice O. Rothschild, *As But a Day: The First Hundred Years, 1867–1967* (Atlanta: Hebrew Benevolent Congregation, The Temple, 1967), 2–3.

32. James Grant, *Bernard M. Baruch: The Adventures of a Wall Street Legend* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983), chap. 1, "A Doctor's Son." (Deborah Marks, whose father, Samuel Marks, arrived in South Carolina about 1800, married Rabbi Hartwig Cohen. Their daughter Sarah Cohen married Prussian immigrant Saling Wolfe. Simon Baruch married their daughter Isabelle.)

33. Even though Simon had courted Belle for years, the marriage was not a foregone conclusion. When Sherman's troops were setting fire to the Wolfe home, Belle, then fifteen, ran to save a portrait she had painted of Simon. A Yankee soldier took it from her and ripped it with his bayonet. When she protested, the soldier slapped her. A Union officer, Capt. John J. Cantine, came to her rescue and beat the soldier with the flat of his sword. A romance ensued between Belle and Cantine. But Simon persisted. Bernard Baruch later wrote in his memoirs that when he was chairman of the War Industries Board during World War I, he was visited by a young man seeking help to get overseas to the fighting front. He carried a letter of introduction from Baruch's mother. "The bearer of this," she wrote, "is a son of Captain Cantine. I know you will do what you can for him." Baruch, *My Own Story*, 20–21.

34. Baruch, *My Own Story*, 32, 34.

35. *Aunt Sister's Book*, 3, 14, 17; Marcus, *Memoirs*, 1:269 (portions of *Aunt Sister's Book* are printed in Marcus).

36. Ashkenazi, *A Centennial: Lehman Brothers*, 11, 13, 20.

37. Korn, "The Jews of the Confederacy," 6; DeLeon, *Four Years*, 10–11, "Sketch of the Author"; *Who Was Who*, 312.

38. Rubin, *Third to None*, 88, 145, 175; Jacob C. Levy letter dated March 24, 1868, in Phillips-Myers Papers, UNC.

39. Clay, *A Belle of the Fifties*, 277.

40. Ibid. The reference is to Haman, the minister of Ashasuerus, who plotted to kill the Jews in Persia. He was thwarted by Queen Esther, a Jewish woman, who saved her

people at the risk of her own life. The holiday of Purim celebrates this event. See "Purim" in glossary. This story illustrates how well-versed Southerners were in the Old Testament. The story is told in the Book of Esther.

41. "Some Memories," Phillips-Myers Papers, UNC, October 1900, p. 2; Rubin, *Third to None*, 134.

42. Letter of J. C. Levy, March 24, 1868, in Phillips-Myers Papers, UNC.

43. Yulee, "Senator David L. Yulee," 15–17; Thompson, "David Yulee," 219.

44. Julia McFarlane to Korn, March 19, 1962, Korn Papers, AJA; *Aberdeen (Miss.) Examiner*, October 15, 1936 ("Major Jonas Corner") clipping in Korn Papers (Jonas).

45. *Aberdeen (Miss.) Examiner*, April 28, 1966, Korn Papers (Jonas), AJA.

46. *Poems of Octavia Harby Moses* (privately printed).

47. *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, November 3, 8; December 6, 10, 16, 1865; Jonas Executive Committee memo, December 12, 1903, Stephens Memorial Library, Southwestern Louisiana Institute; "Speech of Honorable Benjamin F. Jonas of Louisiana in the Senate of the United States, May 20, 1879" (Washington, 1879). While Jonas's own election was undisputed, he and a fellow senator were met at the door of the capitol by an "insolent" Federal officer demanding to know his name. The officer let Jonas pass as the court order affirmed his election, but refused admission to his colleague.

48. Ted Tunnell, ed., *Carpetbagger from Vermont* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 131–33.

49. "Speech of Honorable Benjamin F. Jonas …," May 20, 1879, 14–15.

50. Moise, *Moise Family*, 112–15; CSR, E. W. Moise.

51. *DAB;* Harry Simonhoff, *Saga of American Jewry, 1865–1914* (New York: Arco, 1959), 21–27; R. H. Woody, "Franklin J. Moses, Jr.: Scalawag Governor of South Carolina, 1872–74," *North Carolina Historical Review* (April 1933): 111; Elzas, *Jews of South Carolina*, 197–99; Moise, *Moise Family*, 116–25; interview with Robert Moses of Sumter, South Carolina. Even Richard Zuczek in his revisionist work *State of Rebellion: Reconstruction in South Carolina* concedes Moses was corrupt (136). See also Francis Butler Simkins and Robert Hilliard Woody, *South Carolina during Reconstruction*. Much to the horror of South Carolina Jewry, Franklin J. Moses continues to be identified with the Jewish people. Richard N. Current in *Those Terrible*

Carpetbaggers: A Reinterpretation identifies Moses as a "descendent of a prominent South Carolina Jewish family" (145). Walter Edgar gives a balanced account in *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), but still refers to Moses as "the infamous scalawag" (402). Moise's warning that he would kill Moses is confirmed by the Moses family in Sumter. R. H. Woody in his article on Moses confirms that Charles H. Moise threatened in a public speech to march to the courthouse with "a band of determined men" with "muskets on our shoulders" (129).

52. Simkins and Woody, *South Carolina during Reconstruction*, 142–43; obituary, *News and Courier*, March 7, 1877.

53. Obituary, *News and Courier*, March 7, 1877; see also Simonhoff, *Saga*, 21–28. Moses was the first Jew to serve as chief justice of the supreme court of any American state. But, in the eyes "of white Carolinians, Franklin J. Moses, Sr., became a scalawag, guilty of treachery to his state and to the white race" (24); Elzas (*Jews of South Carolina*, 197–99) was adamant that "the notorious Governor" was not "brought up as a Jew, nor were his affiliations Jewish in any way" (199).

54. Manley Wade Wellman, *Giant in Gray: A Biography of Wade Hampton of South Carolina* (reprint, Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Bookshop, 1980), 262.

55. Moise, *Moise Family*, 123–25.

56. Moses, *Last Order*, 280, 287.

57. Quoted in Simonhoff, *Saga*, 7.

58. The ladies he had appointed were, of course, all grateful to him, except one—Phoebe Yates Pember. Moses had her appointed at the request of her brother-in-law, Octavus Cohen of Savannah, who was Eliza Moses's cousin. "When I had her appointed," Moses recalled, "she wrote me a letter profuse with grateful acknowledgments in giving her a competence when she said she was earning her bread by her needle." Afterward, Mrs. Pember was dissatisfied with her $2,000 annual salary, which, according to Moses, "didn't satisfy her extravagance." She attempted to sell her interest to an investor and make a substantial profit, but Moses scotched her plan. "I have heard of several of her tongue lashings," Moses later wrote, "but I have always regarded her enmity as lightly as I did her friendship." Moses, *Last Order*, 269–80.

59. Ibid., 280–82; Derrell C. Roberts, *Joseph E. Brown and the Politics of Reconstruction* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1973), chap. 7.

60. Moses, *Last Order*, 297.

61. Ibid., 302–4.

62. Ibid., 263.

63. Ibid., 311, 321.

64. Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 321.

65. Gruss, “Judah Philip Benjamin,” 969–70, 1049.

66. Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, chap. 18.

67. Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 340–41; Davis, *Jefferson Davis*, 656–57.

68. Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 369.

69. Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 377.

70. Neiman, *Judah Benjamin*, 209; Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 381.

71. Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 362. Benjamin’s only child, his daughter, never had children.

72. Gruss, “Judah Philip Benjamin,” 1068.

EPILOGUE

1. Visit to Père Lachaise Cemetery; copy of card in possession of author; Evans, *Judah Benjamin*, 402–3. Evans writes, "It is as if he tried to escape notice even in Paris." The United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), founded in 1895, is sometimes referred to as the Daughters of the Confederacy. See *Encyclopedia of the Confederacy*, 3:1027–28 ("Memorial Organizations").

2. Clipping, April 16, 1906, in "In Memoriam" book of clippings, Kruttschnitt Papers, HNOC.

3. Judah Benjamin Papers, Memorabilia, AJHS. "The Life of Judah Philip Benjamin," a pamphlet published by the Louisiana State Museum (March 27, 1937), is in the possession of the author. The granite marker in Charlotte is still there. It marks the site of Abram Weil's home on the main street of downtown Charlotte, where Benjamin stayed.

4. Bertram W. Korn, "Judah Benjamin as a Jew," *PAJHS* 38, pt. 1 (September 1948): 170. Korn believed Benjamin to be "one of the most distinguished Jews in all American history" (169); Rabbi Calisch's remarks in *Southern Historical Society Papers* 40 (September 1915): 240.

5. "Address of Honorable B. F. Jonas at the Laying of the Corner Stone of the Monument to the Memory of the Confederate Dead at Baton Rouge, February 22, 1886" (New Orleans, 1886), Favrat Collection, TU.

6. *History of the Jews of Louisiana* (1903); obituary at Touro Infirmary Archive, New Orleans.

7. Census data in possession of Cathy Kahn, New Orleans.

8. Hyman, *Oleander Odyssey*, 13–48.

9. Obituary, *Pittsburgh Evening Leader*, November 16, 1897, in Levy File, BA; Report of Robert E. Lee Camp, No. 1, November 19, 1897, Leopold Levy File, BA.

10. Lee-Jackson Memorial Service Program, January 19, 1988, Leopold Levy File, BA.

11. Moses, *Last Order*, 324–32; Simonhoff, *Saga*, 6. Raphael Jr. and his wife, Georgina, moved to New York in 1871. The former Confederate naval officer from Georgia became a successful New York lawyer. He died in 1909 (*Columbus Enquirer-*

Sun, December 14, 1909, p. 8, Confederate Naval Museum). “Major” Israel Nunez and his wife, Anna Moses, moved to Austin, Texas. Stanford, Raphael’s grandson, graduated from Annapolis and was a career naval officer. He retired as a captain in 1927. Belle Moses, Mrs. Lionel C. Levy, continued to reside at The Esquiline into the twentieth century. She resided there when Raphael Jr.’s body was returned from New York so he could be buried on his father’s and mother’s plantation in Columbus, Georgia.

12. Obituary, Proskauer Papers, AJA; Sacher, *A History of the Jews in America*, 459, 468, 471, 564–65.

13. Nevins, *Herbert H. Lehman*, 11, 13, 20.

14. Letters to Leovy from Jefferson Davis and William Preston Johnston, Leovy Papers, HNOC.

15. Obituary, *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, October 4, 1902; 10, col. 2.

16. Moise, *Moise Family*, 126.

17. *Shreveport (La.) Times*, February 13, 1869; interview with Eric Brock, Shreveport, in *Shreveport Magazine*, February 1977, 29.

18. Obituary, *Norfolk Landmark*, September 22, 1911.

19. Yulee, “Senator David L. Yulee,” 17; Korn Collection, folder 34/8, AJA.

20. Creeger, “Michelbacher,” 5–6.

21. *Southern Historical Society Papers*, 10:248–50.

22. Yvonne Strug, pamphlet titled “History of Temple Sinai, New Orleans, 1870–1995”; quoted by Leo Shpall, “Rabbi James Koppel Guttheim [*sic*],” *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 22 (1939), 169–70.

23. *The American Hebrew*, clipping, July 18, 1884, G. Jacobs Scrapbook, AJA.

24. DeLeon, “Sketch”; Greenberg, “Becoming Southern,” 59–60.

25. Woodward, *Mary Chesnut*, xv, xii–xiv.

26. *Confederate Veteran* 18 (1910): 379; *Who Was Who*, 312.

27. DeLeon, “Sketch”; Elzas, *Jews of South Carolina*, 273.

28. Sulzberger, *Iphigene*, 4–5.

29. Simonhoff, *Saga*, 289–96; Johnson, *An Honorable Titan*, passim. See chap. 5, note 117, p. 431. *The Confederate Veteran* recalled Ochs as “modest and genteel” and recalled that “Mr. Ochs’s Southern friends rarely have a wish that is not developed in the *New York Times”* (13, no. 12 [December 1905]: 578–79).

30. Ashkenazi, *Diary of Clara Solomon*, 439–44.

31. The monument was later moved to the Jonas family plot at Oddfellows Rest Cemetery in Aberdeen (*Aberdeen [Miss.] Examiner*, April 28, 1966).

32. Margaret Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind* (New York: Scribner, 1996; originally published New York: Macmillan, 1936), 485.

33. *Aunt Sister’s Book;* Stem, *Americans of Jewish Descent;* Marcus, *Memoirs*, 1:261.

34. “Speech on the Anniversary Birth, Gen. Lee,” January 19, 1898, Simon Mayer Papers, Box 1, TU.

35. Ezekiel, “The Jews of Richmond during the Civil War.”

36. Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:197, 236.

37. J. C. Hemphill, ed., *Men of Mark in South Carolina* (Washington D.C.: 1907), 206–8.

38. Simonhoff, *Saga*, 137–42; Arthur Coe, “Sir Moses J. Ezekiel: A True Son of the Confederacy,” *Jewish Veteran* (Winter 1995): 17; Guy R. Swanson, “Sir Moses Ezekiel: The Contribution of a Sculptor,” *Southern Jewish Historical Society Journal* 3–4 (Lee quote); *Confederate Veteran*, May 17, 1917, 235–6.

39. Obituary, Levy Papers, AJA.

40. Libo, “The Moses of Montgomery,” 20–25.

41. Ibid., 25.

42. Obituary in Whitelock MS, VHS.

43. Philip Phillips Diary, Phillips-Myers Papers, UNC; Marcus, *Memoirs*, 3:153–54.

44. Phillips-Myers Papers, UNC, undated clipping.

45. DeLeon, *Belles, Beaux, and Brains*, 178; *Roster of Confederate Soldiers*.

46. Obituaries of Eugenia Phillips and other family members. Phillips-Myers Papers, UNC. Stem, *Americans of Jewish Descent*.

47. Morgan, "Eugenia Levy Phillips," 105; C. Myers, Phillips-Myers Papers, UNC.

48. Demoff, "Phoebe Pember."

49. Pember, *A Southern Woman's Story*, 16; *Civil War News*, September 1995, 71.

50. Simonhoff, *Saga*, 238–43.

51. Grant, *Adventures of a Wall Street Legend*, chap. 1, 24; *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia; DAB*.

52. In 1914 Baruch wrote an article titled "The Heroic Death of Marcus Baum," about the brother of his benefactor Mannes Baum. General Longstreet's book *From Manassas to Appomattox* had mentioned an orderly named "Bowen" of Kershaw's staff who was killed at the Wilderness in May 1864. Baruch knew that "Bowen" was a mispronunciation of "Baum" (pronounced "Bomb") and recalled young Marcus's dashing into camp on a white horse. "Do you hear that volley, Marcus?" Baruch had told young Baum. "The General is always in the front." "I must go to him at once," Marcus cried, and sped off. Marcus Baum reached Longstreet and was killed at his side. "It is but just," Dr. Baruch wrote for the benefit of the Confederate veterans still living, "to chronicle this historic fact and correct the name … [Marcus Baum] was a German and a Hebrew. Though exempt from military duty as a foreigner, he enlisted early. No braver man, none truer to the cause, no soldier more loyal to his chief ever breathed than Marcus Baum" (*Confederate Veteran* 22, no. 4 [April 1914]: 170).

53. Grant, *Adventures of a Wall Street Legend*, ch. 1; Baruch, *My Own Story*, 35; *Confederate Veteran* 29 (1921): 433. A resolution of the Bedford Forrest Camp, U.C.V., Arlington, Texas, said Baruch was a great friend of Lee, which he was not; that he was "always at the front," which he was not; and that he was captured because he was at the front, which he was not.

54. Quoted by Eli N. Evans, *The Provincials*, 43.

55. Belinda F. Gergel, "Assimilated 'New South' Daughter: Irene Goldsmith Kohn and the Widening Sphere of Jewish Women in Early Twentieth Century South Carolina," a

paper for presentation at the Conference on Southern Women's History, Charleston, June 1, 1997; copy of Irene Kohn's UDC application courtesy of Belinda F. Gergel and Julian Hennig Jr., Columbia, S.C. The inscription to Hilzeim reads, in full, as follows:

In Memoriam of Our Dear Son Alexander M. Hilzeim

A victim at 18 years to the horrors of war. Wounded at Kennesaw Mountain, Georgia, he fills an unknown grave. We do not mourn his loss as God gave and God hath taken away. Truly the works of God are incomprehensible.

(Elzas, *The Old Jewish Cemeteries at Charleston, S.C.* [Charleston, 1903], 42).

56. Berman, *Richmond's Jewry*, 44.

AUTHOR’S NOTE

SPELLING, capitalization, italicization, abbreviation, and punctuation in quotations from primary sources have been modernized for readability.

Introduction

ON A TINY ISLAND at the edge of the West Indies, Alexander Hamilton began an unlikely journey. He overcame the perils of orphanhood and decamped from the tropics as a teenager to become a vital figure in the birth of the United States. From the battlefield and the bank to the courtroom and the cabinet, Hamilton shaped the republic to a degree that few others could boast. The remarkable events of his American years have long intrigued scholars and, more recently, theater audiences. While Hamilton biographers are exhaustive in their study of his adulthood, research into his obscure upbringing remains scarce. Yet his Caribbean past is not merely an exotic footnote to the high drama of his American life. Hamilton, like all people, was a product of his roots, and so his West Indian youth matters—not least because he was probably born and raised a Jew.

For more than two centuries, the scant treatment of Hamilton's boyhood has proceeded from a default assumption that he and his relatives were cradle-to-grave Christians. That assumption warps how historians approach his Caribbean background and leads to a double error. For one, they make a series of claims about Hamilton's origins that comport with the premise of his Christian identity but have little grounding in evidence. Moreover, archival sources that should prompt scholars to question this premise are mistakenly interpreted so as to preserve the presumption that he was Christian. By subjecting untested claims to scrutiny and reckoning anew with the historical record, this book concludes that Hamilton, in all likelihood, grew up as a member of the Jewish people.

To be sure, Hamilton did not maintain any identity as a Jew in America. Still, his early engagement with Judaism is hardly just a trivial curiosity. It provides critical context for understanding why the adult Hamilton, more than any other founding father, was connected to Jews and fond of their faith.[1] Many founders commended Jewry and Judaism in one breath only to condemn them in the next. In contrast, Hamilton's favorable relationships with Jews and reverential sentiments about the Jewish religion stand unblemished by bias.

The Hamiltonian-Jewish alliance, in turn, opens a unique window onto the early American republic writ large. A paradox vexed the nation from its inception. The

United States was conceived in the name of equality yet defined by hereditary hierarchy—free over slave, white over Native, propertied over landless, man over woman, Christian over Jew. American Jewry challenged the country to confront this paradox directly. Having spilled blood and spent treasure in service of the Revolution, Jews began advocating for a status that Europe denied them for centuries and the Declaration of Independence championed: equality.

The rightful role of Jewry became a subject of fierce debate among Americans of the era. Many Gentiles had long resented Jewish participation in commerce and now balked at the prospect of full-fledged Jewish involvement in civic life. They responded with consternation as Jews grasped for access to the courthouse, ballot box, and elected office. That the Jewish population was miniscule—about one-tenth of a percent—yet prompted such outsized angst speaks to the depth of contemporary antisemitism. Against these reactionary forces, Alexander Hamilton sought an economic and legal order where his Jewish compatriots would stand equal to their Christian neighbors.

The successes Hamilton achieved to that end illustrate the democratic possibilities of the new nation. Just the same, the obstacles he encountered mark the limitations of an America still rife with inherited inequality. The following chapters are as much about the Jewish world of the early republic as they are about Hamilton—and it is the relationship between the two that shows us afresh how the aftermath of the Revolution was neither an undeviating march toward modern equality nor a pure perpetuation of traditional hierarchy. We instead find a young country uneasily navigating the contested terrain between New World promises and Old World prejudices.

Any claim concerning Hamilton's Jewishness must begin with his mother, Rachel, given the matrilineal nature of Jewish identity. She was unquestionably from a Christian family in the British Caribbean. Rachel wedded a colonist in the Danish West Indies named Johan Levine. Although numerous scholars assume he was not Jewish, considerable evidence suggests otherwise, including the unambiguous declaration from Hamilton's own grandson that Johan was a "rich Danish Jew."[2]

There are compelling reasons to think Rachel converted to Judaism for marriage. When the couple had a son, Peter, they abstained from the standard Christian practice of infant baptism. Peter Levine would later be baptized as an adult under circumstances that indicate he was converting to Christianity and thus not a Christian in childhood. Hamilton scholars do not entertain the possibility that Peter had been Jewish and so remain baffled by his adult baptism.

Rachel fled her marriage and bore Alexander out of wedlock to a Christian, yet she chose to enroll Alexander in a Jewish school. His Jewish education is a well-established fact. Some biographers presume that Alexander attended a Jewish school because his illegitimacy must have precluded him from church schooling. Yet the church records do not support the supposition that out-of-wedlock birth posed an obstacle to church membership. And a host of communal, theological, and political factors give us ample cause to believe that the Jewish school would have accepted Alexander only if the local Jewish community considered him one of its own.

His matriculation at the Jewish school also stands as the best evidence that Rachel had earlier converted to Judaism. Because Jewish identity passes through the mother, any recognition by the Jewish school of Alexander as a coreligionist means that it necessarily would have regarded Rachel in the same light. If we assume that she had no prior identity as a Jew, it is hard to make sense of why Rachel would, or how she even could, choose to arrange a Jewish education for her son. Allow for the possibility of her Jewish identity, however, and such difficulties disappear. Two other long-known details about Rachel, which Hamilton biographers mention but treat with no particular significance, harmonize with the notion that she was Jewish. Rachel kept the surname "Levine" long after she severed ties to Johan—until her death, in fact. And upon her passing she was not buried in a church cemetery.

Hamilton was only thirteen when his mother succumbed to a fatal illness, and he stayed in the Caribbean until the age of eighteen. A recently unearthed legal case from those intervening years makes plain that he presented himself as Christian at seventeen—but it also suggests that his affiliation with Christianity had not been lifelong. When assessed for his competency to swear on the Bible as a witness, Hamilton described himself as Anglican. Yet the court prevented him from giving sworn testimony after Hamilton conceded that he had never before received communion. His failure to have participated in the sacrament of communion would be an oddity if he were raised Anglican but is far more explicable if he were a latecomer to the Christian faith.

Tellingly, Hamilton in his American years was both willing and able to conceal parts of his West Indian background. Newly uncovered records reveal that he fabricated his year of birth after leaving the islands. Hamilton maintained this myth for the duration of his adulthood without any Caribbean contemporary ever exposing him, rendering it all the more plausible that he could obscure a Jewish heritage with similar success.

The theory that Alexander Hamilton probably had a Jewish past may seem, on its face, provocative. But were the foregoing facts presented about the early life and family history of any ordinary Caribbean colonist rather than an American founder, it would be uncontentious to claim that the balance of evidence points to his status as a Jew. And if indeed the evidence of Hamilton's Jewish identity is not controversial, but the idea of it remains so, then perhaps the question of Jewish belonging in the United States is as fraught in our time as it was in his own.

This inquiry requires important caveats. Jewish identity has many dimensions—religious, cultural, legal, communal, and ethnic, among others. Often these dimensions overlap for a given individual; sometimes they conflict. The eighteenth-century Atlantic world featured a diverse array of people who were Jewish in some senses and not others, from crypto-Jews to Afro-Caribbean Jews to Gentiles who converted for marriage. An investigation into whether Hamilton was Jewish cannot, therefore, force him into either of two categories: Jew or non-Jew. It must instead center on the likelihood that he had a Jewish identity in any number of the term's multiple meanings for any period of his life.

Furthermore, the process of recreating the personal history of an inconspicuous adult from the West Indies of that time period is an admittedly thorny enterprise, much more so a child. Hurricanes and fires have degraded the historical record. Many of the documents that do survive have been partially eaten by termites. We are left with remnants of individual lives, scraps of evidence that must be read within the context of what is known about the region and era. A great deal of what might be said about most aspects of Hamilton's upbringing and kin are matters of probabilities rather than certainties. The case for his Jewish identity is no different.

If Hamilton were likely Jewish, then the question arises of how such a significant feature about a historical icon escaped notice for so long. It is, in fact, unsurprising that a principal part of his boyhood could have evaded his numerous biographers. After all, the adult Hamilton refrained from discussion of his youth with few exceptions. He was notoriously outspoken—often to a fault—about every vital matter in his American life, making his self-censorship around his Caribbean origins especially striking. Undoubtedly, Hamilton's illegitimate birth was a topic he preferred to avoid.[3] And the United States suffered from antisemitic biases; for a statesman whose acceptance into the highest echelons of national politics required at least a nominal pretense to a Christian identity, keeping quiet about any Jewish roots would have been highly prudent.

Hamilton scholars have largely followed the lead of their subject in glossing over his beginnings. Their interests lie in the spectacle of his American years. Excavating the details of Hamilton's West Indian past is not only a peripheral but relatively recent undertaking. Even a fact as basic as his mother's name remained unknown to historians until the twentieth century.[4] It should come as little wonder, then, that his religious upbringing is an underdeveloped field of study.

What's more, materials pertaining to Hamilton's origins are much less accessible, both linguistically and geographically, than those concerning his adulthood. The latter sources are overwhelmingly in English and either available in published form or conveniently located in archives in the United States. By contrast, documents germane to his Caribbean background appear in a variety of languages—Danish, Portuguese, French, Dutch, and German—and are scattered across West Indian islands as well as the European countries that colonized them. The arduous task of reconstructing Hamilton’s elusive childhood is hardly worth the effort for his typical biographer whose native tongue is English and whose attention focuses on topics like the Federalist Papers or the Treasury Department.

When historians do write about Hamilton’s youth and family of origin, they usually proceed in cursory fashion and recycle untested claims from other scholars. Many of these claims, which take as an article of faith the Christian identities of Hamilton and his relatives, do not withstand scrutiny. And so it is a litany of factors—Hamilton’s secrecy, biographers’ interests, lingual barriers, remote sources, and faulty assumptions—that have all coalesced to inadvertently obscure important facets of his past.

The adult Hamilton never presented himself as Jewish. Nor is there evidence that he covertly practiced Judaism in his maturity. We have, moreover, no indication that upon reaching America he divulged to anyone a prior identity as a Jew. Yet his links to Jewry did not end with his Caribbean boyhood.

Hamilton is best remembered for his financial wizardry, and Jews were pivotal players in his bid to turn the United States into a banking and commercial power. He also served as a distinguished lawyer in New York City, where he represented Jewish citizens in the courts. And at his alma mater, Columbia, Hamilton helped spearhead reforms that were friendly to Jews. He proved instrumental in placing the first Jew on the college board, abolishing mandatory forms of Christian worship for undergraduates, and repealing a religious test that had disqualified Jews and other non-Anglicans from the Columbia presidency.

Keenly aware of the recurrent persecution that Jews suffered, Hamilton viewed their survival since antiquity as beyond remarkable—God’s hand was surely at work. He marveled that the “progress of the Jews … from their earliest history to the present time has been and is entirely out of the ordinary course of human affairs. Is it not then a fair conclusion that the cause also is an *extraordinary one*—in other words, that it is the effect of some great providential plan?”[5] Perhaps he saw some divine intervention at play in his own improbable rise from Caribbean obscurity to American founder.

Hamilton well understood that the historical train of abuses against Jews continued in the United States. After all, many of his adversaries weaponized antisemitism against his various endeavors throughout his career. During the ratification debates over the U.S. Constitution, Hamilton ranked among its premier defenders while a number of his antagonists denounced the Constitution because it would open federal office to Jewish candidates. The sweeping economic programs that he then advanced as treasury secretary were repeatedly maligned as nefarious plots to benefit Jews. And in a high-profile trial, Hamilton’s Jewish witnesses in court were accused of dishonesty owing to an invidious myth that their religion encouraged them to lie under oath. That the forces of anti-Jewish bigotry assailed Hamilton's agenda so frequently is itself noteworthy testament to his alliance with Jewry. Arguably no other self-professed Christian in the early republic confronted more antisemitism.

Despite this fraught environment, Hamilton never wavered in his affection for the people and faith of Judaism. Indeed, the most impassioned denunciation of antisemitism in the annals of any founder came from Hamilton amid the closing arguments of the aforementioned trial. After opposing counsel impugned his Jewish witnesses, Hamilton responded by exalting Jews as the Chosen People: "Has he forgotten, what this race once were, when, under the immediate government of God himself, they were selected as the witnesses of his miracles, and charged with the spirit of prophecy?" Hamilton then alluded to the Roman conquest of the Holy Land and resulting diaspora for Jews throughout the Roman Empire. He recounted how the Jewish people fractured into "remnants of scattered tribes … the degraded, persecuted, reviled subjects of Rome, in all her resistless power, and pride, and pagan pomp." The Jews were rendered "an isolated, tributary, friendless people." Hamilton would not abide his own legal system perpetuating this age-old animosity. By his lights, the Judaism of his witnesses was not a stigma to be borne but a religion to be honored. "Were not the witnesses of that pure and holy, happy and Heaven-approved faith?" he asked rhetorically. Invoking the allegorical figure Lady Justice, Hamilton declared that she protected Jews the same as she did all others: "Be the injured party … Jew, or Gentile, or Christian, or Pagan, Foreign or Native, she clothes him with her mantle, in whose presence all differences of faiths or births, of passions or of prejudices—all are called to acknowledge and revere her supremacy."[6] Here was a giant of the early republic demanding that Jews, the downtrodden of Europe for centuries, stand equal to Gentiles in an American courtroom. Hamilton's contemporaries remarked that no other trial in his illustrious legal career elicited from him a more emotional performance. Plainly, the case touched something deeply personal within him.

Hamilton's affinity for Jewry undermines the conventional depiction of him, advanced first by rivals and then by scholars, as an aspiring aristocrat with a measure of disdain for those on the periphery.[7] True, he was no populist firebrand. But neither does Hamilton deserve condemnation as an elitist. To reflexively dismiss him as a lackey of the moneyed classes is to overlook how the urban marketplace was more meritocratic than other realms of American life. An enterprising Jew—all too often closed off from the world of law, politics, and colleges—could far more readily access the commercial and financial spheres that Hamilton invigorated. And while many Jewish merchants and brokers in Hamilton's orbit did enjoy a degree of economic security, they were hardly invulnerable to antisemitism. His ties to a Jewish community that was subjected to cultural and legal discrimination call into question the antidemocratic caricature that his foes imagined him to be. It is not without irony that other founding fathers, despite sometimes peddling prejudice against Jews, were far less likely than Hamilton to have charges of elitism leveled against them in their day and afterward.

By fighting for an America where Jew and Gentile would partake alike in civic and economic affairs, Hamilton began to make real the principle of equality in whose name the Revolution had been waged. But the antisemitic resistance that he faced underscores the limits of a hierarchical society still marred by religious intolerance. The experience of American Jewry is certainly not the only one by which to measure the feats and failures of the founding era. Nevertheless, the Hamiltonian-Jewish connections offer us an enriched perspective on the early republic, one that suggests the egalitarian rhetoric of the Declaration of Independence was not an empty promise, even if progress was halting.

Hamilton's appreciation for both Judaism and Jews also has implications for understanding church-state relations. Scholars often presume that historical figures who promoted the separation of church and state were the most compassionate toward minority religions and, correspondingly, that those who saw a role for faith in civic life must have had the least sympathy for religious dissenters. Hamilton's approach complicates these assumptions. In word and deed, he exhibited great esteem for the Jewish faith and its followers. Hamilton *also* argued for a harmony between devotional and civic ends, contending that religion could help nurture the new American republic. Consider, conversely, Thomas Jefferson. He stood as the foremost proponent of the separation of church and state; Jefferson himself coined the phrase. Yet he was blunt in his contempt for Judaism. Jefferson maligned the Hebrew Bible as "defective," the ethics of biblical Judaism as "repulsive," and the Jewish conception of God as "degrading."[8] Hamilton and Jefferson, in opposite ways, illustrate the same point: there was no necessary relationship between respect for Judaism and the principle of separation in their age.

This book does not read the adult Hamilton's veneration of Jewry and Judaism backward as all the more proof of a Jewish identity earlier in his life. Rather, Hamilton's Caribbean roots can help us more fully make sense of his subsequent support for Jews and their faith. It is a fundamental truism that we are all shaped by our childhoods. To be sure, a measure of humility is in order when a historian draws connections between a subject's youth and maturity; no biographer can insist with exacting precision how a given element of a figure's upbringing informed decisions made decades afterward. But so too is it folly to think, for instance, that Hamilton's exposure to the brutalities of bondage in the West Indies had no bearing upon his later attitude toward slavery.[9] We would be equally misguided in assuming that his clerkship in adolescence at an import-export firm—which afforded him a real-time education in credit, currency, and trade—was wholly unrelated to his financial acumen as treasury secretary.[10] And surely it is no mere happenstance that among the founders, Hamilton was the only one to attend a Jewish school as a boy and then cultivated the greatest involvement with Jews as an adult.

That Jewry and Judaism are the central themes of this book is *not* meant to imply that they were the central pillars of Hamilton's American years. It would be inaccurate to depict him as engaged in a daily toil on behalf of Jews or perpetually preoccupied with the Jewish religion. Hamilton's affiliations and influences were numerous; other important strands in his story have received extensive treatment elsewhere. This volume seeks to add the relevance of Judaism and its people to our understanding of Hamilton.

Among Hamilton's beloved hobbies in New York was the theater, so it is altogether fitting that the Broadway stage has made him the country's favorite founder. His pride of place in American culture at this moment indicates that his story is highly resonant. And yet Hamilton is a profoundly enigmatic character. Here was the treasurer who saved the nation's finances but died in debt, the strikingly decisive leader forever haunted by insecurities, the champion of the rule of law who met his demise in an illicit duel. For all the attention thrust on Hamilton, he eludes us still.

His youth remains the most esoteric of the many mysteries surrounding his life. Hamilton spilled gallons of ink on seemingly every topic but maintained a singular silence about his Caribbean origins. Even with his own children, he was largely mute on the subject. And yet, tantalizingly, he broke from his usual secrecy to share with them a warm memory from boyhood—his time at the Jewish school. If Alexander Hamilton left this clue about his cryptic past, then it is the intent of the pages that follow to explore what larger truths it may suggest.

1

Genesis

AS JEWISH IDENTITY BEGINS with a mother, so must this story. Alexander Hamilton's mother, Rachel Faucette, was born a Christian around 1729 on the island of Nevis in the British Caribbean. Her parents, John and Mary, had a troubled marriage that culminated in a legal separation in 1740. John Faucette died five years later and left the entirety of his estate to Rachel. Determined to begin their lives anew, Mary and Rachel sailed 150 miles northwest to St. Croix, an isle of stunning scenery in the Danish West Indies.[1] An American poet visiting St. Croix in the eighteenth century insisted that "even those that have no taste to admire the beauties of nature would at the view be forced to confess that the valleys of Paradise were now displayed to the eye."[2] St. Croix was part of the Leeward Islands, a string of small isles dotting the eastern Caribbean.

The tropical heat and rich soil of West Indian islands like St. Croix were ideal for producing the era's ultimate cash crop: sugar.[3] European powers often waged bloody battles with one another for control over these lucrative colonies.[4] So profitable was the sugar trade that Britain, for instance, extracted more riches from its collection of Caribbean islands than from the entirety of its territory in North America. During negotiations that ended the Seven Years' War in 1763, the French had to decide between keeping their vast expanse of Canada or the sugar island of Guadeloupe. They chose Guadeloupe.[5] Denmark was among those Old World kingdoms lured by the promise of Caribbean sugarcane. The business-minded Danes preferred to use the purse over the sword, and they peacefully acquired St. Croix from France for 142,000 rigsdalers (Danish rix-dollars) in 1733.[6]

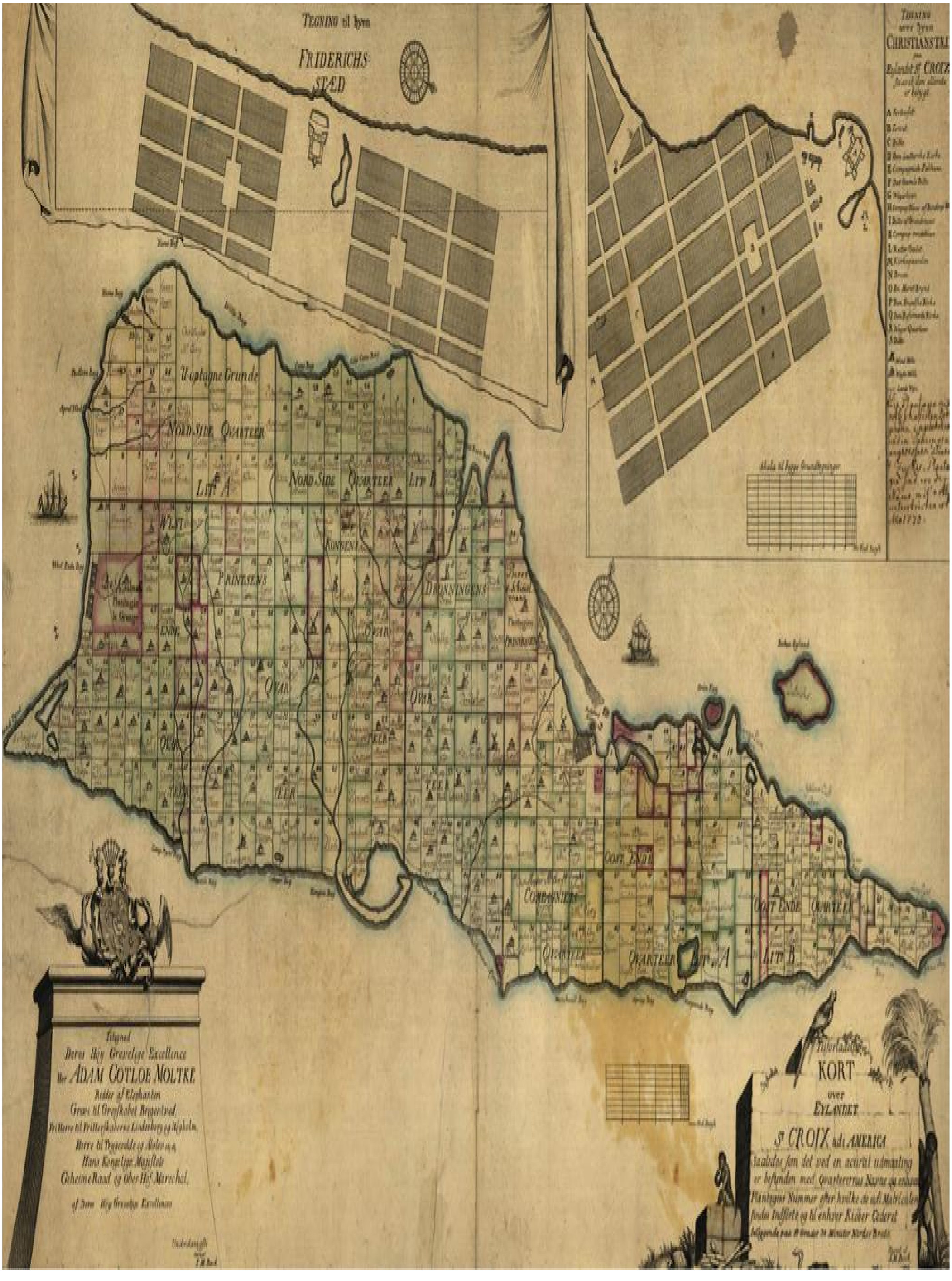
Rachel Faucette and her mother were part of a diverse wave of migrants descending on St. Croix in its early years under Danish rule. Whereas other European nations sought to populate their West Indian islands with their own countrymen, Denmark shrewdly foresaw the benefits of a more inclusive immigration policy. After all, sugar plantations were risky undertakings.[7] The costs of the requisite machinery and slave labor meant significant upfront investment. Droughts, diseases, and hurricanes could summarily wipe out a plantation before a profit was realized.[8] The Danes reasoned that if foreigners wanted to hazard their capital on St. Croix, then Denmark could happily levy its duties on whichever planters managed to win the sugarcane lottery. Relatively few residents of St. Croix were Danish.[9]

Among those who took advantage of St. Croix's open borders were Jews. The Caribbean at large was a magnet for Jewish merchants. Jews had been a stateless people for centuries who lived as outsiders in other lands. Barred by law from many professions, they often assumed the role of cultural intermediaries who served as tradesmen between societies. Jews thus cultivated acumen in commerce and languages not purely by choice but in large part because of their marginality. These very skills proved especially valuable in the early modern era (1500–1800), an age of New World colonization and rising global commerce. Jews became important players in port cities across northern Europe, North and South America, and the West Indies. Not only did Jews boast mercantile expertise and linguistic ability, but they were tapped into transatlantic networks of fellow Jews spread throughout the Atlantic world. Colonial powers willing to accept a Jewish presence stood to profit for their tolerance.[10]

Sephardic Jews of Spanish-Portuguese ancestry composed the bulk of Caribbean Jewry, but some Ashkenazi Jews of German and Polish origin also migrated to the islands.[11] Jewish communities in the West Indies were to be found on British colonies like Barbados, Jamaica, and Nevis; on the Dutch isles of St. Eustatius and Curaçao; and on one of Denmark's other Caribbean territories, St. Thomas.[12] St. Croix never developed the sizable population of Jews that these other islands claimed—in Curaçao, for instance, Jews comprised nearly 40 percent of the free population by 1785[13]—but St. Croix could still tally a handful of Jewish residents.[14]

Amid the polyglot mix of Brits, Germans, Spaniards, Dutch, Danes, and Jews on St. Croix, the largest group by far consisted of African slaves. The sugar trade depended on a steady supply of slave labor. By 1755, St. Croix's slaves would outnumber free people nearly seven to one.[15] Caribbean slavery was particularly barbaric. Interminable hours cutting sugarcane, bouts of tropical disease, and unrelenting heat all exacted a brutal toll on those in bondage. Most slaves perished within just five years.[16] Slaves who faced capital punishment for a given offense often exhibited visible relief that their cruel existence was reaching its end. As one slave owner conceded, "Many who have been hanged or decapitated went to their deaths with the greatest cheerfulness."[17] The picturesque beaches, azure waters, and verdant hills of St. Croix must have made for a perverse beauty in the eyes of slaves, who found themselves in hell amid nature's paradise.

When Rachel Faucette and her mother arrived in St. Croix after a twenty-hour journey,[18] their ship most likely disembarked at the growing port town of Christiansted. The dominant structure along the harbor was Fort Christiansvaern. It housed the colonial governor, the offices of the Danish West India Company, and—as Rachel would personally discover—a prison. The West India Company's warehouse stood opposite the fort and included a courtyard for slave auctions.[19] There prospective buyers would inspect naked slaves, peering into their mouths and checking limbs for defects.[20] Merchants and officials built their houses along King Street, Company Street, and Strand Street, three parallel avenues that began near the water and ran inland. Free blacks were barred from constructing homes in central Christiansted and instead relegated to a separate neighborhood. The Danes demonstrated a unique degree of forethought in urban planning; Christiansted's orderly growth along a grid offered a stark contrast to the hodgepodge development of other West Indian islands. Visitors often marveled at the tidy nature of life on St. Croix.[21]


TEGNING til Byen
FRIDERICHS STÆD
TEGNING over Byen
CHRISTIANSTA
paa
Eylandet St. CROIX
Skala til begge Grundtegninger
Uoptagne Grunde
NORD SIDE QUARTEER
LITr A
NORD SIDE QUARTEER LITr B
WEST
ENDE
QUAR
TEER
PRINTSENS
QUAR
TEER
KONGENS
QUAR
TEER
DRONNINGENS
QUAR
TEER
Prindsens Plantagie
COMPAGNIETS
QUARTEER
OOST ENDE
QUARTEER LITr A
OOST ENDE QUARTEER
LITr B
Tilegned
Deres Høy Grevelige Excellence
Hr ADAM GOTLOB MOLTKE
Ridder af Elephanten
Greve til Grevskabet Bregentved
Fri Herre til Fri Herskaberne Lindenborg og Høyholm
Herre til Tryggevelde og Alslev m. m.
Hans Kongelige Majestæts
Geheime Raad og Ober Hof Marechal
af Deres Høy Grevelige Excellences
Underdanigste
Tiener
J. M. Beck
KORT
over
EYLANDET
St. CROIX udi AMERICA
Saaledes som det ved en accurat udmaaling
er befunden med Quartererns Navne og enhver
Plantagies Nummer efter hvilke de udi Matriculen
findes Indførte og til enhver Kiøber Ciderit
beliggende paa 17 Grader 54 Minuter Norder Brede

On this map of St. Croix, the insets show the street layouts for the island's two towns: Frederiksted on the west end and Christiansted on the north shore. *Source*: Kort og tegninger (1600–1920), Rigsarkivet (Danish National Archives, Copenhagen).

For Rachel and Mary Faucette, St. Croix was an obvious choice for the next stage of their lives. Rachel's older sister, Ann, had already moved there with her wealthy husband, James Lytton, who purchased a sugar estate on St. Croix that came to be known as the Grange.[22] Plantations like his were oriented around a "great house," typically European or neoclassical in style. A planter and his family occupied the upper story of a great house while using the ground floor for storage. Such homes were strategically situated on a property to catch ocean drafts, though the breeziest parcel of land was reserved for the windmill. A great house's dense walls and vaulted ceiling were designed to withstand hurricanes, which could strike with little notice and even less mercy.[23]

Guests visiting an estate for a dance would ride their carriages up an imposing tree-lined drive. The host family made use of imported luxuries like porcelain and silver. Under the Caribbean moon, the sound of the minuet, aroma of flowers, and flavor of punch easily mingled. But come daylight, the unforgiving sun beat down on the slaves toiling in the cane fields. These slaves often lived in simple huts on the estate, lined in two rows with a road in between where the women prepared meals amid playing children. In addition to boiling cane juice into sugar, plantations also produced rum and molasses. Oxen then carted these valuable commodities to the wharf for shipment to ports throughout the Atlantic world.[24]

James Lytton was probably the one who introduced Rachel Faucette to his business associate—and the man she would marry—Johan Michael Levine.[25] Hamilton himself would describe Levine as a "fortune-hunter" who was "bedizzened with gold, and paid his addresses to my mother, then a handsome young woman."[26] Levine acquired a stake in a sugar plantation in 1744. After seeing his investment come to naught, he redirected his energies toward St. Croix's next most lucrative crop: cotton. While the prime real estate on the western side of the island was designated for sugar, the sloping hills of eastern St. Croix were profitably employed for cotton production.[27] Levine's swanky wardrobe surely gave Rachel the impression he was a planter of substantial means.[28]

The vast body of historical scholarship on Hamilton, often excellent in its analysis of his adult years, has been less thorough in documenting his family history. Levine is a consummate example of an understudied and misconceived figure in Hamilton's past. Many Hamilton biographers fail to mention Levine at all.[29] Others acknowledge his presence in Rachel's story but offer no comment on his religious identity.[30] Those who do engage with the question of Levine's faith often make misguided assumptions. Uncovering Levine's religious background is key to unlocking Hamilton's own.

Levine's name raises the possibility of a Jewish identity, specifically ancestry in the tribe of Levi from ancient Israel. His surname appears in various spellings in the historical record, and several of these formulations ("Levin," "Lewin," "Lavien") correspond to surnames used by Jews of Levitic descent in the eighteenth century.[31] Before coming to St. Croix, Levine worked as a merchant, a common Jewish profession, and he did so on Nevis, an island with a Jewish community.[32] Jews were especially likely to conduct commerce among themselves,[33] so it is perhaps telling that when Levine decided to sell his plantation on St. Croix in 1753, he secured two Jewish buyers (and the property soon ended up in the hands of still another Jew).[34] The list of plantation owners on St. Croix for that year included over 300 Gentiles and no more than six Jews, so the probability that Levine would have made the sale to any Jew by mere coincidence was one in fifty.[35] As we will see, Levine would fail to have his infant son baptized, which was standard practice for Christians on St. Croix. And Hamilton's own grandson unequivocally identified Levine as a "rich Danish Jew."[36] Conversely, there is no known source in the historical record referring to Levine as Christian.

While some Hamilton scholars accept that Levine was Jewish,[37] many others insist that even if Levine did have Jewish origins, he was not a Jew by the time he met Rachel in 1745. The argument that Levine did not belong to the Jewish faith—at least by 1745—originated in 1903 with Gertrude Atherton, a novelist–turned–amateur historian. She was the first Hamilton biographer to journey to the West Indies in the hopes of uncovering new information about his ancestry. Her resulting book offers this tentative statement: "I am also informed that Levine or Lawien probably was a Jew by birth, but must have changed his religion—perhaps when he married Rachael?—or he would have been written down in the records: 'Levine the Jew.' "[38] In 1978, James Flexner produced a biography focused wholly on Hamilton's early life, which echoes Atherton's findings about Levine in more definitive terms. "He was not legally considered a Jew," Flexner writes, citing Atherton.[39] Robert Hendrickson's 1981 book *The Rise and Fall of Alexander Hamilton* similarly claims, "St. Croix records of the time generally identified Jews as such, but Lavien is not so identified. It may be that he had disavowed Judaism by the time of his marriage to Rachel."[40] Meanwhile, William Cissel, a historian with the National Park Service on St. Croix, issued a report in 2004 that expresses doubt Levine was Jewish and repeats Atherton's reasoning: "He was not identified as a Jew (*Joder*) in annual registers."[41]

Plantagiers Nommer		Capable	Ma-Kion	Over Aar	Under Aar	Datum &c.
	Transport	554	38	68	183	
1.	Emanuel Aboab	13		3	3	d 19 Decbr 1743
1.	Francis Brooks	18	4	5		do dato
1.	Samuel Dauning					do dato
2.	Francis Broocks					d 18 april 1737
3.	James Boyle	8	5		2	d 12 decbr 1737
4.	Edward Ewans Arfvingr	23	2		4	d 10 Febr 1740
5.	Friderich Moths Arfvingr	61	11	6	14	d 19 decbr 1743 er overs Kudt fra de Compag: aff Koarun Anno Dom igien for
6.	James Koones Enche og Arfvinger	12	3	4	10	d 24 May 1738
7.	Valentin French	33		1	5	d:
8.	Joseph Robbinson					d 29 octobr 1738
9.	James Lijthon	16			8	d 24 May 1738
10.	Samuel Dauning	23	2		7	d 29 octobr 1738
11.	Joseph Jones	37	3	12		d 20 Juny 1739
12.	Samuel Dauning					d 20 Augt 1739
12.	Johan Michael Lavien	10			7	do dato

This land register from St. Croix lists Emanuel Aboab, who was Jewish, in the first entry and Johan Levine (under the spelling “Lavien”) in the last. Notably, the Danish term indicating Jewish identity, *Joder*, does not appear for either of them. *Source*: Mandtalslister og matrikler (1741–1755), Rigsarkivet (Danish National Archives, Copenhagen).

However, the notion that the Danish records necessarily identified Jews *as* Jews is erroneous. The names of six other residents of St. Croix who were known Jews appear a total of ninety-eight times in the island’s *Matrikler* (land register) and *Mandtalslister* (census list) for 1741–1755. In ninety-seven of those entries, the clerks logged no reference whatsoever to these Jews’ religious identity;[42] only in one anomalous instance is *Joder* used.[43] For over a century now, the basis for denying that Levine was Jewish has been the absence of the term *Joder* next to his name. In reality, these Danish records provide no grounds for concluding he was a Gentile by birth or choice.[44]

Cissel also argues that Levine was probably not Jewish because “Jews listed in the annual St. Croix property, population, and head-tax registers … bore Sephardic surnames.”[45] Yet it does not follow that because many of the colony’s Jews were Sephardic, Levine was therefore not Jewish. Caribbean Jews in general and St. Croix’s Jews in particular were not exclusively of Spanish-Portuguese descent. Records from the Privy Council of St. Croix during Levine’s era explicitly acknowledge the presence of both Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews on the island.[46]

The precise details of Johan Michael Levine’s engagement to Rachel Faucette remain lost to history, but whatever the nature of their courtship, it culminated in a wedding in 1745 that was most likely held at the Grange.[47] Rachel bore Johan a son, Peter, the subsequent year. The circumstances surrounding Peter’s religious life harmonize with the notion that he was not Christian by birth or upbringing. Unlike his maternal cousins on the island who were dutifully baptized shortly after their births, Peter was not. Only in adulthood did Peter undertake a baptism in the process of joining the Anglican Church.[48] While Anglican doctrine called for infant baptism, there were three circumstances under which Anglicans would have baptized an adult. The first involved someone who grew up in a Christian denomination that practiced adult rather than infant baptism (such as Mennonites) and who had yet to undergo an adult baptism in his original church. However, this possibility could not have applied to Peter because no such denomination operated on St. Croix at that time.[49] Another potential explanation for an adult baptism in the Anglican Church is that the person in question had been baptized in a non-Trinitarian denomination of Christianity (for instance, Unitarians). Anglicans accepted baptisms from other Christian denominations as valid, except those that reject the Trinity: the belief that God is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. So the Anglican Church would have rebaptized someone whose initial baptism had not been in the name of the Trinity.[50] Yet Peter could not have fallen under this category either because there were no non-Trinitarian denominations on St. Croix while he lived on the island.[51] A final reason why Anglicans would have baptized an adult—the only one plausibly pertaining to Peter—is that the person was converting to Christianity.

Hamilton scholars, fixed on the assumption that Peter Levine was born Christian, have been confounded by his adult baptism when they do not ignore it altogether. In 1939, the Danish military officer H. U. Ramsing published a study of Hamilton's origins that notes of Peter, "On Nov. 22, 1769 he was on St. Croix where he, strangely enough, was baptized."[52] Ron Chernow's sweeping biography *Alexander Hamilton* (2004) characterizes Peter's adult baptism as "shocking and seemingly inexplicable," and poses a question for which Chernow has no sure answer: "Why had he not been baptized before?"[53] Cissel is also puzzled by Peter's adult baptism, describing it as "most curious."[54]

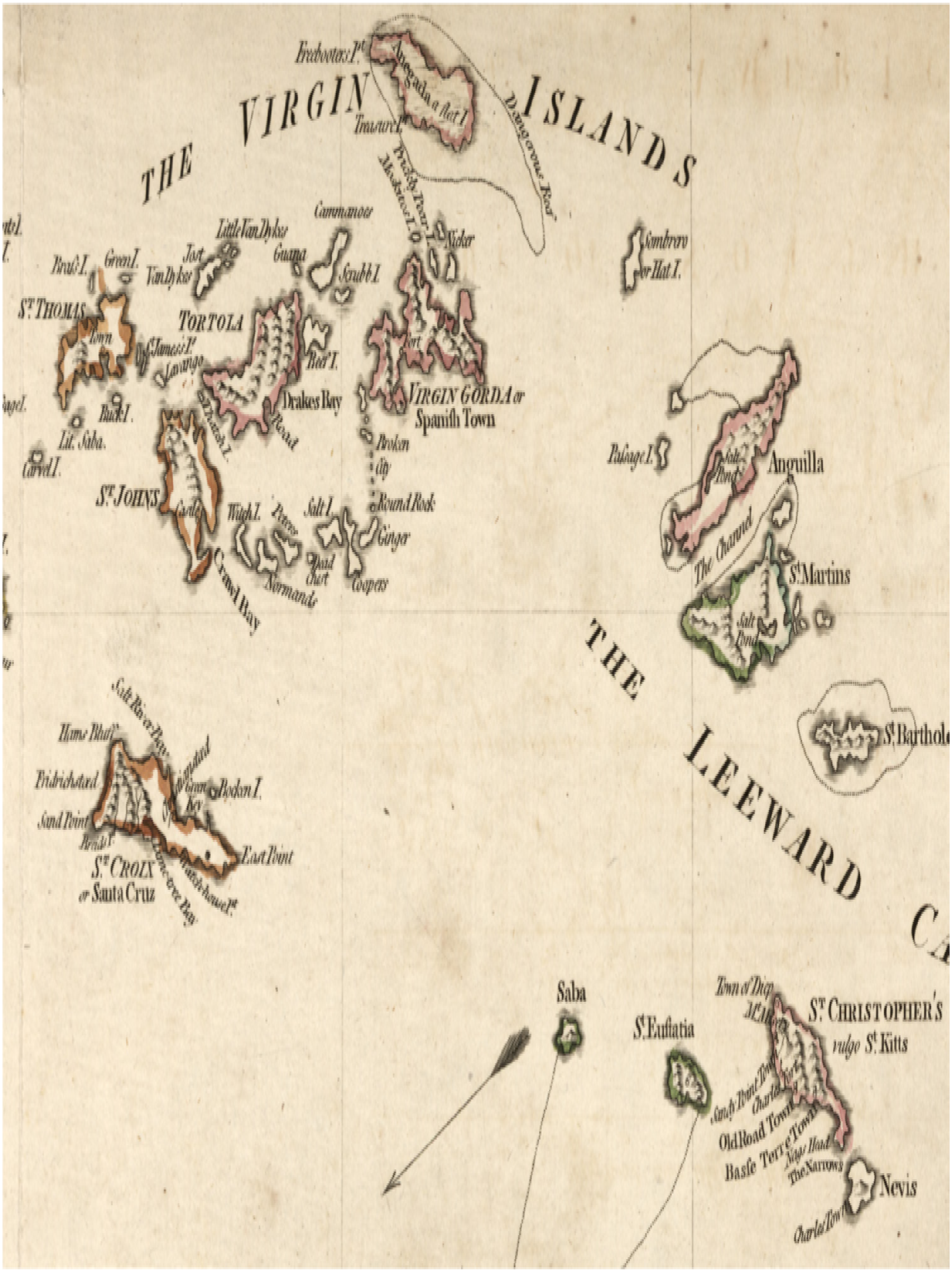
That Rachel and Johan failed to infant baptize Peter is indeed strange, shocking, inexplicable, and curious if we cling to the presupposition that Peter was Christian throughout his life. But if Rachel converted to Judaism prior to his birth, then the matrilineal nature of Jewish identity would make Peter a Jew, and this long-standing mystery about his need for an adult baptism is easily explained.[55] Still another possibility is that Rachel did not convert to Judaism herself but agreed to raise Peter as a Jew to appease her husband.[56] Yet such a scenario is unlikely owing to the matrilineality of Jewish identity and the fact that, as we will see, Rachel maintained ties to Jewry well after Johan and Peter were no longer part of her life.[57] It is also worth noting that the choice of the name "Peter," which is not conventionally Jewish, does not necessarily indicate a Christian identity. Some Jews at this time gave their children non-Jewish first names such as Mark, James, and Andrew.[58]

There were certainly enough Jews on St. Croix to have convened for Rachel a *beit din*—a Jewish court that could authorize a conversion. The Talmud requires only three adult Jewish males to constitute a *beit din*, and none need be a rabbi. For a woman converting to Judaism, the sole Talmudic obligation is immersion in a ritual bath known as a *mikveh*.[59] A conversion for Rachel would not have been unique in the Atlantic world; other Christian women at the time converted to the faith of their Jewish husbands.[60] Given the paucity of Jews on St. Croix relative to many other islands, it would be unsurprising if Levine sought out a Gentile willing to convert in the absence of a suitable Jewish-born woman to marry.

Around five years after their wedding, the marriage between Johan and Rachel Levine deteriorated to the point where he had her imprisoned for adultery. Rachel endured months in a cell usually occupied by petty criminals and disobedient slaves.[61] Johan later said that he had hoped, upon her release, "everything would change to the better and that she, as a wedded wife, [would] change her unholy way of life."[62] Yet once freed from her confinement, Rachel boarded a ship for the island of St. Kitts, abruptly deserting her spiteful husband and their young son.[63]

St. Kitts, like St. Croix, belonged to the Leeward Islands. There the still legally married Rachel met a Christian colonist from Scotland named James Hamilton. Many an enterprising Scotsman moved to St. Kitts hoping to profit from either crops or commerce before returning home. Although James claimed lineage in one of Scotland's aristocratic families, he never met with much success in the West Indies, lacking in talent or luck—or perhaps both. The ill-fated James and Rachel relocated to the neighboring island of Nevis, where Rachel had spent her childhood.[64]

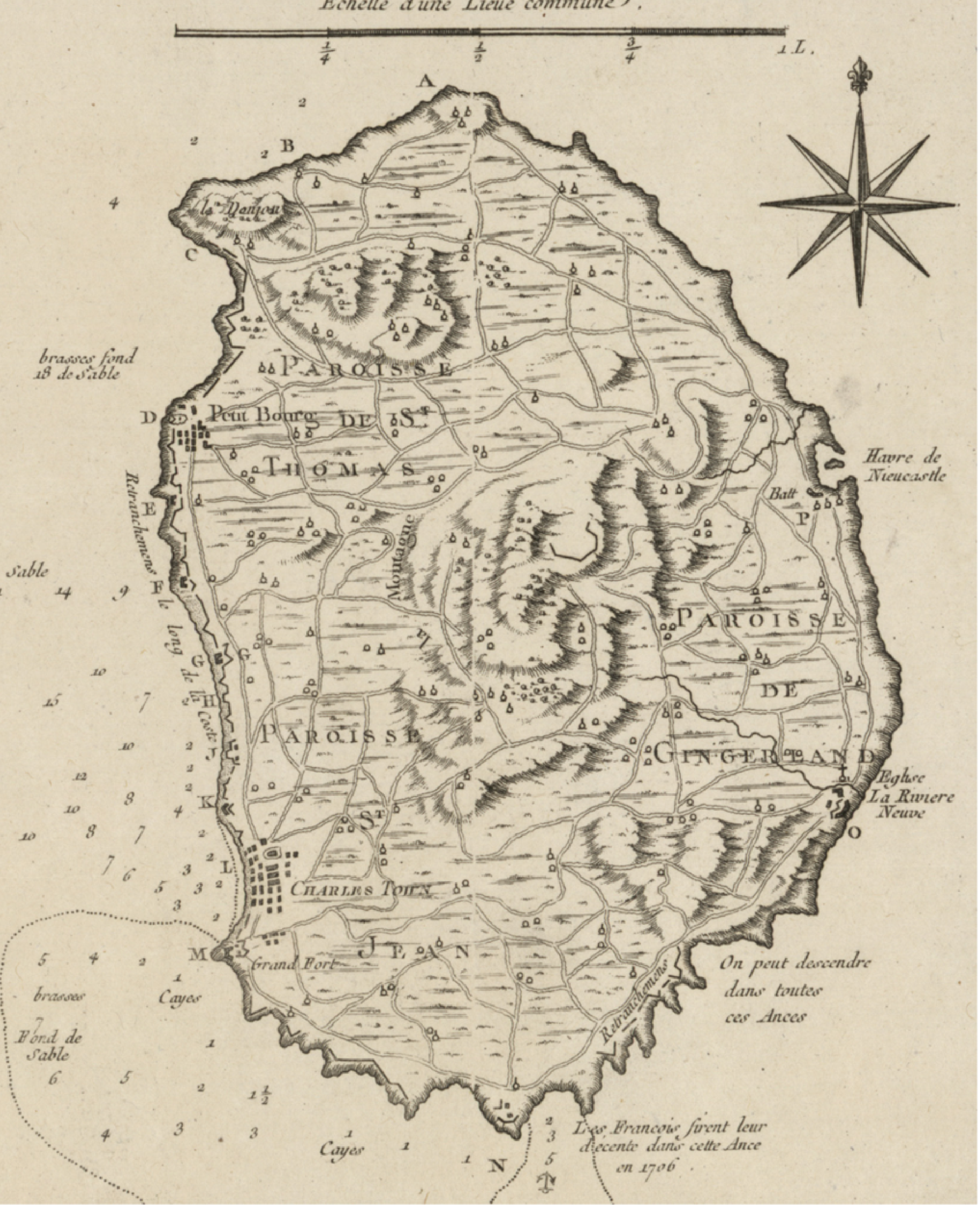
Dominating Nevis's landscape is an extinct volcano, whose peak is perennially kissed by low-hanging clouds. The volcano, thick with green forests, slopes downward into hills, valleys, and beaches before disappearing into the sea. One eighteenth-century observer, approaching Nevis by boat, described how "some refreshing rains had made the whole face of the earth look so verdant and smiling, that no other part of the Globe, which I have as yet seen, could afford a richer gratification of its kind."[65]


THE VIRGIN ISLANDS
Freebooters Pt.
Anegada or Flat I.
Treasure Pt.
Dangerous Reef
Prickly Pear I.
Muskitoes I.
Nicker
Sombrero or Hat I.
Cammanoe
Little Van Dyke
Guana
Jost Van Dyke
Scrubb I.
Brass I.
Green I.
St. THOMAS
Town
TORTOLA
Off
St. James's Pt.
Kawango
Fort
Rat I.
VIRGIN GORDA or Spanish Town
Drakes Bay
Road
Buck I.
Lit. Saba
Carvel I.
St. JOHNS
Castle
Broken Jerusalem
Round Rock
Watch I.
Peters
Salt I.
Ginger
Dead Chest
Normande
Coopers
Cramel Bay
Pasage I.
Anguilla
Salt Pond
The Channel
St. Martins
Salt Pond
THE LEEWARD CA
St. Barthol
Salt River Bay
Hams Bluff
Fridrichstad
Christianstad
Green Key
Booken I.
Sand Point
Bredts Pt.
Lime-tree Bay
Watch-house Pt.
East Point
St. CROIX or Santa Cruz
Saba
St. Eustatia
Town of Deep
St. CHRISTOPHER'S vulgo St. Kitts
Sandy Point Town
Charles Fort
Old Road Town
Basse Terre Town
Nags Head
The Narrows
Nevis
Charles Town

The distance from St. Croix (also known as Santa Cruz) to St. Kitts (St. Christopher) is about 150 miles. Nevis is only two miles from St. Kitts. *Source*: *A map of the Caribbee, Granadilles and Virgin Isles*. London: Published by M. Richmond; sold by W. Faden & J. Harris, 1779. Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

The island brimmed with wildlife, from native pelicans to imported monkeys.[66] One visitor described a "certain monstrous spider" that was larger than "the palm of a man's hand." And the air hummed with birds of "such art and speed that the huntsman's dexterity is not comparable." Nevis boasted all manner of lizard, the longest of which stretched five feet. When European settlers first tried to kill these giant lizards for food, their bullets proved surprisingly ineffective. Indigenous people taught the naive newcomers that a stick shoved up a lizard's nostril was the surest way to bring death to the reptile and dinner to the colonist.[67]

CARTE DE L'ISLE DE NIEVES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PAROISSE ST. JEAN
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Grand Fort
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Fond de Sable
Cayes
Havre de Nieucastle
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La Riviere Neuve
On peut descendre dans toutes ces Ances
Retranchemens
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A French geographer created this map of Nevis at the time that Hamilton was living on the island. *Source*: Jacques Nicolas Bellin, *Carte de l'isle de Nieves* [Paris, 1764]. Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

As with St. Croix, a slave-based sugarcane economy was the lifeblood of Nevis. A network of paths hewn through the trees connected the various sugar estates.[68] The richest soil was to be found in the valleys, but even the flinty land closer to the volcano's peak was employed for sugarcane.[69] So central was sugar to island life that it substituted for currency. "Pounds of sugar and not pounds of sterling is the balance of all their accounts," noted an Englishman.[70] Because nearly every inch of arable terrain was reserved for sugar, islanders imported most of their food rather than making it fresh. Their diet suffered accordingly. In the words of one disappointed diner, the butter was "bad and the cheese worse."[71]

Upwards of fifty vessels a year departed Nevis for England, their hulls full of sugar.[72] Each shipment was a tacit testament to the slaves whose lives were sacrificed to produce what the British called "white gold." Due to the island's acute demand for slave labor, blacks outnumbered whites by more than seven to one. The insufferable workday of a slave could stretch to eighteen hours during boiling season in late winter and early spring.[73] At night, the fires from the boiling houses illuminated Nevis in a fantastic display of light.[74]

It was on Nevis where Alexander Hamilton was born out of wedlock to Rachel Levine and James Hamilton in 1754. They already had one son together, named James Jr.[75] According to island lore, the boys grew up in Nevis's port village, Charlestown.[76] Facing west from the shoreline, Alexander would have seen an endless stretch of Caribbean waters; turning east, Charlestown's maze of winding streets and wooden homes.

Island life was gritty. Slave auctions and public whippings were common sights.[77] In the pointedly named Gallows Bay, captured pirates marked their final moments with the tightening grip of the hangman's noose.[78] A clergyman who lived in Charlestown for nine months described a bizarre habit among the townspeople that was thought to detoxify their bodies. The river water was "operated both by stool and urine" and the locals "would drink of it till they puked, and say they found great benefit by so doing." The clergyman opted not to join them, explaining, "As I have an aversion to puking, I never cared to use it in that way."[79] If Alexander Hamilton ever partook in this curious tradition in his youth, it was not a practice known to have continued into his adulthood.

Charlestown was home to a Jewish community. In the seventeenth century, Sephardic Jews facing expulsion from Portuguese Brazil had found refuge on various Dutch and British islands in the West Indies, including Nevis.[80] Jews arrived in Nevis no later than the 1670s, and within fifty years they comprised fully one-quarter of Charlestown's white population. The town featured the trappings of an established Jewish neighborhood, complete with a synagogue, cemetery, and pathway in between known as “Jew’s Alley.” This kind of walkable distance between a synagogue and burial ground was standard Jewish practice. There was also “Jew Street,” where many Jews resided.[81]

The Jews of Nevis, like their Christian neighbors, were implicated in the institution of slavery. While it appears that these Jews were not especially involved in the slave trade,[82] some notable portion did own slaves. An eighteenth-century priest reported that “with the respect to the Jews” on Nevis and St. Kitts, “many [were] owners of numbers of slaves.” He also observed that throughout the Leeward Islands, slaves operated markets on Sundays when they would “traffick with the Jews in colonies where Jews live, and with the looser sort of Christians.”[83] Although Jews were second-class citizens relative to white Christians, their marginality was of course negligible compared to the subjugation of slaves.

Today the last surviving remnant of the Jewish presence on Nevis is the cemetery. Typical of Sephardic tradition, the horizontal tombstones are partially elevated from the ground. Their inscriptions mix Hebrew, Portuguese, and English, reflecting the linguistic acumen that made Jews so valuable as merchants. Several tombstones bear the same verse from the book of Samuel: “May his soul be bound up in the bond of everlasting life.” The image of open hands on the grave of one Daniel Cohen is symbolic of a priestly blessing.[84] All the graves were dug facing east toward Jerusalem, as per Jewish custom, so that upon resurrection during the Messianic Age, the deceased could walk to the Holy Land.[85]

Jewish identity is complex and can assume at least eight forms. *Personal identity* means that an individual sees herself as Jewish. *Communal identity* signifies that someone is accepted as a Jew by his local Jewish community. *Public identity* relates to a person who is considered Jewish by her Gentile neighbors. *Universal identity* pertains to an individual whom any Jewish congregation in the world would acknowledge as a member of the faith. *Legal identity* denotes that someone meets the requirements of Jewish law—that is, he is either the child of a Jewish woman or himself a convert to Judaism. *Ethnic identity* applies to a person who is descended from the ancient Israelites. *Religious identity* concerns adherence to the devotional obligations of Judaism. *Cultural identity* entails an association with the customs, lifestyle, ethics, art, and/or heritage of the Jewish people.

These varieties can overlap but may not necessarily. For instance, the children of a Jewish woman who sheds her faith and hides her past are still legally Jews despite their having no knowledge of their true religious background and thus no personal Jewish identity. A crypto-Jew practicing the faith only in secret to stave off persecution could have a personal Jewish identity, and even a communal one within a subculture of fellow crypto-Jews, but no public identity as a Jew. An individual who converts to Judaism under the auspices of a meager Jewish community—one on the fringes of the diaspora with unrigorous requirements for conversion—might find acceptance communally but not universally. Someone whose father's lineage traces back to the ancient Israelites and whose mother is a Gentile has some Jewish ethnicity but no claim to a legal identity as a Jew.

The eighteenth-century Atlantic world throws into high relief the idiosyncrasies of Jewish identity. Under the Inquisition in Spain and Portugal, for example, Jews had been forced to flee or convert to Catholicism, and many of the conversos' descendants revived their Jewish heritage after migrating to more tolerant territories on both sides of the ocean.[86] Meanwhile, crypto-Judaism persisted in lands under Spanish or Portuguese rule, including New World colonies like New Mexico and Brazil.[87] Further testament to the diversity of Jewish identities was the sizable population of black Jews in the Dutch colony of Suriname that resulted from relations between Jews and slaves.[88] And, as mentioned earlier, there are several known instances of Christian women who converted to Judaism for marriage.

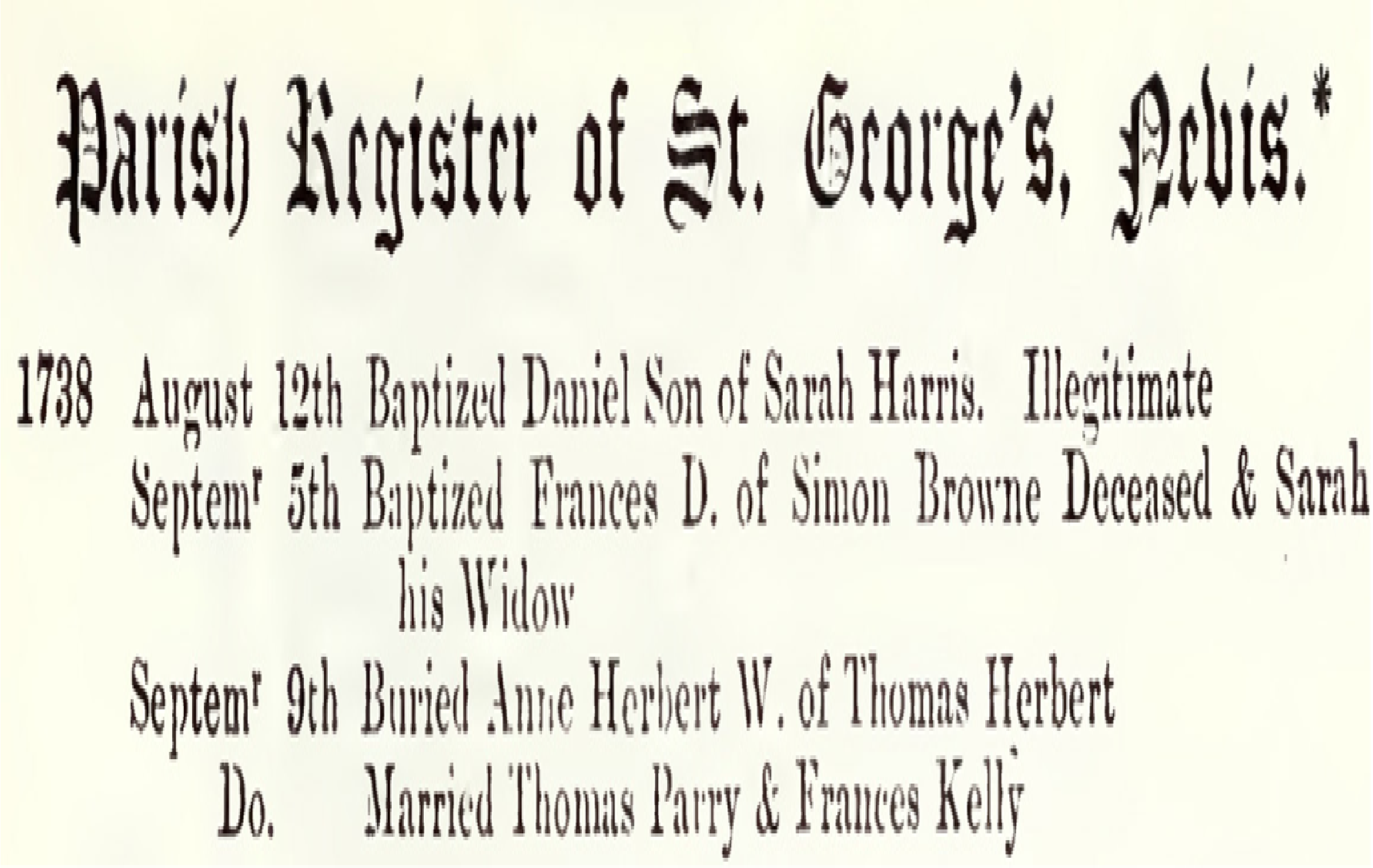
In a world where Jewishness had a multiplicity of dimensions and assumed a variety of forms, the question of Alexander Hamilton's religious identity cannot be reduced to a simple Jew/Gentile binary. Instead, we must consider the likelihood that Hamilton had a Jewish identity in one or more of its many senses for any span of his life. With respect to Jewish law, the Talmud specifies that Jewish identity is matrilineal and, even for converts, permanent.[89] Therefore, if Rachel converted to Judaism to marry John Levine, then Alexander Hamilton legally would be a Jew—at least by the standards of those who oversaw his mother's conversion—regardless of whether she still presented herself as Jewish at the time of Alexander's birth. And the case for Alexander's Jewish identity does not rest on Talmudic technicalities alone. There is compelling evidence that Rachel passed on some communal Jewish identity to her son (and if so, his communal identity likely coincided with other forms of Jewish identity, such as public and personal).

It must first be noted, however, that there is little historical documentation concerning Alexander's birth that is instructive here. If Alexander were born a Jew, he would have been circumcised consistent with Jewish tradition, and if born a Christian, baptized. Yet no records survive from the synagogue in Charlestown, and so if Alexander were indeed circumcised, any source attesting to such a ritual has been lost.[90] Meanwhile, extant church registers from Nevis for the 1750s show no baptismal entry for Alexander (or for his brother, James Jr.). These parish records, however, are fragmentary and thus cannot provide definitive conclusions.[91]

The best evidence of Alexander's Jewish identity is that he attended a Jewish school on Nevis. While he was not known in adulthood for divulging much about his origins, even to his family, one happy memory he did share with his children was his Jewish education. "Rarely as he alluded to his personal history," Hamilton's son recalled, "he mentioned with a smile, his having been taught to repeat the Decalogue [i.e., the Ten Commandments] in Hebrew, at the school of a Jewess, when so small that he was placed standing by her side upon a table."[92] (It remains unknown whether James Jr. also attended this school.)

Many Hamilton biographers make no mention of his Jewish instruction.[93] Those who reference this peculiar detail typically do so in passing without any reflection on why a supposedly Christian child attended a school for Jews.[94] The few scholars who try to make sense of this curiosity point to his illegitimacy. In her 1970 history of St. Croix, Florence Lewisohn maintains without evidence, "Schooling for the boys had been one of the problems in Nevis, since they were held ineligible for church school there because the parents were unmarried. Alexander had gone for a time to the Jewish school."[95] Chernow uses more measured language in speculating along similar lines: "His illegitimate birth may well have barred him from Anglican instruction."[96] There is, in fact, no basis for concluding that Alexander's out-of-wedlock birth raised an obstacle to his attending a church school on Nevis, and good cause to think otherwise. Church records from around the Caribbean—including the very church to which Rachel's parents had belonged on Nevis—list infants who were "bastards" yet baptized.[97] We have no grounds for assuming that a church willing to baptize children *despite* their illegitimacy would at the same time refuse to educate those very children *because* of their illegitimacy.[98]

Moreover, there is ample reason to expect that Alexander would have only attended the Jewish school if the community's Jews accepted him as a coreligionist. Although no records still exist from Hamilton's school, we can glean much about the nature of contemporary Jewish education from other schools in that era.[99] As with Christian schools, Jewish educational institutions existed to impart religious precepts. And because Jews were a dispersed minority, their schools took on the added mission of cultivating a shared sense of Jewish peoplehood that bound Jews together across the diaspora. In sum, students gained the knowledge, customs, and identity necessary for adult lives as observant Jews.[100] Jewish schooling for any given child in this era is, therefore, a strong indicator that the local Jewish community considered the student a Jew. What's more, the Talmud prohibits Jews from teaching the Torah to Gentiles (and Hamilton made clear to his children that he undertook, at the very least, rudimentary study of the Torah in its original Hebrew), furnishing yet another reason for Hamilton's school on Nevis to admit Jewish students exclusively.[101]



Parish Register of St. George's, Nevis.*

1738 August 12th Baptized Daniel Son of Sarah Harris. Illegitimate
Septemr 5th Baptized Frances D. of Simon Browne Deceased & Sarah
his Widow
Septemr 9th Buried Anne Herbert W. of Thomas Herbert
Do. Married Thomas Parry & Frances Kelly

The entry for August 12 shows that Daniel Harris was baptized despite his classification as "illegitimate." *Source*: Vere Langford Oliver, ed., *Caribbeana: Being Miscellaneous Papers Relating to the History, Genealogy, Topography, and Antiquities of the British West Indies*. Vol. 3. London: Mitchell Hughes and Clarke, 1914.

The fraught nature of Jewish-Christian relations on Nevis further suggests that the Jewish school would likely have educated Hamilton only if local Jews saw him as one of their own. Britain's quest to populate its Caribbean colonies with settlers led to laxer restrictions on religious minorities than those applied in Britain proper. Jews, along with other out-groups such as Quakers and Catholics, gained a foothold on islands like Nevis. But religious diversity was not a principle that the British celebrated; it was, instead, a reality that required begrudging acceptance in the name of cash crop cultivation. Tolerance for minority faiths had its limits, especially as islands reached peak productivity and, accordingly, the imperative for additional immigration waned. By 1701, Nevis had banned both Catholics and Quakers. When the Leeward Islands General Assembly—a federated legislature with representatives from Britain's various Leeward colonies—sought to repeal restrictions on Catholics in 1752, the local Nevis legislature erupted in protest.[102]

Nevis's Jews fared better than Quakers and Catholics but still faced civic inequality and cultural stigma. Members of the Jewish faith were disallowed from casting ballots, serving as jurors, joining the militia, becoming justices of the peace, or holding elected office.[103] In 1694, the Leeward Islands General Assembly barred Jews from trading commodities. Although that prohibition would later be lifted, there was still plenty of cause for anxiety among Jews on Nevis and throughout the British West Indies. They were prominent as merchants, and Jewish success in commerce was perceived to come at the expense of Christians. On Barbados, English merchants complained to the Crown that Jews were crafty swindlers who threatened to rob the island of its wealth: "The Jews are a people so subtle in matters of trade that in a short time they will not only engross trade among themselves, but will be able to direct the benefit hereof to other places."[104] Aggrieved Gentile merchants in Jamaica used more dire terms, lamenting, "The Jews eat us and our children out of all trade.… This is a great and growing evil, and had we not warning from other colonies, we should see our streets filled and the ships hither crowded with them. This means taking our children's bread and giving it to Jews."[105] Confronted with this kind of bigotry, Jamaican Jews sought to curry favor with local officials by gifting them "Jew pies," which were baked pies with coins inside.[106]

Nevis was scarcely immune to the antisemitism infecting the British West Indies at large. Nevisian Jews were pegged by the local legislature as "evil-minded persons, intending nothing but their own private gain, and the ruin of the poor." It was further alleged that these Jews tended to "buy whole cargoes of provisions at a cheap rate" and "retail them again at excessive prices, thereby forestalling the market."[107] The Jewish community may have been especially vulnerable to prejudice after a series of misfortunes bedeviled Nevis. Although anointed "the Queen of the Caribees" in its early colonial history,[108] the island's condition steadily deteriorated. Antigua replaced Nevis as the capital of the Leeward Islands in 1687. Soon after, the Nevis-based Royal African Company lost its monopoly on trafficking slaves. The most devastating blow came in 1706, when an invading French force ransacked the island for eighteen days. With crops ravaged, homes reduced to rubble, and the courthouse set aflame, Nevis managed only a partial recovery in the decades to follow.[109] The governor of neighboring St. Kitts relayed to London in 1728 that "Nevis has quite lost its trade and is a desert island to what it was thirty years ago."[110] Hurricanes, soil erosion, and slave rebellions compounded Nevis's decline throughout the eighteenth century.[111]

In troubled times, Jews could become easy scapegoats. A reverend conveyed to the bishop of London that among the free population on Nevis, "one 4th are Jews, who have a synagogue here, and are said to be very acceptable to the country part of the island, but are far from being so to the town [i.e., Charlestown], by whom they are charged with taking the bread out of Christians' mouths." Charlestown's Jews were "by many thought to be the true cause of the strange decay of this place."[112] That fellow Jews had been expelled from the French West Indies likely stoked anxieties for Jews on Nevis that a similar fate could befall them.[113]

The geography of Jewish life in Charlestown reflects how the Jews occupied a separate, and subordinate, rung on the island hierarchy. Jews were not dispersed evenly throughout the town but rather concentrated in a Jewish quarter. And this Jewish neighborhood was hardly the island's most prized real estate. Situated in south Charlestown, the Jewish quarter was sandwiched between the jail on one side and a mosquito-infested backwater called “the bogs” on the other.[114] Jews in many European nations similarly dwelled in their own, less desirable districts. In other words, Jews and Christians did not move to Nevis and create a new set of spatial and social dynamics with each other. Rather, they recreated patterns of Jewish-Christian relations from the Old World—patterns designed to ensure a degree of distance, both physical and cultural, between the two faith groups.[115] The clustered nature of Jewish life on Nevis characterized other Jewish communities throughout the Caribbean.[116] (We do not know where Rachel Levine lived on Nevis. Island legend has it that she inhabited a waterfront property that she inherited from her father, but the claim remains unsupported by historical evidence.)

The site of the official parish church in Charlestown further illustrates how the European practice of religious segregation migrated with the colonists to Nevis. Known as St. Paul’s, the church resided on the northern corner of town, far from the synagogue. Throughout much of Europe, church regulations called for maximal distance between Jewish and Christian houses of worship. No such rule existed in Nevis, and yet the island’s Christians chose to adhere to this convention anyway, testifying to the endurance of Old World religious customs.[117]

When Nevis’s Christians made reference to someone who happened to be Jewish, that Jewish identity was often noted, underscoring that Jews’ religious difference was a salient feature in the eyes of their Christian neighbors. One Gentile recorded after a fishing expedition, “In the month of July, 1719, one Mr. Moses Pinheiro, a Jew, and myself went to angle in Black Rock Pond.”[118] A planter similarly remarked that a local woman compensated “Sampson the Jew for repairing an earring.” The use of language like “the Jew” speaks to a mentality among island Christians that Jewish residents were fundamentally different.[119]

Given the role of Jewish schools in cultivating Jewish identity, the Talmudic prohibition on Jews teaching the Torah to Gentiles, and the segregation of Jewish and Christian life on Nevis, there is substantial cause to believe that the Jewish school would have educated Alexander Hamilton only if the local Jewish community recognized him as a fellow Jew. Alexander’s attendance at the Jewish school is also the most compelling indication that his mother had converted to Judaism back on St. Croix. Under the tenets of Jewish law, recognition of Rachel as a Jew would have been a precondition for Alexander’s own Jewish status. If we proceed from the conventional wisdom that Rachel lacked prior ties to Judaism, it becomes difficult to explain why she would, or how she even could, enroll her child in a Jewish school.

One wonders what the place of Alexander’s father, a Christian, means for making sense of Alexander’s religious identity. Alas, the record is silent; it is impossible to state the extent of James’s involvement in Alexander’s life. We do know that Rachel Levine never married James, which may have made it easier for the Jews of Nevis to accept her.

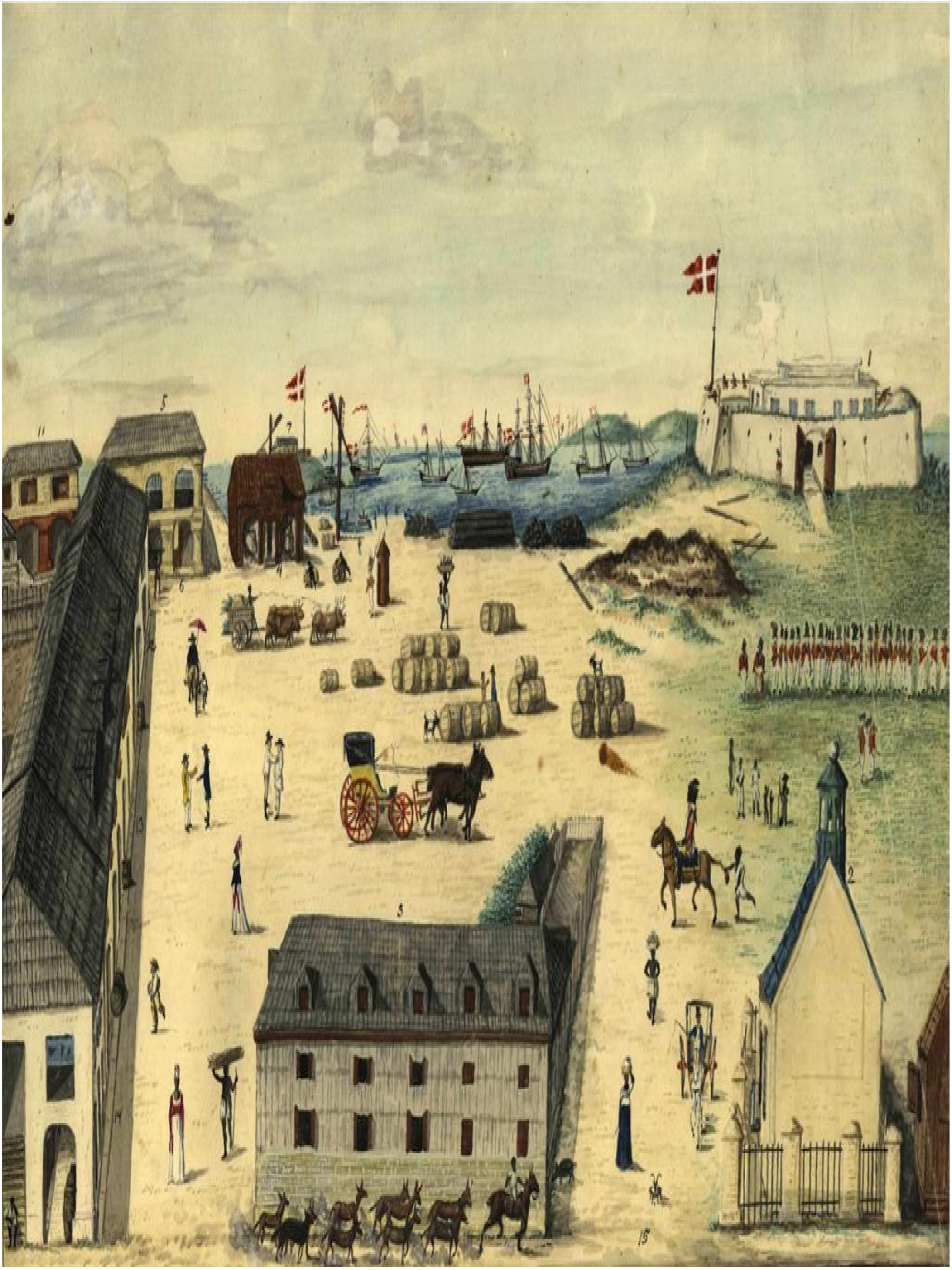
If Rachel did profess a Jewish identity even after fleeing St. Croix, her motivations for doing so remain a matter for speculation—and may have been more strategic than spiritual. Perhaps Rachel found it convenient on Nevis to trade on an earlier conversion to Judaism to secure some measure of acceptance in the Jewish community. And although that community constituted a sizable proportion of Nevis's free population, in absolute numbers the Jewish population there was far smaller than many sister congregations on other islands,[120] and so Nevis's Jews would have had little incentive to rebuff a woman willing to both claim a Jewish identity and contribute tuition payments to the school's coffers. Rachel and Alexander were marginal people; it would be altogether unsurprising if they found themselves on the margins of different faiths at different times in their lives. Indeed, the theory that they were Jewish—in at least some senses of the term and for at least some stretch of time—accounts for more evidence in the historical record than the long-standing assumption they were cradle-to-grave Christians.[121]

2

Exodus

AROUND THE TIME of Alexander Hamilton's eleventh birthday, in 1765, his family relocated to the site of Rachel Levine's past imprisonment: Christiansted, St. Croix. Notably, Rachel appears in the Danish tax rolls under her married name and sometimes under her maiden name but not as Rachel Hamilton, demonstrating that she made no pretense to be James Hamilton Sr.'s wife. James Sr. did move to Christiansted around the same time, but the fact that he is not mentioned at all in the rolls indicates that Rachel and her sons did not even live with him. He abandoned St. Croix altogether not long after his arrival, further suggesting a lack of engagement in the lives of his boys and their mother.[1] Johan Levine, for his part, had secured a divorce from a local court years earlier during Rachel's lengthy absence from St. Croix. She need not have worried about daily run-ins with her ex-husband, as he was now living in the town of Frederiksted on the other side of the island.[2]

St. Croix had come to vie with Jamaica and Barbados as a premier sugar producer in the West Indies.[3] Christiansted was home to a gradually growing population of some 2,200 residents[4] and featured all the varied imports typical of a Caribbean port city. Islanders could purchase flour from New York, oats from Denmark, wine from Madeira—and from the Gold Coast of West Africa, slaves. The local newspaper featured advertisements from craftsmen who journeyed to St. Croix to offer their services. A jeweler from Copenhagen who "flatters himself with giving the utmost satisfaction" promoted his goldsmithing talents, while a Bostonian skilled in "the sailmaker's business in all its branches" sought a market among the seafaring.[5]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The harbor in Christiansted, St. Croix. *Source*: Kort og tegninger (1600–1920), Rigsarkivet (Danish National Archives, Copenhagen).

Life on the island did not center solely on sugar and commerce, at least for whites who could afford to partake in festivities and cultural pursuits. Celebratory balls and St. Patrick's Day merriment added color to the social calendar. For those partial to the literary arts, the printing office on Queen Street sold German poetry and English treatises. Planters and merchants hoping to impart some measure of erudition to their children could send them to a private school, which touted a curriculum in "spelling, reading, and writing, together with that truly laudable and excellent accomplishment, the noble science of arithmetic." (There is no evidence that Alexander attended any Caribbean school other than the Jewish one on Nevis.) Rival theater companies put on Shakespearean classics, catering to the tastes of an island where the gentry class had far more Brits than colonists of any other European nationality. Twelve shillings purchased a ticket to a performance of *Hamlet* or *King Lear*.[6]

Rachel Levine and her two sons took up residence at 34 Company Street in Christiansted. They resided on the second story, while Rachel ran a store on the ground floor that sold provisions like beef, apples, and rice.[7] Her library held nearly three dozen books, which likely fed Alexander's hunger for knowledge that would characterize him throughout his life.[8] Rachel's mother, now deceased, had bequeathed to her several slaves. One of those slave's children, Ajax, was enlisted to attend to Alexander.[9]

In February 1768, both Rachel and Alexander were struck with a mysterious illness. A doctor was summoned to the fevered mother and son, who suffered together in a single bed. Thirteen-year-old Alexander pulled back from the brink, but on February 19, Rachel Levine drew her dying breath.[10]

Rachel's passing was marked in the St. John's church register, a fact that would seem on its face to signal that she identified as a Christian, at least at the end of her life. However, the recording of a death in a church register may not necessarily indicate that the deceased was a member of that church or even an adherent of the Christian faith generally. At the time, many governments that did not yet keep civil records of births and deaths instead relied on religious institutions to log such details, not just for their respective parishioners but for those outside the flock as well. Jewish people were especially likely to appear in church registers in areas where there were not enough Jews to have a synagogue with its own records.[11]

The details of Rachel's burial may be telling of her religious identity. A plot in a Jewish burial ground would not have been an option for Rachel or anyone else on the island at that time; the earliest epitaph in St. Croix's Jewish cemetery dates from 1779, eleven years after her death.[12] An island Jew in 1768 could therefore only be laid to rest at a family home, and in fact Rachel was buried at the Grange, the estate that her sister's husband had purchased. To be sure, plantations like the Grange often had graveyards, so such a burial was not unusual for an islander of any faith.[13] Still, the fact that Rachel was not interred in the church cemetery would at least conform with the theory that she had a Jewish identity until her death. She also bore her ex-husband's surname even at the end of her life—eighteen years after leaving him—another possible indication of an enduring link to Judaism. Her death was recorded under Johan's last name and a slightly varied spelling of her given name: "Rachael Levine."[14]

A stubborn myth among Hamilton scholars is that a local reverend presided over her funeral. H. U. Ramsing's *Alexander Hamilton's Birth and Parentage* describes how "the English minister, the Rev. Cecil Wray Goodchild, performed the ceremony of casting earth upon the coffin."[15] In a work that is otherwise exhaustively documented, Ramsing conspicuously cites no source to substantiate this statement. Presumably, he uses the fact that Rachel's death appears in the St. John's register to infer that the Reverend Goodchild of St. John's must have officiated. Broadus Mitchell's study of the first half of Hamilton's life proceeds along similar lines: "Rachael's body was taken in a hearse to the family plot of James Lytton on Grange plantation and was buried there, February 20, by the English minister, the Reverend Cecil Wray Goodchild." Mitchell adds that the "particulars of Rachael's illness and death are from claims presented to the probate court" as well as from "the burial register of St. John's."[16] Yet neither the probate court record nor the burial register make any mention of the Reverend Goodchild's attendance at the interment.[17] Robert Hendrickson's biography of Hamilton follows Mitchell nearly word for word—"Rachel's body was taken in a hearse to James Lytton's family plot on Grange plantation and buried there on February 20 by the English minister, the Reverend Cecil Wray Goodchild"—while providing no evidence for the assertion.[18] Meanwhile, Willard Sterne Randall's *Alexander Hamilton: A Life* takes poetic license in imagining that "under ancient mahogany trees in the burial yard overlooking the azure Caribbean, Alexander heard the local Church of England curate intone the matter-of-fact Anglican formula."[19] And in *Odd Destiny*, author Marie B. Hecht mistakenly writes that Rachel "was buried in the churchyard of St. John's Anglican church."[20] These biographers' sundry assumptions notwithstanding, there is no source in the historical record documenting the presence of the Reverend Goodchild at Rachel Levine's funeral.[21]

In the aftermath of his father's flight and mother's burial, Alexander confronted life as an orphan. The tragedies of his childhood only multiplied from there. His vengeful stepfather, Johan Levine, legally challenged the right of Alexander and his brother, James Jr., to their inheritance on account of their illegitimacy. The local probate court awarded Levine's son, Peter—Rachel's only child born in wedlock—the entirety of the estate.[22] Alexander and James Jr. were left in the custody of a cousin named Peter Lytton, and within a matter of months Peter committed suicide. According to the St. Croix records, he “stabbed or shot himself to death.”[23] Alexander Hamilton’s achievements in America are all the more impressive when considered in light of the calamities that befell him in childhood.[24] His contemporaries in the United States would fail to fully appreciate his rise from these harrowing origins partly because of his lifelong silence about his Caribbean past.

Any identity as a Jew that Hamilton may have had almost certainly died with his mother. A plucky youth like him would have been disinclined to compound his troubles as a dispossessed orphan with a second-class religious status. Had Hamilton still resided on Nevis at this point—with its Jewish community and the Jewish school that educated him—perhaps Rachel’s passing would have been less likely to occasion her son’s disaffiliation from the Jewish faith. But St. Croix was home to far fewer Jews than Nevis. If Hamilton ever laid claim to a Jewish identity, he was now bereft of a family or community that might have kept it alive.

While James Jr. began an apprenticeship with a carpenter, Alexander finally had a moment of luck that allayed his seemingly endless succession of hardships—an affluent merchant named Thomas Stevens agreed to house him. Stevens’s son Edward was, like Hamilton, a precocious youth, and the two boys became lifelong friends. In fact, they looked so similar in appearance that commentators from Hamilton’s day to our own have speculated that Thomas Stevens might have been Hamilton’s biological father.[25]

Hamilton worked as a clerk at the import-export firm of Beekman and Cruger, a job he had begun even before his mother’s death.[26] Although he did not personally travel off St. Croix, Hamilton was now immersed in vast trading networks and exposed to seafaring merchants from across the Atlantic. Given the prominence of Jewish traders in the Caribbean, it is all but certain that Hamilton came into contact with the kinds of Jewish merchants with whom he would later collaborate in America. His time at Beekman and Cruger offered him a practical education in global markets that informed his later stewardship of the Treasury Department. While many other founders of the United States grew up on farms and plantations, and hence were schooled in agrarian life, Hamilton was uniquely prepared to become the visionary of America’s financial future.

The Beekman and Cruger firm trafficked in a wide variety of goods, from rope and rice to brick and bread—and occasionally slaves.[27] Hamilton learned the nuances of accounting, pricing, and inventory. He gained mastery over exchange rates between numerous national currencies. And perhaps most significantly for his later endeavors, he cultivated an advanced understanding of credit.[28]

One of the firm’s partners, Nicholas Cruger, recognized Hamilton’s extraordinary acumen for commerce. When poor health prompted Cruger to return to his native city of New York for five months in 1771, he entrusted the firm to his teenage clerk.[29] Hamilton proved equal to the task, managing the firm’s affairs with remarkable poise for someone so young. After one Captain William Newton arrived with a shipment of subpar mules from South America, Hamilton described to Cruger’s brother “41 mules in such order that I have been obliged to send all of them to pasture, and of which I expect at least a third will die."[30] Hamilton chastised Captain Newton in unequivocal terms: "Reflect continually on the unfortunate voyage you have just made and endeavor to make up for the considerable loss therefrom."[31] Even in correspondence with his employer, Hamilton could be blunt. As he once told Cruger, "Your Philadelphia flour is really very bad, being of a most swarthy complexion and withal very untractable."[32] The confident judgment, swift decision-making, and unvarnished candor that would all define Hamilton's life in America were already on full display at this early stage.

A newly unearthed court transcript from 1771 concerning Cruger's firm demonstrates that Hamilton unquestionably identified as a Christian by this point in his life. But it also raises questions about the recency and extent of Hamilton's church affiliation. He was called as a witness to testify about the delivery of goods in a legal dispute. To determine Hamilton's competence to take an oath on the Bible before testifying, he was asked "how old he was and of what religion, and if he had received the sacrament of the altar [i.e., communion], as well as if he understood the meaning of the oath." Hamilton said that he was seventeen and assured the court that he was "brought up in the Reformed religion as it was observed in the English Established Church [i.e., the Anglican Church]." He conceded, however, that "he had not yet received communion." The lawyers debated whether Hamilton could take the oath; in the end, the court forbade him from so doing. He was permitted to share what he knew about the delivery of the goods in question, albeit in a statement lacking the greater credibility that the oath would have provided.[33]

While there is no reason to doubt Hamilton's claim that he was an Anglican in 1771, his failure to have taken communion suggests that his relationship with the church had not been lifelong. The text governing Anglican rituals—*The Book of Common Prayer*—specified that the related rites of confirmation and communion were to take place in childhood. Those eligible for confirmation were "children being now come to the years of discretion," defined as youngsters capable of reciting "the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments" and answering some basic questions about Anglican theology. Once confirmed, a child could then take communion. As *The Book of Common Prayer* stipulated, "there shall none be admitted to the holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed."[34]

It seems, then, that Hamilton's comment about being "brought up" Anglican had shades of both truth and exaggeration. In all likelihood he *was* brought up Anglican, at least nominally, in the years that he lived with Thomas Stevens. But Hamilton's choice of words must also be read in the context of the legal case. Seeking to give testimony for the benefit of the man who paid his salary, Hamilton had a clear incentive to puff up his Christian credentials in court. And the fact that Hamilton had not received a sacrament by age seventeen that was expected of Anglican children is consistent with the theory that he came late to Christianity. As we will see, his relationship with Christianity in his American adulthood would be largely ambivalent. Even at the twilight of his life, when a bleeding Hamilton was laid down on his deathbed, he still had never taken communion.

Although Hamilton was of considerable use to his trading firm, he did not thrill to the life of a clerk. Island hierarchy positioned European planters at the top rung, African slaves at the bottom, and clerks somewhere in between. Hamilton bristled at the strictures of a stratified society that afforded little hope for advancement. In a revealing letter to his childhood friend Edward "Ned" Stevens, who was then studying in New York, Hamilton expressed an intense hunger to rise above his modest circumstances: "To confess my weakness, Ned, my ambition is [so] prevalent that I condemn the groveling conditions of a clerk … and would willingly risk my life, though not my character, to exalt my station." He added, "I wish there was a war." Hamilton believed that for someone like him—without an esteemed father or extensive fortune—martial glory was the surest path to respectability.[35]

At the time that he penned these sentiments, in 1769, colonists in both North America and the West Indies were agitating against taxes levied by the British Parliament, but the prospect of a military revolt by any of these colonies against the motherland was not yet imaginable. War was more of an abstract hope rather than a concrete likelihood for Hamilton. Yet war would indeed break out the following decade and present Hamilton with the opportunity for battlefield heroics.

If commerce was a new subject for Hamilton in his St. Croix years, then Hebrew may have been an old one that he revived. Some scholars go so far as to claim that Hamilton was fluent in Hebrew.[36] While his level of proficiency is impossible to ascertain, if he did in fact achieve fluency, the Reverend Hugh Knox may have played some part. Hamilton became friendly with Knox,[37] who not only mastered Hebrew but insisted that it was a "duty" to study the Hebrew Bible in its "mother tongue." In one "discourse" that Knox published, he lamented the failure of English translations to adequately capture the majesty of the Psalms. "Words are too feeble," Knox reflected, "to express that sublimity of sentiment, that grandeur of figure and style, and that pure flame of ardent and rapturous devotion which animate almost every line of these wonderful compositions in the original Hebrew."[38] As a Christian interested in Hebrew, he was not alone. Christian Hebraists on both sides of the Atlantic were keen to read their Old Testament in its original language.[39]

After sundown on August 31, 1772, a catastrophic hurricane brutalized the Leeward Islands. Its eye passed directly over Christiansted. Amid gale-force winds and seventy-foot waves, homes were destroyed, ships hurled inland, and the lives of hundreds of islanders summarily extinguished. Survivors assessed the damage the next morning, uncovering the corpses of their neighbors strewn about the rubble.[40]

The best contemporary description of the storm came from the pen of an eighteen-year-old Alexander Hamilton, whose baroque letter detailing the calamity appeared in the local island paper. “It seemed as if a total dissolution of nature was taking place,” he recounted. “The roaring of the sea and wind, fiery meteors flying about it in the air, the prodigious glare of almost perpetual lightning, the crash of the falling houses, and the ear-piercing shrieks of the distressed, were sufficient to strike astonishment into Angels.” Hamilton’s depiction of the hurricane included the line, “Jesus be merciful!” which is notable for its aberrancy—the name “Jesus” appears nowhere else in the voluminous writings and correspondence that he produced throughout his life.[41]

According to legend, the publication of Hamilton’s letter in the newspaper suddenly and profoundly changed his life’s trajectory because his precocious eloquence inspired islanders to raise money so that he could receive a college education in America.[42] In truth, Hamilton’s patrons almost certainly were already acquainted with his intellectual prowess, and his letter about the hurricane likely confirmed—rather than created—their impression that he merited advanced schooling on the mainland.[43] Soon Hamilton was boarding a ship bound for Boston, with most accounts placing his arrival in the fall of 1772. From there, he journeyed south to the city that would one day be nicknamed Hamiltonopolis: New York.[44]

This initial stay in New York was brief. Although brilliant, Hamilton lacked formal schooling on St. Croix and was not yet ready for college. He used Hugh Knox’s connections to secure a place at the Elizabethtown Academy in New Jersey, where he quickly absorbed the preparatory curriculum.[45] His notebook from the time demonstrates that whatever study of the Hebrew Bible he had begun in Nevis continued in America. Over several pages, Hamilton recorded a verse-by-verse paraphrase of the book of Genesis. He wrote in one column, “1. God created heaven and Earth 2. The earth shapeless and without light/spirit moved on the face of the waters,” and then he scribbled in a second column, “inference that Earth and Sea were mingled together.”[46]

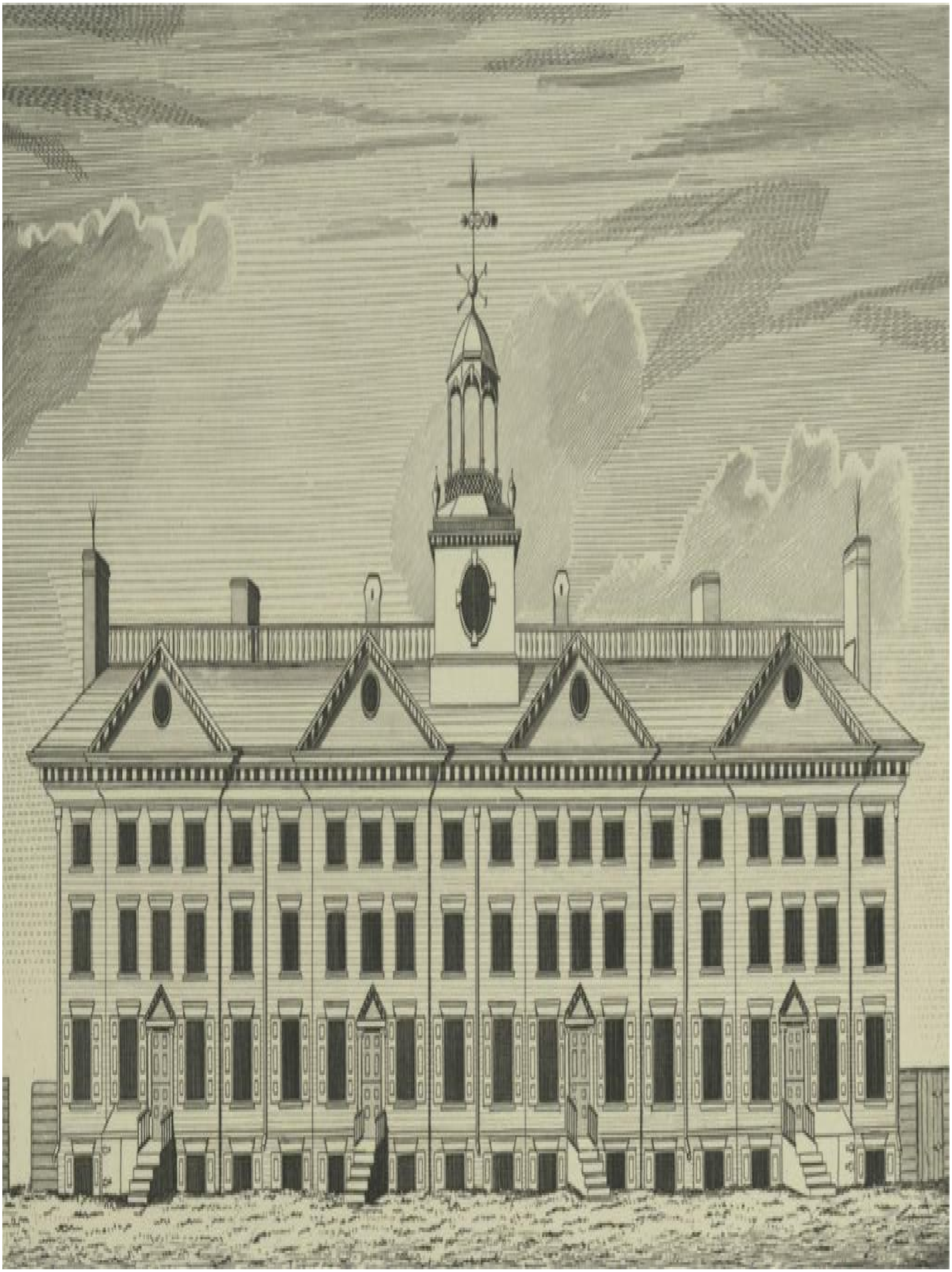
When Hamilton set about to choose a college, he looked for an institution that would allow him to accelerate through the curriculum according to his aptitude rather than force him to follow the standard academic calendar. His eagerness to hurdle through his studies was typical of the constant sense of urgency that would characterize the rest of his life. The College of New Jersey (later Princeton) denied his request, but King’s College (later Columbia) in New York was amenable to Hamilton’s plan.[47]

Hamilton peddled the fiction that he was younger than his real age by some two-and-a-half years, claiming January 11, 1757 as his birthday.[48] Numerous biographers accept at face value the date of birth that Hamilton offered once he appeared in America.[49] Yet all the relevant evidence from the Caribbean debunks this myth and instead aligns with a 1754 birth year. In August of 1771, Hamilton testified in the previously mentioned legal case on St. Croix that he was seventeen years old.[50] Four months earlier, a poem published in the St. Croix newspaper in 1771 by “A. H.”—widely believed to be Hamilton—included a note from the author describing himself as “a youth about seventeen.”[51] This language suggests a sixteen-year-old with an imminent birthday. We can thus infer that Hamilton likely turned seventeen as early as April but no later than

August 1771. This timeline accords with the record of the probate court that handled Rachel Levine's estate, which identified Hamilton as thirteen years old in February 1768.[52] It also harmonizes with documentation from Johan Levine's divorce proceedings from 1759. In that case, a witness recalled that back in 1757, Rachel's youngest child (i.e., Alexander) had been "about" three years old.[53] In sum, every relevant piece of evidence from the West Indies is consistent with a birth date between April and August 1754.

It is unsurprising that Hamilton disguised his true age. King's College skewed younger than other institutions of higher learning; the average incoming student at King's was only fifteen.[54] Aware of his outsider status, Hamilton was surely anxious to fit in with students who were a few years his junior. His small size and boyish face would have made the deception easy to carry out.[55] Having committed himself to a 1757 birth year after he arrived in America, Hamilton then had to maintain this fiction throughout his life for consistency's sake. And he did so without any Caribbean acquaintance ever exposing his falsehood. That Hamilton was able to misrepresent the date of his birth so successfully makes it all the more likely that he could obscure any Jewish origins for the duration of his adulthood without a West Indian contemporary correcting him.

Founded in 1754, King's College was situated in a stately three-story building with a cupola adorning its roof. The college sat atop a hill that gradually descended to the Hudson River.[56] A visiting Scotsman remarked that the setting was "one of the finest situations perhaps of any college in the world."[57] The library, staircases, and student accommodations were all designed on the model of Oxford and Cambridge. A typical day for an undergraduate began with morning prayers in the chapel shortly after dawn, academic study until noon, a ninety-minute break for lunch, additional study until evening prayers, and then time to himself until curfew. Academic gowns were to be worn at all times, even when students ventured into town. The campus was encircled by a fence that (usually) reined in students after nightfall.[58]



King's College was renamed Columbia after the Revolution. *Source*: *View of Columbia College in the City of New York*. Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Print Collection, New York Public Library.

The student body at King's was small, consisting of merely thirty-six pupils.[59] Undergraduates were exclusively white and male, and typically from well-to-do Protestant families (although there was a lone Jewish student in the 1770s named Isaac Abrahams). While the students were demographically similar to each other, they shared no common education prior to their arrival at King's. Some had received independent tutoring as children; others, like Hamilton, had attended preparatory academies. All that the college required for admission was sufficient ability in Latin and Greek, and even that standard was leniently applied.[60]

The King's College curriculum, following Oxbridge, emphasized classical civilization. The poetry, history, and philosophy of ancient Greece and Rome were seen as vital fodder for a student's intellectual development. Indeed, classical thought would deeply inform Hamilton's approach to the modern world throughout his career. Students also studied ethics, logic, rhetoric, mathematics, and metaphysics. When not attending lectures, undergraduates kept busy with assigned readings and by memorizing declamations—passages to be read aloud from either classical texts or their own essays.[61]

Given that much of Hamilton's college education was administered in private tutoring, we do not know which subjects he undertook. He may well have resumed his study of Hebrew while an undergraduate. This much is clear—Hamilton's intellect did not tire from the demanding curriculum. He was part of a quintet of classmates who gathered weekly of their own volition to hone their writing and speaking skills.[62]

A King's College education was intended to impart not just knowledge but virtue, and to that end the college banned all sorts of juvenile buffoonery. During Hamilton's time, the college president made use of a notorious "Black Book" that recorded indiscretions. Transgressive behavior ranged from the predictable (skipping classes) to the mischievous (teacup theft) to the downright unseemly (cockfighting). Punishment often entailed paying a fine or translating Latin texts.[63] In his later capacity as a trustee of the college, Hamilton would advise with moderation that a college president should "be of a disposition to maintain discipline without undue austerity."[64]

The academic year began in July and ran for four terms, each concluding with examinations. At the end of their fourth year, seniors had to pass a final evaluation covering the totality of the curriculum to earn the bachelor of arts degree. Routinely graduates then pursued one of the three learned professions of the day: law, medicine, or ministry. Given that King's was in a city rather than the countryside, it is little surprise that just as many alumni took up careers in commerce, finance, or manufacturing.[65]

The matter of Hamilton's relationship to Christianity during his undergraduate days was addressed after his death in a remembrance penned by his former roommate, Robert Troup. According to Troup, Hamilton "was a zealous believer in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity."[66] But there is cause enough to question the credibility of this account. In the only study to date focused exclusively on the topic of Hamilton and the Christian faith, historians Douglass Adair and Marvin Harvey write that his “manifestation of public piety” at King’s was merely “skin-deep” given his postcollege “lapse into complete indifference” toward Christianity. They continue, “One suspects, too, a strong element of opportunism in the early display of conventional orthodoxy. Hamilton was probably paying his devout patrons for his college education with spiritual coin of less than sterling value.”[67] Perhaps the same desire for belonging that led Hamilton to falsify his age also prompted him to make pretenses to religiosity in a college with an avowed Anglican affiliation.

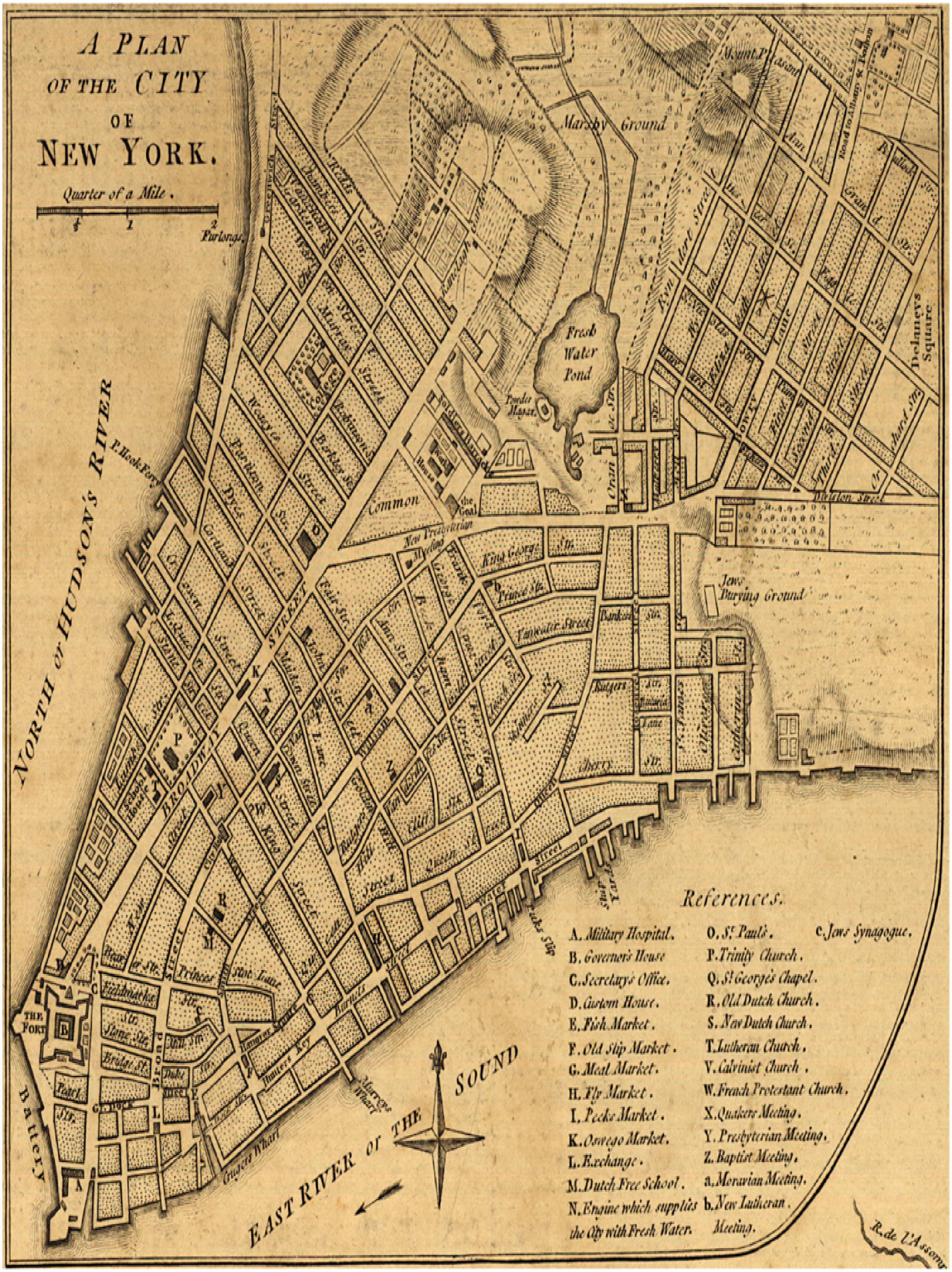
Hamilton biographer Nathan Schachner challenges the accuracy of Troup’s description by pointing out that Troup wrote this testimonial at the request of a clergyman, the Reverend Dr. John Mason. In Schachner’s words, “The whole business has too much the air of having been thrown into the narrative for Dr. Mason’s especial benefit.”[68] That Troup’s account contains other statements about Hamilton’s past that are incorrect lends further doubt to this picture of religious fervor. And aside from Troup’s remembrance, no evidence indicates that Hamilton enthusiastically embraced the Christian faith in his early adulthood. Regardless of Hamilton’s religious practices at King’s, he was largely disengaged from Christianity in the years that followed.

Hamilton’s matriculation at King’s made him not just a college man but, more importantly, a New Yorker. Depending on one’s perspective, visitors to this bustling port encountered either a lively bastion of opportunity or a repugnant pit of vice. Thomas Jefferson condemned the city as a cesspool of “all the depravities of human nature.”[69] John Adams found New York superficially impressive but substantively impoverished. “With all the opulence and splendor of this city, there is very little good breeding to be found,” he griped. “At their entertainments there is no conversation that is agreeable. There is no modesty—no attention to one another. They talk very loud, very fast, and all together. If they ask you a question, before you can utter three words of your answer, they will break out upon you again—and talk away.”[70] While New York may have repelled the genteel southerner and irascible New Englander, it was the ideal stage for a Caribbean orphan with boundless ambition. That city—a magnet for immigrants and transplants, merchants and lawyers, traders and financiers—would prove not merely background scenery but foundational to Hamilton’s meteoric rise.

New York’s population numbered around 25,000 when Hamilton arrived, making it the second-largest urban center in America after Philadelphia, with its 40,000 residents.[71] Little more than the southernmost mile of Manhattan was then settled. Amid the labyrinth of narrow streets were government buildings, houses of worship, and merchant homes.[72] King’s was situated toward the northwestern corner of town. A block to the college’s east was a triangular green expanse called the Common.[73]

Broadway was the widest avenue in the city, originating off Bowling Green park near the island's southern tip and running northward. Bowling Green featured a recently erected statue of King George III on horseback. The other noteworthy statue in town, on Wall Street, was of William Pitt in honor of his outspoken resistance to the Stamp Act, a 1765 piece of parliamentary legislation that had taxed a wide array of colonial goods and provoked riotous opposition from Americans. That New York commissioned both statues in 1770—the one, a symbol of British authority; the other, a celebration of American autonomy—aptly reflects the torn loyalties that characterized the city's political culture. Neither statue would survive the coming revolution intact. The king was ripped apart and remade into bullets by the Americans, while Pitt was decapitated by British soldiers.[74]

Among the churches lining Broadway was St. Paul's, known less for the salvation within its walls than for the sins just beyond them—the neighboring lot was home to 500 prostitutes and subversively called the "Holy Ground." King's College was only two short blocks away. As a visitor remarked, "The entrance to this college is through one of the streets where the most noted prostitutes live. This is certainly a temptation to the youth that have occasion to pass so often that way."[75] It remains unknown whether Hamilton, who had a weakness for women, ever indulged in such carnal pleasures. John Adams, for one, would show limited faith in Hamilton's self-restraint, describing him after his death as a "superabundance of secretions which he could not find whores enough to draw off."[76]

A PLAN
OF THE CITY
OF
NEW YORK.
Quarter of a Mile.
1 2
Furlongs
NORTH or HUDSON'S RIVER
EAST RIVER OF THE SOUND
Marshy Ground
Mount Pleasant
Fresh Water Pond
Powder Magaz.
Common
the Goal
New Presbyterian Meeting
Jews Burying Ground
Delanceys Square
Division Street
King George Str.
Prince Str.
Vanwater Street
Rutgers
Cherry Str.
Queen Str.
Water Street
Broad Street
BROADWAY
STREET
Beaver Str.
Princes Str.
Stone Str.
Bridge Str.
Pearl Str.
Duke Street
Mill Str.
Dock Str.
Wall Street
King Street
William Str.
Nassau Str.
Smith Str.
John Str.
Maiden Lane
Fair Str.
Ann Str.
Gold Str.
Cliff Str.
Ferry Str.
Dyes Street
Cortlandt Street
Crown Str.
Little Queen Str.
Robinsons Street
Murray Str.
Warren Str.
Chambers Str.
Church Street
Catharine
Oliver
St. James
Bowery Lane
Grand Str.
Bayard Str.
Hunters Key
Burnets Key
Murrays Wharf
Cruger's Wharf
P. Hook Ferry
THE FORT
Battery
R. de L'Assom
References.
A. Military Hospital.
B. Governor's House
C. Secretary's Office.
D. Custom House.
E. Fish Market.
F. Old Slip Market.
G. Meal Market.
H. Fly Market.
I. Peck's Market.
K. Oswego Market.
L. Exchange.
M. Dutch Free School.
N. Engine which supplies the City with Fresh Water.
O. St. Paul's.
P. Trinity Church.
Q. St. George's Chapel.
R. Old Dutch Church.
S. New Dutch Church.
T. Lutheran Church.
V. Calvinist Church.
W. French Protestant Church.
X. Quakers Meeting.
Y. Presbyterian Meeting.
Z. Baptist Meeting.
a. Moravian Meeting.
b. New Lutheran Meeting.
c. Jews Synagogue.

Map of New York. *Source*: Thomas Pownall and Samuel Holland, *The provinces of New York and New Jersey; with part of Pensilvania, and the province of Quebec*. London: Robt. Sayer & John Bennett, 1776. Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

Near the corner of Broadway and Wall Street was City Hall. It housed the collections of the Union Library Society; for thirty shillings in dues, patrons could peruse nearly a thousand volumes.[77] Farther east, at the river's edge, the marketplaces alongside the wharves brimmed with all manner of provisions. A pound of beef ran four pence, the same of butter sixteen pence, and a "good hen" no more than a shilling. Rum, cider, and wine were all affordably priced. Only beer from London, at a steep two shillings a bottle, was relatively costly.[78]

Although New York claimed only 3 percent of the population of London, it still faced the various problems of urban life. The New Gaol prison, at the eastern corner of the Common, was deluged with convicted felons. The city took a number of measures to address rising crime rates, from hiring patrolmen to installing street lamps. Disease ran rampant as well, and a new hospital was under development on the northern fringe of town.[79] Another hazard of a condensed population was that an uncontained fire in a single home could threaten the entire community. To mitigate the risk of a widespread outbreak, the city appointed a number of fire captains and offered a financial reward to whoever among them most promptly summoned his team of men to the flames. Water pumps were also placed at regular intervals throughout the city, although water potable enough for tea had to be hauled in from the suburbs on carts.[80]

If Alexander Hamilton were to head through the college gates, down Broadway past the Common, beyond the Holy Ground, turning left onto Wall Street, then right at City Hall, and left again onto a cramped lane called Mill Street, there he would have beheld a sight he had first encountered as a child in Nevis—a synagogue.

3

Revolution

WHEN THE JEWS OF NEW YORK first formed a congregation, they chose a name rife with messianic significance: “Shearith Israel.” These Hebrew words translate to “remnants of Israel,” reflecting a prophecy that the scattering of the Jewish people was a necessary precondition for the coming of the Messiah and the ultimate reuniting of the dispersed Jewish tribes.[1] Jews had been present on the island of Manhattan since the days of Dutch rule in the seventeenth century, when the city was known as New Amsterdam.[2] The Dutch imposed significant restrictions on Jewish colonists, barring them from running for office, casting ballots, buying land, or worshipping publicly.[3] After the British took control of the city in 1664 and renamed it New York, Jews came to enjoy greater religious and economic freedom.[4] Small concentrations of Jews also appeared in Newport, Philadelphia, Charleston, and Savannah during the era of British colonial rule.[5]

New York Jewry tallied around 250 souls by the late colonial period.[6] With a vibrant congregation and commercial opportunity, the city’s Jewish community highlights the rich possibilities for Jewish life in the New World even before the advent of a revolution waged in the name of equality. Still, European bigotries migrated westward across the Atlantic. New York may have been the most inclusive toward Jews of the thirteen colonies, but toleration there had its limits.

The hub of New York’s Jewish community was the brick synagogue on Mill Street. Jewish donors from as far afield as Boston, Barbados, and Britain had helped fund its construction in 1730. All local Jews were expected to participate in synagogue life, and most lived in close proximity to the house of worship. At the heart of the building was the sanctuary where the congregants prayed. The ark was at the sanctuary’s east end—that is, in the direction of Jerusalem—and housed the Torah scrolls on which the Five Books of Moses were inscribed. A glowing lamp above the ark symbolized the eternal light that had burned in the holy temples of Jerusalem in ancient times. During worship, the men took up the sanctuary's lower level while the women occupied a balcony. The president and vice president of the congregation enjoyed the best seating by the ark. Those who failed to pay sufficient dues were relegated to the least desirable seats.[7]

A Gentile physician who once observed a religious service at Shearith Israel noticed that the men were donning skull caps and prayer shawls—known as *kippot* and *tallitot* in Hebrew—but he had only a vague sense of what he was witnessing: "The men wore their hats in the synagogue and had a veil of some white stuff which they sometimes threw over their heads in their devotion." He also remarked that "the women, of whom some were very pretty, stood up in a gallery like a hen coop."[8]

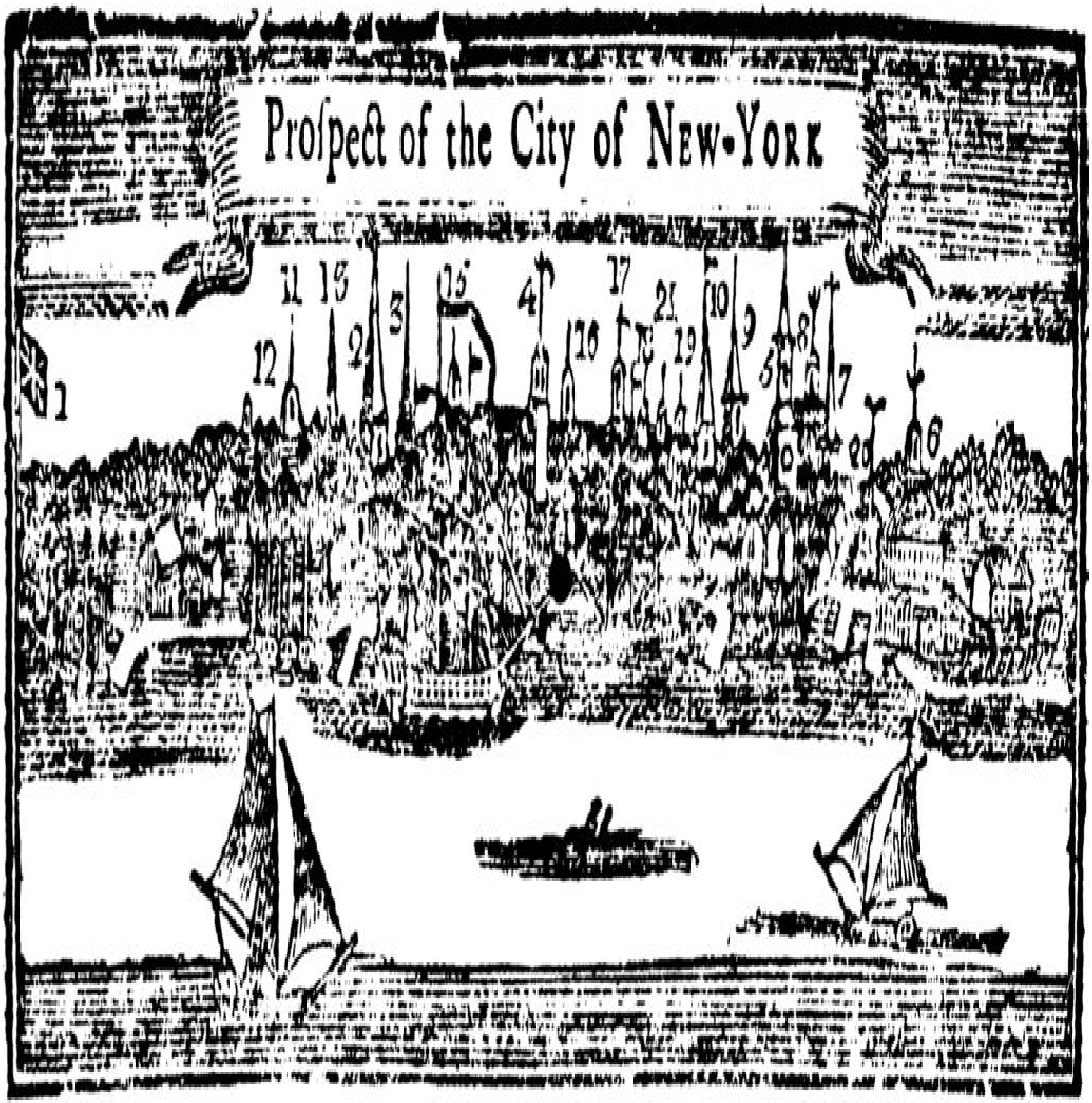
Although Ashkenazi Jews had outnumbered their Sephardic counterparts at Shearith Israel since the 1720s, the congregation's customs continued to bear the distinctive mark of its Sephardic origins. In accordance with Sephardic practice, the leader of the religious services was positioned at the center, rather than the front, of the sanctuary. Hebrew prayers were intoned in the Sephardic style (as they still are to this day at Shearith Israel). And in a tradition that would end with the Revolution, the congregants offered a prayer in Spanish for King George III.[9]

A board of elders selected and counseled the president, a lay leader who received no compensation for his services. Sometimes there were two copresidents. A president's duties included management of the synagogue's finances and arbitration of conflicts between congregants. He also supervised Shearith Israel's salaried employees. Among them was the *hazzan*, whose function was akin to that of a rabbi. (The synagogue would not have an official rabbi until the 1840s.) He ran religious services twice daily and thrice on the sabbath, *Shabbat*. The *hazzan* also circumcised baby boys, trained congregants' sons for their bar mitzvahs, and addressed theological inquiries as they arose. The *shamash* was the second paid officer and attended to the maintenance of the sanctuary. A third staffer, the *shochet*, ensured that the meat was kosher. The *shochet'*s diligence in his duties was of concern far beyond Shearith Israel because the kosher meat that he oversaw in New York was exported to Jewish communities throughout North America and the Caribbean. The synagogue also ran a school in a separate building where students learned Hebrew as well as secular subjects.[10] In one congregant's will, £50 annually were bequeathed "for the support of our Hebrew School at said New York to teach poor children the Hebrew tongue."[11]

Tradition formed the bedrock of community life. Observance of *Shabbat* was paramount, a sacred time of rest from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. Working and even writing were forbidden.[12] Circumcision of boys was also an important religious tradition, taking place eight days from birth. The infant was given his name after a specially trained *mohel* performed the circumcision. In a set of instructions for the medical and ritualistic aspects of circumcision, a New York *mohel* wrote to Rhode Island's Moses Seixas in 1772, "The first and principal thing is, to have a good heart, to perform the operation with courage intermixed with tenderness."[13] As we will see, this was the same Moses Seixas to whom George Washington would address his famous Newport letter of 1790.

Yet another tradition was the bar mitzvah, a rite of passage wherein a thirteen-year-old boy chanted from the Torah. Weddings, too, were important events. If a man sought to wed a woman, his father first approached her family for permission. The presumptive groom then solicited the blessing of the congregation at large, underscoring the collective nature of Jewish life in colonial New York. A wedding contract was drafted consistent with Jewish custom. In the absence of rain, the ceremony took place outdoors; otherwise, the bride's family hosted the affair. Jewish couples tended to enjoy long marriages and averaged five children.[14]

Proſpect of the City of New-York



1 Fort George
2 Trinity Church
3 Presbyter. Meeting
4 North D. Church
5 St. George's Chapel
6 The Priſon.
7 New Brick Meeting
8 King's College
9 St. Paul's Church
10 N. Dutch Cal. Church
11 Old Dutch Church
12 Jew's Synagogue
13 Lutherian Church
14 The French Church
15 New Scot's Meeting
16 Quaker's Meeting
17 Calviniſt Church
18 Anabaptiſt Meeting
19 Moravian Meeting
20 N. Lutheran Church
21 Methodiſt Meeting

This illustration from a 1771 almanac shows the religious diversity of Manhattan in the late colonial period. The synagogue is identified as #12. *Source*: *The New-York Pocket Almanack, for the year 1771 … by Thomas Moore, Philo*. New York: Hugh Gaine, 1770.

Although Jews made up less than 1 percent of New York's population, they played an outsized role in the city's economic life. At the top of the Jewish hierarchy was the mercantile elite, comprising businessmen whose success in trade placed them among the colony's most prosperous merchants. They tended to sport fashionable British apparel and enjoyed working relationships with Christians. Beneath this gentry was a middle class of Jewish shopkeepers, vendors, and craftsmen. An underclass of impoverished Jews—including some who spent time in debtors' prison—survived on charity administered through the synagogue.[15]

In percentages consistent with New Yorkers at large, Jews were slave owners. Slavery was less central to life in urban New York than to the agrarian economies of the American South or West Indies. Still, New York had more slaves than any other city in the northern colonies. An affluent merchant—Jew or Gentile—might have claimed upwards of five slaves who cooked, cleaned, and cared for children. Artisans owned fewer slaves, using them to assist in workshops. Numerous other colonists did not own slaves themselves but would rent a given slave's labor from his or her owner. Slaves, of course, occupied the lowest stratum of New York society and offer a grisly reminder of the far superior position of contemporary Jews.[16]

Jewish life in New York had its share of internal conflict. Intermarriage between Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews sometimes generated tensions at Shearith Israel. Whereas London and Amsterdam boasted large enough Jewish populations to have separate Sephardic and Ashkenazi synagogues, New York Jewry was too small for that kind of segregation.[17] Another fault line at Shearith Israel divided wealthier, established Jews from poorer newcomers. The former feared that their own status in the eyes of Gentiles might be imperiled by the meager appearance and broken English of recent Jewish immigrants.[18]

Sometimes high drama within the Jewish community emerged simply from personality clashes. When an elder rose to read from the Torah on one occasion, a younger man laughed at his unkempt prayer shawl—and a lawsuit was filed. In another disturbance, an aggressive congregant was forcibly escorted from the synagogue as he prepared to brawl with an adversary. And after the synagogue president refused a congregant's request to sermonize at a funeral service, the rejected congregant began to openly curse the president while a second unruly attendee offered a rogue "amen."[19]

Shared traditions and commercial ties bound the Jews of the New World with those in the Old, but American Jewry nevertheless claimed its own unique features. Jews in New York and other American cities came from a diverse array of European countries and Caribbean colonies, and so marriage between Jews of different geographic backgrounds fused together discrete Jewish subcultures and produced children who were a new type of Jew—the American Jew. Back in Europe, religious authority pervaded all realms of

Jewish life. Synagogues levied taxes on their members' business dealings, and Jewish courts adjudicated various disputes among congregants. By way of contrast, in New York and elsewhere in the American colonies, Jews partook in commercial and civic affairs without the intervention of synagogue patriarchs. The American Jew kept one foot in the congregational community and another in the outside world. Sometimes these two spheres came into tension; eating kosher and observing *Shabbat* were especially difficult when traveling on business. Levels of religious adherence could vary widely even within a single Jewish family.[20]

American Jews also enjoyed more security and liberty than their European coreligionists.[21] Jews in British North America never faced banishment or state-sanctioned violence as they had in the Old World. And they found greater ability to achieve prosperity as merchants and shopkeepers than many European nations allowed.[22] New York Jews were the freest of any in the British Empire, and the property-owning among them were nearly on equal legal footing with their Christian neighbors by the eve of the Revolution.[23] The American Jewish community, moreover, confronted less discrimination than other religious minorities, partly because Jews were too few in number to generate as much notice as larger maligned groups. The total Jewish population in the thirteen colonies was around 2,000 in 1776, compared to 25,000 Catholics, who were more conspicuous and thus more likely to encounter intolerance.[24]

For all the advantages Jews in colonial America enjoyed relative to European Jewry, to American Catholics, and of course to slaves, acceptance only went so far. Most of the thirteen colonies barred Jews at various times from all manner of civic life—running for office, electing officials, practicing law, testifying in court, sitting on juries.[25] Even relatively tolerant New York saw its share of prejudice against Jews.

The most egregious incident in colonial New York involved mob violence directed at a Jewish funeral procession in 1743. A throng seized the corpse and subjected it to a mock conversion to Christianity.[26] One Gentile eyewitness, aghast at the spectacle, wrote into the *New York Weekly Journal* to deplore the "rude unthinking wretches" who formed a "rabble." These agitators were "lost to shame and humanity" as they "insulted the dead in such a vile manner that to mention all would shock a human ear." The bystander lamented, "I've only reason to abhor and despise many who (oh impudence!) dare style themselves Christians."[27]

New York Jewry worried about the desecration of its cemetery. Situated on the northeastern edge of Manhattan's settlement—some twenty minutes by foot from the synagogue—the burial ground was ringed by a wall to thwart intruders. Sister congregations in Newport, Philadelphia, Charleston, and Savannah likewise built walls or fences around their graveyards. Despite these precautions, all five Jewish cemeteries were vandalized.[28]

Old World caricatures of the conniving Jewish merchant resurfaced in New York. In 1765, a visitor from Massachusetts observed that in New York most businessmen "are observed to deal very much upon honor, excepting some Jews." These Jews "sustain no very good character, being many of them selfish and knavish, (and where they have an opportunity), an oppressive and cruel people."[29] Even a compliment about a Jew could unwittingly reveal the extent of antisemitic prejudice. When a respected Gentile lawyer praised a New Yorker as "the honestest Jew that has been in this place," he intimated much about the perceived integrity of Jews in general. The very word "Jew" carried pejorative connotations.[30] As a Gentile trader wrote in a letter, he had been so relentless in his efforts to sell his inventory of sugar that he had "almost turned Jew."[31]

The stubborn stereotype of the deceitful Jewish merchant was not without irony. In reality, Jews in New York and elsewhere achieved prosperity in large part because they could depend on the integrity of their fellow Jews. They cultivated an ethos of collective support among themselves in reaction to the discrimination that they encountered as a group. Jews prospered not because they duped their Gentile counterparts, as was so often alleged, but because they tapped into trusted networks of their coreligionists.[32] But Jewish probity in business was lost on bigots.

It was against this mixed backdrop—religious and economic freedom on the one hand, lingering antisemitism on the other—that New York Jewry questioned its fealty to the Crown as tensions flared between the mother country and her New World colonies. Political tumult in the 1760s and 1770s led many colonists of all faiths, Jews included, to reconsider their allegiance to Britain. A series of unwelcome taxes from Parliament sparked unrest across British North America. Colonists regarded these taxes as tyrannical encroachments on their liberty. After the Townshend Acts of 1767 levied duties on a variety of goods shipped from Britain to America—paper, glass, tea, paint, lead—ten respected Jewish merchants joined their names to a nonimportation agreement against British goods subject to these new duties.[33]

By 1775, colonial resistance to the British had become organized and violent. The first shots of the Revolution were fired in Lexington and Concord in April of that year. The following spring, the Continental Army stunned the British by seizing Boston, and the redcoats then turned their attention to capturing New York. As the British planned their invasion of the city, General George Washington convened his troops at the Common in Manhattan on July 9, 1776, for a public reading of the Declaration of Independence, signed by the Continental Congress five days prior.[34]

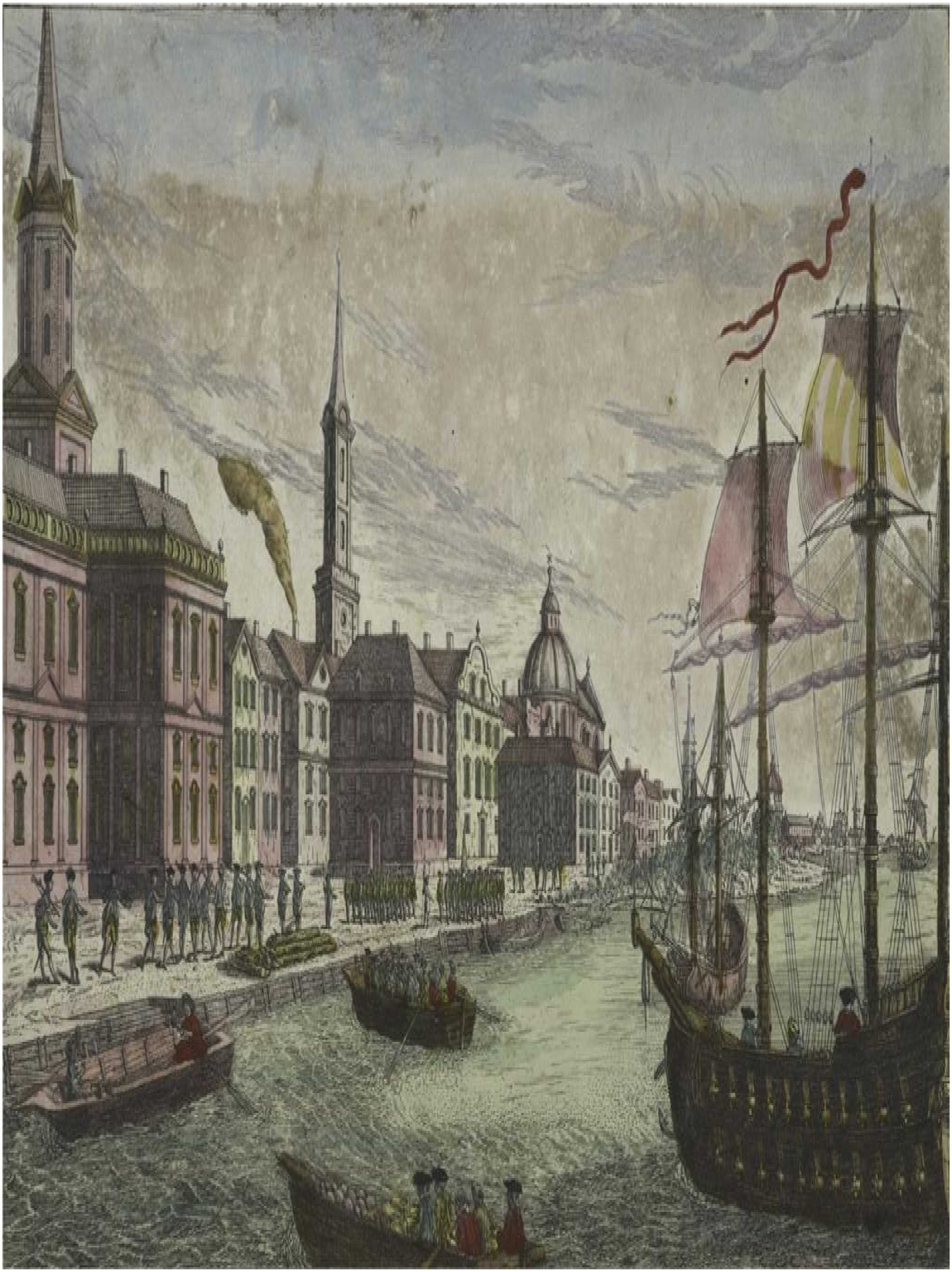
The members of the Jewish community in New York now faced a difficult choice. They could side with the Patriots and flee the city before it fell into British hands, or stay and pledge their loyalty to the Crown. Some feared that their exodus from New York would irreversibly dissolve the oldest Jewish congregation in America, one that had taken generations to develop. Others wanted to leave the city in solidarity with the Patriots.[35] In the end, most of New York's Jews abandoned their homes and aligned themselves with the cause of independence.[36] Their motivations for doing so were a combination of high-minded principles and hard-nosed practicalities. For many Jews, a revolution animated by the radical promise of equality understandably inspired stronger fidelity than did a mother country that relegated its Jews to second-class citizenship.[37] What's more, Jews were heavily involved in the mercantile life of America's port cities and thus had felt the effects of British interference in the colonial economy as directly as any group.[38]

A majority of those Jews who deserted New York that summer fled to Connecticut and later found refuge in Philadelphia. A fair number of New Yorkers counted among the nearly one hundred Jews nationwide who fought the redcoats. Several Jews became officers in the Continental Army, in contrast to the British forces, which limited their officer ranks to professing Christians. And there is at least one known case of a Jewish soldier on the Patriot side who was afforded leave from his sentinel duties on Friday nights so that he could observe *Shabbat*.[39]

Although Alexander Hamilton did not identify as a Jew at this point in life and his relationships with American Jews would form in earnest only after the Revolution, he shared much in common with New York Jewry in the late colonial era. Like many of the city's Jews, Hamilton was an immigrant who had to rely on his wits, not family fortune, to survive. He too gravitated toward an urban environment that was more receptive than the countryside to cosmopolitan outsiders. And in parallel with the majority of the New York Jewish community, Hamilton cast his lot with the Patriots.

When the conflict in America turned bloody, Hamilton wasted no time in joining the fray. Word of the skirmishes at Lexington and Concord incited a fervor in New York. Hamilton enlisted in a local militia alongside other King's College classmates who ran drills before morning classes. In March 1776, Hamilton was appointed an artillery captain and commanded sixty-eight men. When the British finally did invade New York that September, Hamilton was among the last of the Patriots to retreat. The twenty-two-year-old Hamilton then led his troops into battle in pivotal American victories at Trenton and Princeton.[40]

In these early days of the war, General Washington struggled to keep pace with the volume of his incoming correspondence—Congress, state governments, and, of course, the Continental Army all required his attention. "At present, my time is so much taken up at my desk, that I am obliged to neglect many other essential parts of my duty," he wrote to a lieutenant colonel under his command. "It is absolutely necessary therefore for me to have persons that can think for me, as well as execute orders."[41] In other words, Washington needed a talented ghostwriter, and he soon found one in Hamilton. In early 1777, Hamilton accepted an invitation from Washington to join the general as an aide-de-camp. The new role came with an elevation in rank for Hamilton to lieutenant colonel.[42]



British forces invade Manhattan in September 1776. *Source*: Franz Xaver Habermann, *Debarquement des troupes engloises a nouvelle Yorck* [ca. 1775–1796]. Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Print Collection, New York Public Library.

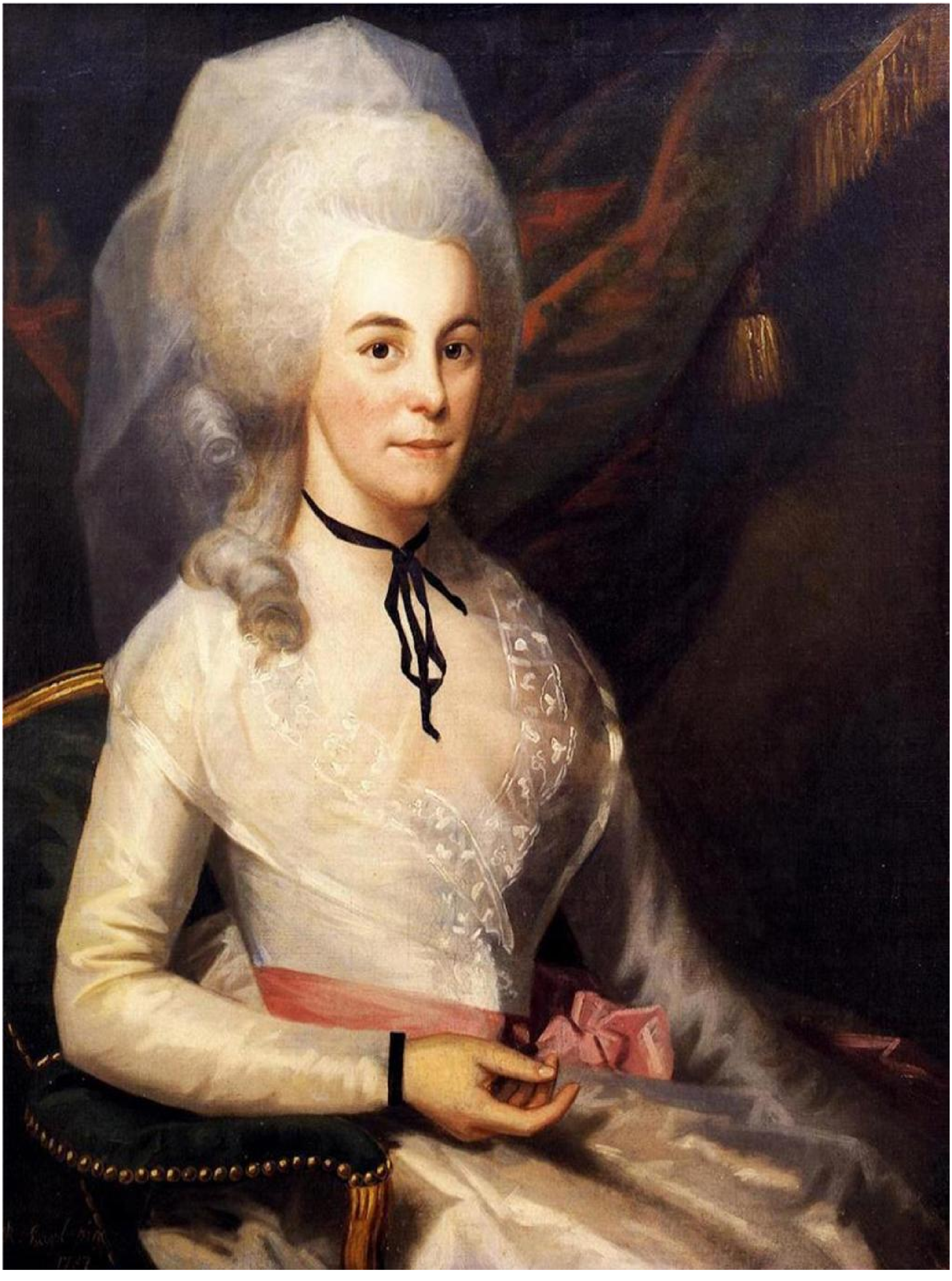
Contemporaries attested to the autonomy that Washington afforded his astute assistant. "Hamilton had to *think* as well as *write* for him," an adjutant general wrote of the Hamilton-Washington dynamic.[43] Another officer offered a similar assessment: "The pen of our army was held by Hamilton and for dignity of manner, pith of matter, and elegance of style, General Washington's letters are unrivaled in military annals."[44] Thus began a relationship that would forever alter the trajectory of Hamilton's life.

The American quest to become the first colonies in the hemisphere to successfully secede from a mother country was a blood-soaked crucible—but not so hazardous as to prevent Hamilton from courting various young women in between battles. He put his talent at flirtation to use during elegant balls where military officers mingled with stylish ladies. Although short in stature and slight in frame, Hamilton had a handsome face with magnetic blue eyes. The arrival of Elizabeth Schuyler near the army's encampment in February 1780 brought a hasty end to Hamilton's dalliances with other romantic interests. Known as "Eliza," or sometimes "Betsey," she belonged to the illustrious Schuyler family of Albany. Her father, Philip, was a wealthy statesman who had served as a representative in the New York State Assembly, delegate in the Continental Congress, and general in the Continental Army. An orphan of limited means like Hamilton might not have typically expected to court a daughter of an aristocratic clan. But the turmoil of war shifted the usual course of social relations, and Hamilton's position as Washington's aide-de-camp elevated him to an acceptable standing.[45] Hamilton had mused eleven years earlier as a teenage clerk in St. Croix that military service in wartime could provide him upward mobility in an otherwise stratified world—and his prediction was proving strikingly prescient. He would later remark generally about "great revolutions" that they "serve to bring to light talents and virtues which might otherwise have languished in obscurity."[46]

The twenty-five-year-old Hamilton charmed the twenty-two-year-old object of his affection and her parents. After a two-month courtship, the Schuyler family consented to a marriage. Eliza was intelligent if not quite brilliant, attractive if not quite stunning—it was her virtuous character that set her apart. Her unassuming integrity went hand-in-hand with her religious devotion. One of Hamilton's fellow aides on Washington's military staff called Eliza "the little saint." Her family had Dutch origins and so naturally belonged to the Dutch Reformed Church.[47]

It is somewhat surprising that Hamilton chose a devout wife given his general apathy toward Christianity. Alexander and Eliza would move on divergent tracks in the realm of faith, with the husband keeping a distance from church life that the wife fully embraced.

Hamilton, to be sure, was not the sole husband of the era who showed less commitment to Christian piety than did his wife. Still, most other founders had more engagement with Christianity relative to Hamilton.[48] Only Benjamin Franklin appears to have rivaled Hamilton in ambivalence toward the Christian faith. Franklin acknowledged in his autobiography that he "seldom attended any public worship" and complained that church services were "dry, uninteresting, and unedifying."[49] Maybe church liturgy similarly struck Hamilton as stale. Or perhaps a Jewish upbringing made him resistant to little more than a nominal Christian identity.



Elizabeth Hamilton. *Source*: Ralph Earl, *Portrait of Mrs. Alexander Hamilton* [ca. 1787]. Museum of the City of New York. Image courtesy of the Athenaeum.

As the now betrothed Hamilton awaited his wedding, he crossed paths with a prominent Jewish officer, Major David Salisbury Franks, amid the most scandalous moment of the Revolution. Franks was born in Philadelphia around 1740. He relocated in 1774 to Montreal, where he worked as a merchant and assumed the presidency of the local synagogue. Canada was then under British control but retained a significant Francophone population from an earlier day of French colonial rule. Like many fellow Anglophones, Franks felt betrayed by the British in 1774 when Parliament, in a bid to appease French Canadians, instituted French law in civil matters in the province of Quebec. Anglophones bristled at this concession, which they considered an affront to their fundamental liberties. One disaffected Montrealer draped a garland of potatoes around a statue of King George III in the town square. When a French Canadian suggested that the potato culprit should face death, Franks offered a barbed reply. The verbal spat gave way to a fistfight, with Franks besting his opponent. Franks subsequently spent a week in jail for the brawl, affording him plenty of time to ruminate on his animus toward the British.[50]

After American forces captured Montreal early in the war, Franks provided the revolutionaries with supplies and funds. The Americans were later forced to retreat from Canada, and Franks decided to enlist in the Continental Army. Staying in British-occupied Canada would have been dangerous for him given his treason against the Crown.[51] Franks was soon appointed aide-de-camp to General Benedict Arnold.[52] Although Arnold fought valiantly against the British at first, he grew increasingly pessimistic about America's chances of success and struck a secret bargain with the enemy. In exchange for money and the promise of a high rank in the British Army in the future, Arnold would remain in the Continental Army as a spy and furtively notify the redcoats of American troop movements.[53]

Hamilton, Franks, and Arnold all converged on a fateful September day in 1780. Arnold was then the commanding officer at West Point's fort, perched above the Hudson River some fifty miles north of New York City. He dispatched a spy to relay covert information about the fort to the British. Meanwhile, George Washington and a coterie of aides, including Hamilton, were journeying to West Point to see Arnold. Hamilton was sent ahead to the Robinson House—which served as Arnold's headquarters near the fort—to prepare for Washington's arrival later that day.[54] David Franks was on hand when Hamilton appeared.[55]

As Hamilton ate breakfast with Arnold, the traitorous general received a note from a colonel on the Patriot side. The note explained that Patriot soldiers had intercepted a spy and recovered from the spy's boot the secret plans for West Point's fortifications. The colonel who had authored the note was not complicit in the subterfuge; he was informing his superior Arnold of the spy merely as a matter of course. The note had the unintended effect of tipping off Arnold that his scheme had been foiled. Although Arnold himself was not yet implicated, he surmised that his own role in the espionage would likely come to light in short order. Arnold suddenly announced that he needed to check on the fort and would return in an hour. In reality, Arnold made a hasty escape to a British warship.[56]

Washington soon appeared on the scene at the Robinson House, and not long after a messenger came with materials documenting Arnold's treason. The crestfallen Washington lamented, "Arnold has betrayed me. Whom can we trust now?"[57] Not surprisingly, suspicion fell on Franks as well as another Arnold aide, Richard Varick. But exoneration for both men would come almost immediately. On the very day that Arnold absconded, he penned a letter to Washington taking sole responsibility for his treason. Arnold wrote that, "In justice to the gentlemen of my [military] family, Colonel Varick and Major Franks, I think myself in honor bound to declare that they" were "totally ignorant of any transactions of mine" that "were injurious to the public."[58]

Although Washington was wholly convinced of Franks's rectitude, nevertheless Franks pressed for a military tribunal to undertake a full probe so that no one could entertain the slightest misgiving about his commitment to the Patriot cause. Washington acceded to the request. As the case was pending, Franks wrote to Washington to ask that the tribunal expand its purview to include not just the recent treason but also an earlier, unrelated episode in 1779. At that time Arnold had been court-martialed for numerous infractions, including financial malfeasance. Franks—who had given testimony in those proceedings refuting the notion that Arnold was guilty of improper expenditures—was convinced that rumors abounded he had perjured himself to protect Arnold. If the imminent military tribunal would investigate perjury as well as treason, then Franks could clear his names on both counts. In his letter to Washington, Franks bemoaned that they lived in a "world too easily misled by first reports and prejudices."[59]

Hamilton, ghostwriting for Washington, replied to a nervous Franks. He told Franks that while the military tribunal would adjudicate the matter of treason, the question of perjury "is so much of a civil nature that I think you had best procure some sort of civil examination."[60] It is unclear why Hamilton thought an inquiry into possible perjury in a court-martial would be a civil matter. His suggestion may have been a tactical one to spare the pending military tribunal the burden of an investigation beyond its original remit. In any event, the tribunal convened shortly thereafter to consider the question of treason alone. Its final determination was unequivocal: "Every part of Major D. S. Franks' conduct … reflects the highest honor on him as an officer, distinguishes him as a zealous friend to the independence of America, and justly entitles him to the attention and confidence of his countrymen."[61]

Yet Franks was still uneasy. He requested that Washington make public the tribunal's report, fearing that "many people are to this hour inclined to think that my connection with Arnold could not be void of criminality."[62] There is no extant reply from

Washington, but he surely did allow for the report's release, as he had already done the same for Varick, who underwent a similar investigation. Franks also took up Hamilton's advice to undergo a civil inquiry, which further acquitted him of wrongdoing.[63]

Given that no army generals ever doubted Franks's innocence, his hypersensitivity about his reputation is telling. A common antisemitic trope, salient in novels of the time, was the Jew as a shifty operative engaged in espionage.[64] So it would be unsurprising if Franks felt that he, as a Jew, had to take particular care to demonstrate his patriotism. His complaint about a world rife with "prejudices" probably stemmed from a belief that undercurrents of antisemitism were feeding rumors of his alleged treachery.[65] After the war, Franks was rewarded for his loyalty with the opportunity to represent the United States as an envoy to France and Morocco, thereby becoming the first Jewish diplomat in American history.[66]

Once Washington became president, Franks solicited him for a post in the new administration. The president opted not to appoint Franks to a full-time role. Washington did, however, name the Jewish veteran as secretary to a trio of federal commissioners embarking on a two-month assignment in Georgia where they were to negotiate a peace treaty with the Creek Indians. At the conclusion of the undertaking, the entourage returned to the capital—then New York—and shared a meal with Washington.[67] The president recorded in his diary, "The commissioners … dined with me today, as did their secretary Colo. Franks."[68] This was, perhaps, Washington's first and only instance dining with a professing Jew.[69]

As the coda to his long career in public service, Franks took a position in the early 1790s at the Bank of the United States, one of Hamilton's signature endeavors during the Washington administration.[70] But soon thereafter a yellow fever epidemic claimed Franks's life. Washington counted "Colo. Franks" among those "acquaintances [who] have fallen victims to the prevailing malignant fever."[71] This choice of language seems to hint at more than just tangential familiarity, if not quite friendship, between the two men.[72] In all his dealings with Franks, Washington showed a total absence of antisemitic bias, which is in itself notable by the standards of the day. Washington's lack of prejudice against Jews was of a piece with Hamilton's, although the former never developed the extensive ties to Jews that the latter would.

Hamilton also had an important, albeit indirect, connection to the most renowned Jew of the Revolution: Haym Salomon. During the war, the new nation suffered from depreciating currency and ballooning debt.[73] Hamilton set forth a bold proposal for how the embattled United States could bring the war to an end through financial maneuvers—and Salomon's unique skills would prove pivotal in realizing that vision.

Insatiable in his quest for knowledge, Hamilton somehow found time to study economics amid the duress of war. He had first honed his mercantile acumen as a clerk in the Caribbean. Now Hamilton read widely about European financial affairs, taking note that Jews featured prominently in the markets of the Old World. “Prague is the principal city of Bohemia,” he recorded in a notebook, “the principal part of the commerce of which is carried on by the Jews.”[74]

Hamilton’s survey of various financial systems culminated in a lengthy letter to Robert Morris in the spring of 1781. Born in Liverpool, Morris came to America as a fourteen-year-old in the 1740s.[75] He found success as a merchant and, notably, was derided by a critic for being “rich as a Jew.”[76] It is unlikely that his wealth would have provoked an antisemitic slur had Morris been the heir to a large plantation in the countryside (in the manner of a Christian aristocrat) instead of a self-made businessman (in the mold of a Jew). Morris served in the Continental Congress, signed the Declaration of Independence, and—with the nation mired in economic crisis during the Revolution—was nominated by Congress to the newly created position of superintendent of finance of the United States.[77] On the eve of assuming office and inheriting a financial emergency, he received a forty-five-page handwritten letter from the twenty-six-year-old Hamilton, who was never shy about exhibiting his talents to older men in power.[78]

Hamilton’s message conveyed the crucial insight that British credit buttressed the enemy’s army while America’s insufficient credit beleaguered its own. Bolstering American credit could obviate protracted fighting. As he told Morris, “Tis by introducing order into our finances—by restoring public credit—not by gaining battles, that we are finally to gain our object.” Hamilton believed that the best means to address the ongoing “catastrophe” was a national bank that alone could provide the substantial credit required. He then offered a highly detailed blueprint for such a bank. Hamilton’s plan reflected an impressive depth of financial knowledge for someone who had never before worked as a banker, much less designed a national economic strategy.[79]

Morris was humble enough to appreciate Hamilton’s letter, replying, “I have read it with that attention which it justly deserves” and “I esteem myself much your debtor for this piece.” He signaled to Hamilton that future suggestions would be most welcome: “My office is new and I am young in the execution of it. Communications from men of genius and abilities will always be acceptable.”[80] Morris’s words were more than just empty flattery. Less than three weeks after receiving Hamilton’s correspondence, Morris submitted to Congress a plan for a national bank that reflected many of the younger man’s ideas.[81] The success of the endeavor—called the Bank of North America—would hinge not just on financial capital but also human talent. As Hamilton had explained to Morris, “The game we play is a sure game, if we play it with skill.”[82] And Morris managed to find the most skilled player of the era: Haym Salomon.

Born in Poland in 1740, Salomon wandered through Europe as a young man—picking up six foreign tongues along the way—before settling in New York. He was working as a merchant in 1776 when stories filtered down to the city about the troubled American military campaign against the British in Quebec. The revolutionaries were lacking vital supplies, and so the enterprising Salomon headed north with provisions. While en route he encountered a Patriot leader who agreed to furnish him with a letter of introduction to

General Philip Schuyler, Hamilton's future father-in-law. Salomon soon crossed paths with Schuyler himself, whose battered troops had retreated southward from Canada. The letter of introduction endorsed Salomon as a trustworthy businessman, assuring Schuyler, "Mr. Salomon has hitherto sustained the character of being warmly attached to America." Schuyler gladly accepted Salomon's services.[83]

Salomon returned to New York just before the redcoats seized the city in September 1776. He was imprisoned by the British on account of his American sympathies but managed to exploit his German-language skills to win over the Hessian guards who monitored the prison. Following his release, Salomon trafficked in goods for these guards, all the while smuggling out American and French prisoners of war. When a fire erupted in New York, he immediately came under suspicion of arson by British soldiers. They chased him through the city streets, but Salomon evaded capture. Once safely settled in Philadelphia, he wrote to the Continental Congress describing his "great service to the French and American prisoners." Salomon recounted how he had "assisted them with money and helped them off to make their escape." He was "so obnoxious to the British Headquarters" that he had been "pursued by the guards" but "made his happy escape."[84]

After Robert Morris received congressional approval for establishing the Bank of North America in Philadelphia, he quickly tapped Salomon to join the endeavor. Salomon combined a talent for languages with an intimate understanding of foreign currencies. As Morris's broker, he facilitated the exchange of Spanish, French, and Dutch money for American bonds. Salomon himself was among the early investors in the Bank of North America. The willingness of the country's foremost bill broker to dedicate his own resources to the bank prompted other men of means to do the same.[85]

The challenge of stabilizing the nation's finances required not just Salomon's knowledge base but his persuasive abilities as well. Rival brokers, unlike Salomon, did not work for the U.S. government and were thus free to sell bonds below the government's rates. Yet Salomon prevailed upon them to raise their prices to match his own. This would admittedly cost Salomon's rivals some business, but the boon to the country's financial health would lead to victory in the war, he assured them. Salomon also devised a scheme to ensure that banks in London would accept American currency. He convinced British officers that they had to legitimize American bills by signing them in order to aid British prisoners of war who were reliant on the stability of American legal tender for their supplies.[86]

As Salomon generated public funds for the nation, he donated personal funds to the Jewish community. In the early 1780s, he made the largest contribution of any individual to the construction of a synagogue in Philadelphia and paid for a Torah scroll. His generosity was not limited to his coreligionists. Salomon gave loans for little or no interest to several prominent statesmen, and apparently Hamilton was among them. Hamilton's ledger book shows that he repaid Salomon £150 in Pennsylvania currency shortly after the war.[87]

Salomon contracted tuberculosis—known at the time as "consumption"—and died in 1785 at the age of forty-five. He was survived by his young wife, Rachel, and their three children. Although Salomon's estate included large holdings in government securities, they were significantly depreciated, and Rachel was left destitute.[88] Still, his legacy of a national bank, one that Hamilton had envisioned, endured well beyond Salomon's premature demise. Both men illustrate how the financial world of the early republic was particularly accessible to talented outsiders.

As Hamilton handled Washington's correspondence and studied finance in his quieter hours, he hungered to return to the battlefield. His desk work for the general was vital to the war effort, but Hamilton sensed that the musket rather than the pen would earn him the esteem he craved. The headstrong Hamilton was not shy about reminding Washington of his preference for combat, prodding his boss, "I explained to you candidly my feeling with respect to military reputation and how much it was my object to act a conspicuous part in some enterprise that might perhaps raise my character as a soldier above mediocrity." Washington, for his part, had little inclination to risk his gifted aide in the field. A disaffected Hamilton eventually left the general's staff in frustration. But the rupture proved temporary as Washington eventually acceded to Hamilton's request for command of a battalion in the summer of 1781. That October, Hamilton led the charge against the British in the Battle of Yorktown in eastern Virginia. The battle proved decisive in ensuring America's independence and making Hamilton a bona fide military hero. Yorktown would not be the final time that Hamilton hazarded death for honor.[89]

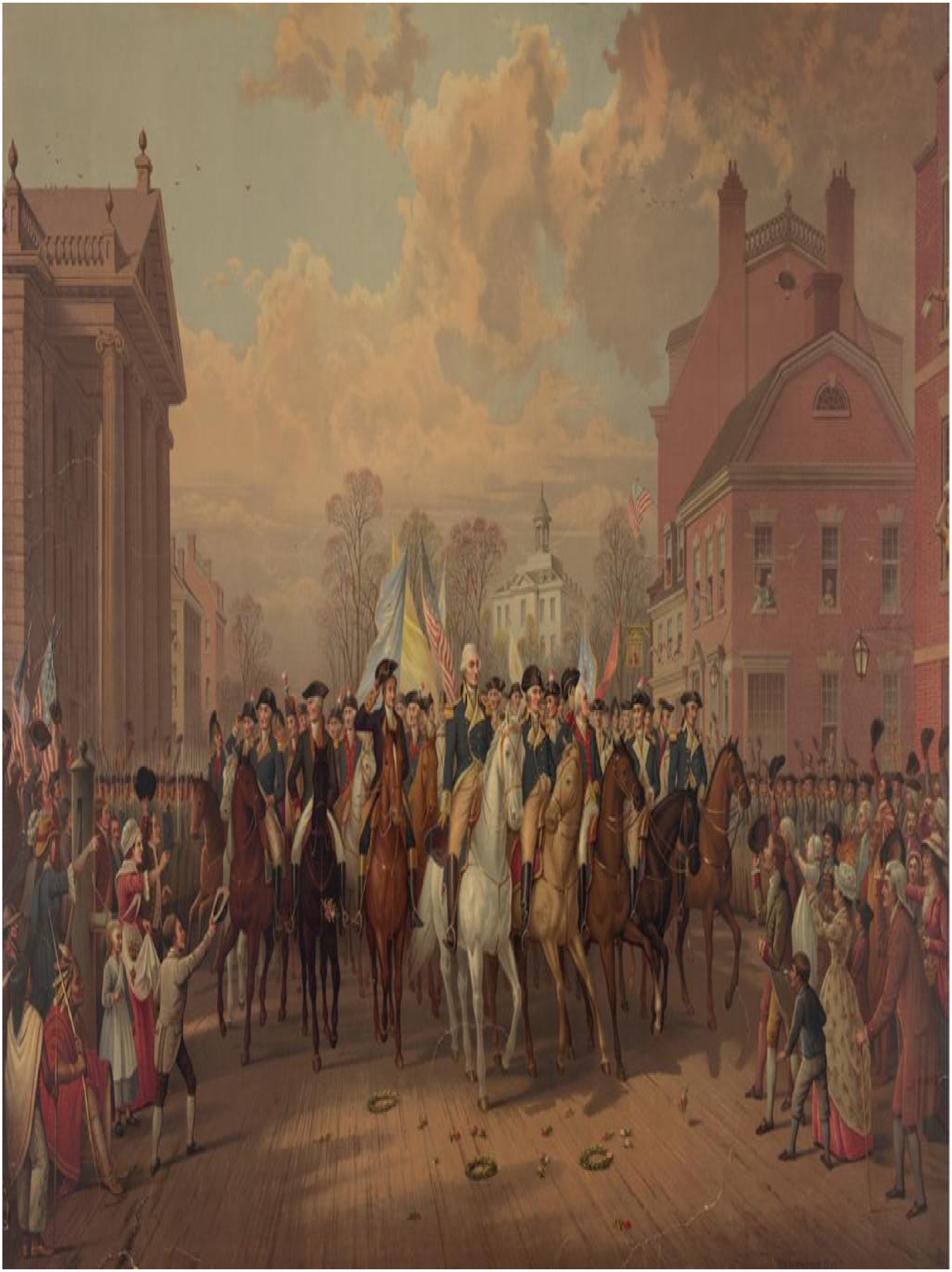
When the guns of the Revolutionary War fell silent, Hamilton set off for his father-in-law's mansion in Albany, where Eliza awaited him, now pregnant with their first child.[90] Just as Hamilton was settling into family life, a ghost from his Caribbean boyhood intruded on his domestic idyll. Recall that after Rachel Levine's death, the Danish probate court on St. Croix awarded the entirety of her estate to her one son born in wedlock, Peter Levine. Alexander and his full brother, James Jr., were left destitute. Now, fourteen years later, Hamilton received word that Peter had died and bequeathed to him little more than a pittance. Hamilton relayed to Eliza the news of "the death of my brother Levine" and the "disagreeable piece of intelligence" that "he dies rich, but has disposed of the bulk of his fortune to strangers."[91] For the second time in his life, Hamilton had been effectively robbed of his mother's estate. This festering wound from his woeful adolescence is just one example of how the adult Hamilton was inescapably informed by his earliest years. His advanced understanding of international trade and preoccupation with military glory were also rooted in his West Indian upbringing. And as we will see, Hamilton would forge relationships with Jews in yet one more illustration of how his Caribbean past echoed in his American adulthood.

4

New York

WITH THE COUNTRY FINALLY AT PEACE, Alexander Hamilton embarked on a legal career that furnished some of his most important links to New York Jewry. The war had prematurely ended Hamilton's collegiate education in 1776 before he and his fellow classmates could graduate. Now, at age twenty-seven, he was far too old to pick up his undergraduate studies, and in any event a bachelor's degree was not a prerequisite for professional success at that time. Hamilton even bypassed the usual clerkship in a law office that most lawyers-in-training undertook. Instead, he delved into a legal curriculum of his own device. There were two kinds of credentials for practicing law in New York at the time—one to become an attorney who prepared cases and another to qualify as a counselor who litigated them in court. After several months of solitary study in Albany, Hamilton earned both credentials by October 1782.[1]

The redcoats, meanwhile, continued to occupy New York until the United States and Britain agreed to the final terms of a peace treaty. Finally, in late 1783, British troops evacuated the city, leaving the triumphant Americans to peacefully reclaim what was violently lost seven years earlier. The war had exacted a severe toll on New York. Homes were in ruins, the streets strewn with garbage, and the wharves corroding with rot. Nevertheless, Hamilton resolved for the second time in his life to make the city his adopted home. Alexander, Eliza, and their baby, Philip, took up residence on the road that would become forever associated with Hamilton: Wall Street.[2]



Evacuation Day. *Source*: *"Evacuation Day" and Washington's Triumphal Entry in New York City, Nov. 25th, 1783*. Philadelphia: E. P. & L. Restein. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

Hamilton was hardly the only displaced New Yorker to find his way back. Thousands returned to rebuild their lives and their city, including many Jews. They found the synagogue still intact; it had been maintained throughout the war by the Loyalist bloc within the Jewish community that stayed in New York. To the credit of the British Army, two redcoats who desecrated the synagogue during the war were harshly disciplined. Now in peacetime, the Patriot and Loyalist factions of Shearith Israel managed to reunite with minimal discord.[3]

The 1780s were tumultuous for New York's mercantile class as it confronted a new era of Atlantic commerce. The Revolution had upended long-established trade networks, presenting merchants with unprecedented opportunities and novel challenges. On the one hand, they were freed from royal authority; on the other, Britain barred Americans from lucrative business with its Caribbean colonies. Alongside these upheavals in the market were new developments in the legal arena. America had become a sovereign nation, unencumbered by the judicial precedents and legislative statutes of its former mother country. The quickly shifting terrain of both commerce and law meant that the nexus of the two—commercial law—was particularly ripe for a versatile mind like Hamilton's.[4]

He began work as an energetic young lawyer with a client roster that included the city's leading Jewish merchants. Among the first Jews whom Hamilton represented was a prominent figure within Shearith Israel, Solomon Simson. He was the son of Joseph Simson, a Frankfurt native who had come to New York at the age of thirty-two in 1718. In Hamilton's day, Joseph enjoyed status as a revered elder known for recounting firsthand memories of New York as it had existed in the early 1700s, when lower Manhattan consisted largely of orchards.[5] Before the Revolution, Solomon Simson and his brother, Samson—apparently their father had a taste for alliteration—teamed with three other Jews in a candle business. In a bid to co-opt competition, a New England–based candle conglomerate persuaded the Simson brothers and their partners to merge into the combine.[6]

The Simsons were Patriots whose fidelity to the Revolution prompted them to join the Jewish exile from New York as the British prepared to invade Manhattan in 1776. Joseph had been obligated to wear a "Jew badge" in his youth in Frankfurt, a bitter memory that drew him to the American revolutionaries' promise of equality.[7] When Solomon returned to New York after the war, he resumed his professional endeavors as a merchant and his religious leadership in the community. Solomon was elected president of Shearith Israel on multiple occasions. He also corresponded with the far reaches of the Jewish diaspora, penning letters to Jewish congregations in India and China.[8]

Solomon Simson turned to the thirty-year-old Hamilton for help in 1784 in a suit against Ebenezer Jones that was filed in the New York Supreme Court. Hamilton sought for his client compensation of £4,000 in New York currency after Jones had seized "with force and arms" a variety of goods from Simson, including clothing, furniture, and 1,454 bushels of salt. Jones argued that the merchandise had been lawfully taken as the spoils of war because the goods in question were confiscated behind enemy lines before Britain and America negotiated a peace.[9] (The litigation between Simson and Jones would continue into the 1790s, by which point Hamilton had left private legal practice to serve in the Washington administration.)

The case is noteworthy because the lawyer whom Hamilton opposed in the courtroom was the same man he would one day face on the dueling grounds—Aaron Burr. The commonalities between Hamilton and Burr are striking. Born within just two years of each other, both were orphaned as children. Each joined the Patriot cause during the Revolution and served on General Washington's staff. Though diminutive in stature, Burr and Hamilton alike were handsome and flirtatious. They passed the bar in quick succession after the war and moved with their wives to homes on Wall Street. Hamilton and Burr would become giants of the legal profession in New York and ultimately major figures in American politics.[10]

Yet for all the similarities between these two men, their disparities are even more conspicuous. While Hamilton was begotten out of wedlock on a Caribbean island and left a penniless child upon his mother's tragic death, Burr claimed lineage in one of America's most aristocratic families. Whereas Hamilton forged a close relationship with Washington during the war, Burr irritated Washington and remained forever at a remove from the celebrated general. If Hamilton was a man of deeply held principles, then Burr had few convictions. And in contrast to Hamilton's propensity for publicly airing his views, Burr's penchant was for strategic silence.[11]

It was in court that their differences were at their most pronounced. Hamilton delivered grandiose performances that stretched for hours; Burr was at once less evocative and more concise. A New York congressman remarked, "When they were rivals at the bar … Burr would say as much in half an hour as Hamilton in two hours. Burr was terse and convincing, while Hamilton was flowing and rapturous."[12] Their contrasts in the legal arena went beyond style to their most fundamental beliefs about law. Burr held no special reverence for the law, defining it as "whatever is boldly asserted, and plausibly maintained."[13] Hamilton, conversely, celebrated the majesty of the law. For him, devotion to the rule of law was the only means by which America's experiment in self-government could endure. As Hamilton once wrote in an essay, "If it were to be asked, What is the most sacred duty and greatest source of security in a Republic? The answer would be, An inviolable respect for the Constitution and Laws."[14] That which Hamilton held sacrosanct was for Burr merely a game to be won.

Burr and Hamilton faced off against one another in court more often than they collaborated for the same client,[15] but even in the latter instances, their rivalry could flare up. Early in their careers, for example, they were cocounsels in a trial, and protocol dictated that the lead lawyer give the closing argument. The self-assured Hamilton, fashioning himself the lead, proposed that Burr give the opening and he the closing. Piqued at Hamilton's suggestion, Burr slyly acquiesced—only to make all of the points that Hamilton intended to cover. Hamilton was left with nothing to say, and Burr alone received the accolades for the case.[16]

It was in these early years of Hamilton's legal practice that he began a decades-long role as lawyer and trustee for the Jewish trading firm of Moses and Company. The head of the firm was Isaac Moses, one of Shearith Israel's great patriarchs. He was known for his charitable donations to indigent Jews, involvement in synagogue life, and taste for European art.[17] Firmly allied with the revolutionaries, he fled the city in 1776 as the British invaded Manhattan. According to legend, Moses received word of the imminent arrival of redcoats on *Shabbat* and insisted on escaping by foot rather than wagon so as to adhere to the Sabbath's prohibition on riding. He joined other Jewish Patriots who eventually settled in Philadelphia until the war's conclusion.[18]

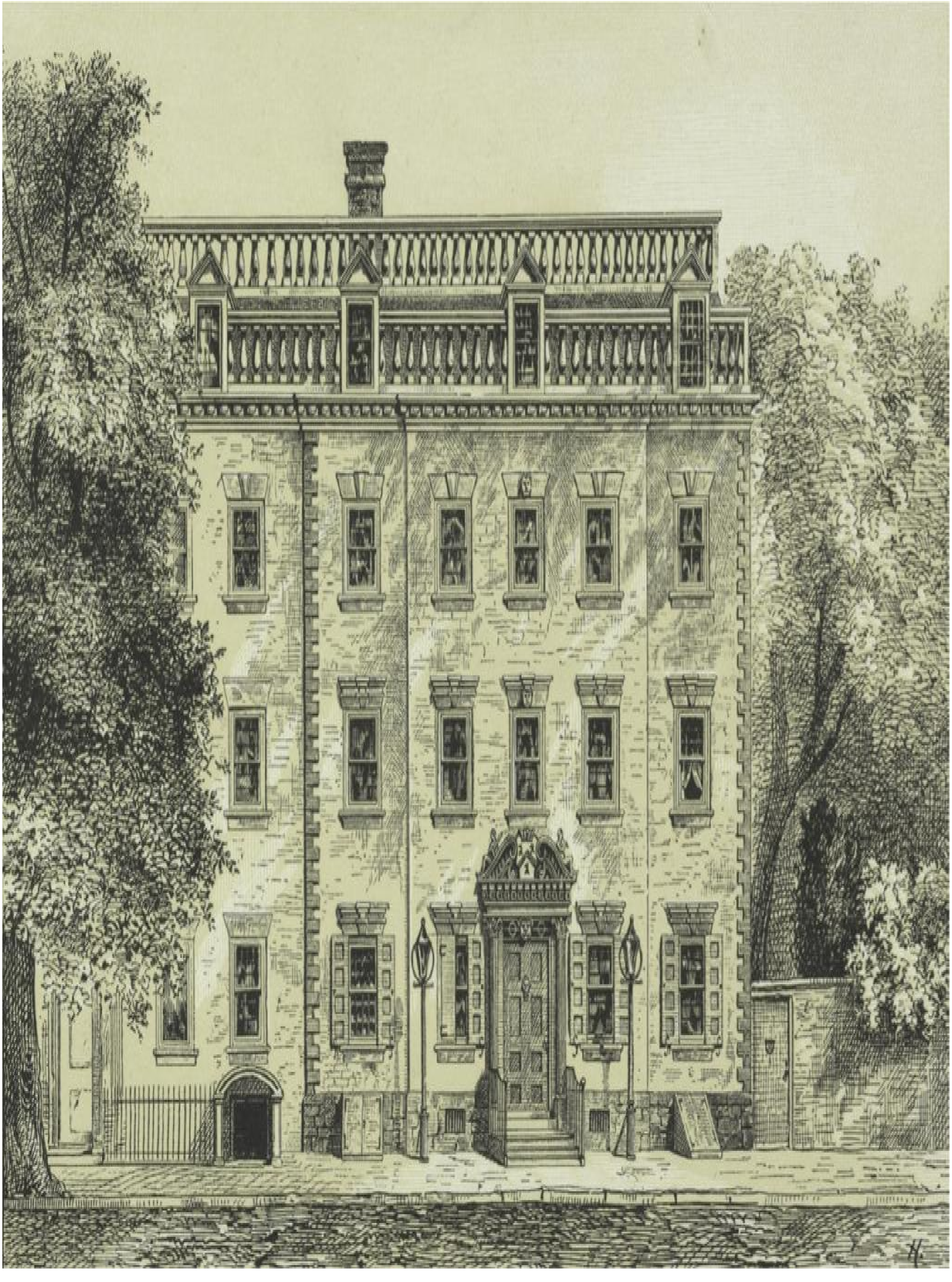
Moses's contributions to the fight for independence were substantial. To establish the credibility of the Continental Congress's paper currency, he helped raise $20,000 in coins that were exchanged for Continental dollars, a service that won him the appreciation of the congressional president, John Hancock. Moses also furnished a £3,000 bond to fund supplies for the army and personally ensured that soldiers had access to scarce commodities.[19] When the Bank of North America was struggling, Haym Salomon sought the aid of Moses (who was related to Salomon through marriage). Moses understood that the Revolution hinged not just on cannons but on currency, and so he drew from his considerable fortune to purchase promissory notes from the bank, which stimulated its cash flow.[20]

Isaac Moses's greatest involvement in the American cause was his role as a privateer—that is, someone whom the government deputized to arm private ships that would attack British vessels on the high seas. He provisioned eight boats, some quite large, like the *Marbois* with its crew of eighty-five.[21] Among Moses's partners in privateering was the nation's superintendent of finance, Robert Morris.[22] When Moses was unable to secure sufficient gunpowder for a schooner, he petitioned Congress for help. He explained that his search for gunpowder left him "everywhere disappointed" and he was "now under the disagreeable necessity of troubling Your Honors, and to pray that you would be pleased to spare … out of the public stores, two or three hundred weight of powder." Moses touted his "principles as a true Whig [i.e., Patriot] and friend to the liberties of his country" and was confident that it was "needless" to "remind your body of the assistance" he had thus far extended to the Revolution.[23]

While in wartime Philadelphia, Moses assumed the presidency of the local congregation, Mikveh Israel (meaning "Hope of Israel"), a position he had held previously at Shearith Israel in New York. He understood the importance of diplomacy with Philadelphia's Christians. As his congregation prepared to build a synagogue on a particular plot of land, a local church expressed its displeasure at the location, and Moses, in turn, sent a conciliatory note. "Our intention was to build a synagogue and a school-house thereon, for the use of our congregation, not conceiving that we would in the least disturb you," he explained. "To our great surprise we are told that it will." Moses informed the church that although a different location for the synagogue would be both more expensive and less accessible, his congregation would make that sacrifice because "we wish to live in friendship with our neighbors." When construction on the synagogue finally began, Moses was one of four congregants conferred the honor of laying a cornerstone. He may have exhibited tactful deference to Christians but was less measured with his own congregants, chastising them for chatting during religious services. "We now bind ourselves by the strictest ties of honor to behave with decency and decorum," Moses demanded.[24]

Following the British evacuation, Isaac Moses was among those who returned to New York. He became president of Shearith Israel once again and continued to represent the Jewish community to the outside world. Moses counted among three Jews who sent a letter to the governor of New York on behalf of "the Ancient Congregation of Israelites." They claimed that among the various "religious societies," none had "manifested a more zealous attachment to the sacred cause of America in the late war with Great Britain" than the Jews. The governor could rest assured that Jewish law required Jews to "obey our rulers" and that the Jewish community in New York would diligently fulfill "the duties of good citizens." The letter praised the state constitution of 1777, which in its guarantee of the free exercise of faith was "wisely framed to preserve the inestimable blessings of civil and religious liberty."[25] Amid the Revolution, as American colonies-turned-states had set about drafting constitutions for themselves, New York's constitutional convention was the only one in which the question of equality for Jews had been assumed rather than debated.[26] It is notable that the letter sent to the governor referred to Jews as a religious "society." In Europe, Jews were considered a foreign "race" or "nation" unto themselves, whereas Christian denominations were called "societies." Isaac Moses and his cosignatories were thus rejecting the prejudicial language of the Old World and indicating their intent to be counted as equals with their Christian counterparts.[27]

Beyond Isaac Moses's leadership in Shearith Israel, he was also a founding member of the Bank of New York, a thoroughly Hamiltonian institution. Postwar New York was a city with no bank. Several merchants were keen to collectively establish one; they were equally keen to avail themselves of Hamilton's services when he agreed in 1784 to help launch the endeavor. Hamilton wrote the Bank of New York's constitution unilaterally, served as a director, and represented the bank as its lawyer. He was motivated in part by concerns about the volatility of the currency markets. Despite the existence of the dollar as national currency, businesses still advertised goods in pounds, shillings, and pence. Complicating matters further was the fact that individual states printed their own paper money. Meanwhile, foreign bills from European countries circulated widely in New York City. And exchange rates were far from uniform. Hamilton knew that a bank could stabilize the currency market by disseminating its own money and publishing exchange rates. Support from reputable merchants such as Moses was central to the success of the bank, which helped make New York a hub for global finance.[28]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The Bank of New York occupied the Walton House in its early years. *Source*: Abraham Hosier, *The Walton House, Pearl Street. Large Tree on Walk to Left; Garden Wall, Trees, and Shrubs to Right*. Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Print Collection, New York Public Library.

At the time that Hamilton became involved in Isaac Moses's shipping firm in 1785, Moses had two business partners who were also Jewish merchants: Moses Myers and Samuel Myers. The two Myerses were unrelated but warm friends who shared much in common besides their surname. Both were New York–born and had served in the Virginia militia.[29] Virginia was one of several states that, despite having almost no Jews prior to the Revolution, boasted a number of Jewish soldiers in their militias during the war.[30] This dispersal of Jews is unsurprising given that British troops managed to occupy for some stretch of time each of the five American port cities that claimed a Jewish community.[31]

Moses and Company ran offices in New York and Amsterdam. The partners exported materials such as lumber, grain, and fur, while importing liquors, spices, and teas. At a time when overland travel was difficult, a given partner in the firm would sometimes journey a grueling 500 miles throughout America in a nine-day span to transact with far-flung clientele.[32]

The 1780s were trying years for merchant shippers like Moses, Myers, and Myers. Not only had Britain cut off Americans from profitable business with its Caribbean islands, but other European powers—including France, Spain, and Portugal—resisted commercial treaties with the United States, which they viewed as a trading rival to be bested. Without foreign markets for their produce, American farmers lacked funds with which to purchase goods from domestic merchants. Oversupplied merchants, in turn, were forced to flood local markets with underpriced wares. Bankruptcy loomed for soil tillers and traders alike.[33]

Compounding these difficulties was the fragmentary nature of economic life under the Articles of Confederation, which had governed America since 1781. The United States was more of a loose collection of thirteen mini-nations than a unified country with a single-minded economic policy. Every state in the Union levied its own tariffs on foreign goods and sometimes even on imports from other American states. Moses Myers spoke for many when he voiced his concern that economic disorder would breed political disorder. Writing to his partner Samuel, he remarked, "For my part, [I] should not be surprised at a civil war taking place on this continent."[34]

Isaac Moses's firm was vulnerable in these troubled times. As its American debtors failed to make payment, Moses and his partners were unable to meet their own debt obligations to creditors in Holland and England. Moses, Myers, and Myers soon owed upwards of £150,000. That they had managed to accrue such a staggering debt betokens their prominence in transatlantic trade.[35]

In April 1785, one of the firm's American creditors, Jeremiah Wadsworth, asked his lawyer—Hamilton—if he and his business partner should be concerned. "I have received very unfavorable accounts respecting Isaac Moses and Co," he reported to

Hamilton, expressing his fear that “we shall be liable to any loss in case of his ruin.”[36] Hamilton replied that he was aware of the firm’s difficulties, as he had already met with Moses personally. “Mr. Moses, who is one of the partners, called upon me to consult me professionally as to the measures I should think it advisable for him to pursue,” Hamilton shared. “I told him … that as I did not think your interest incompatible with his, I should freely give him my counsel.” Hamilton knew that if creditors grew anxious and began demanding payment, the insolvent Moses would face financial downfall. Creditors such as Wadsworth would in turn receive little of what they were owed. So Hamilton urged patience on Wadsworth’s part, and vouched for Moses: “He is very enterprising.”[37]

Wadsworth had good reason to trust Hamilton’s integrity on this count. Wadsworth’s business partner, John Church, was married to Hamilton’s beloved sister-in-law. Church had wedded Eliza’s older sister, Angelica, in 1777 shortly before Hamilton entered the Schuyler family orbit. Angelica and Alexander shared a deep friendship that sometimes edged into flirtation. Whereas Eliza attracted Alexander with her character, Angelica enchanted him with her charisma. The elder sister was whimsical in demeanor, sharp in intellect, and astute in politics.[38] Alexander’s fascination with Angelica was fully reciprocated. As she once needled Eliza, “If you were as generous as the old Romans, you would lend him to me for a little while.… You were a lucky girl to get so clever and so good a companion.”[39] With respect to the debts that Moses owed Jeremiah Wadsworth and John Church, Hamilton surely would not have offered advice that could have harmed the financial stability of his dear Angelica.

Moses and the Myerses could not, in the end, stave off financial collapse amid dire market conditions. On November 25, 1785, their remaining assets were entrusted to the supervision of Hamilton and two businessmen; together these three would serve as trustees for the partners as they proceeded through bankruptcy. Moses and the Myerses—obliged to pay off half their debts—were reduced to selling their furniture and silver. At the behest of Hamilton and the other two trustees, Samuel Myers made an arduous wintertime journey through Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia to collect what monies he could from the firm’s debtors in early 1786. Meanwhile, Hamilton and his cotrustees held a public auction for property that Moses owned in lower Manhattan’s Dock Ward, a district where many of the city’s Jews lived because of its proximity to the synagogue. Some of Moses’s land was purchased at auction by Hamilton’s college roommate.[40]

As might be expected, bankruptcy did little to foster warm relations among the firm’s partners. The Myerses managed to stay close with one another, but Isaac Moses grew estranged from them both. Moses Myers, with little more than £50 to his name and overcome with distress, paid a visit to the home of Shearith Israel’s *hazzan*. “I laid on the sofa … most of the night reflecting on my situation, bereft of almost everything dear to me,” he recounted in a letter to Samuel. The devout Moses Myers relied on his faith to sustain him, assuring Samuel, “God is great and in him [is] all my trust.” The partners could at least take solace that they had lost only their money and not their reputations. After all, many great trading houses were then failing due to economic circumstances beyond anyone's control. One of the Myerses wrote, "Our firm has been very unfortunate" but "our characters as men of honor remain unsullied." They certainly garnered the respect of the county sheriff; when a creditor initiated a lawsuit against the firm, the sheriff tipped off the Myerses in advance so they could preemptively secure funds for bail and avoid any time in debtors' prison.[41]

Samuel and Moses Myers soon returned to Virginia, where they launched new ventures that met with success. Isaac Moses, for his part, proved just as "enterprising" as Hamilton had promised; he too reversed his misfortunes in the fullness of time.[42] John Church was pleased that he had deferred to the discretion of Angelica's brother-in-law, telling Hamilton, "I think you have done the best with respect to Moses's matters."[43] Hamilton's relationship with Moses, Myers, and Myers prefigured a much deeper involvement with the Jewish merchant class to come in the 1790s.

As Hamilton was establishing himself as one of New York's most skilled lawyers, a missing figure from his enigmatic childhood sent him a letter: his brother, James Hamilton Jr. Recall that James, like Alexander, is unlisted in the surviving baptismal records from Nevis.[44] Whether James too attended the Jewish school on the island is unknown. All that can be said with certainty about James's earliest years is that he apprenticed with a carpenter on St. Croix after his mother's death.[45] Then, in 1785, James wrote to Alexander from the Caribbean island of St. Thomas to solicit money.[46]

Alexander's reply indicates that he was hurt by James's lack of interest in maintaining a relationship, noting, "Your letter of the 31st of May … and one other, are the only letters I have received from you in many years." Still, the orphaned Alexander was so eager to bring James back into his life that he took his brother's self-serving correspondence as an occasion to demonstrate his own fraternal devotion. "Nothing will make me happier than, as far as may be in my power, to contribute to your relief," Alexander informed James. "I will cheerfully pay your draft upon me for fifty pounds sterling." If money was the means by which Alexander could hold on to some vestige of his family of origin, then he would be grateful for even that much. He added, "My affection for you … will not permit me to be inattentive to your welfare, and I hope time will prove to you that I feel all the sentiment of a brother." Alexander then offered to arrange for James to immigrate to the United States and secure him farmland.[47] But James never came to America. He disappears from the historical record for good at that point, leaving behind no hint of his future destiny or religious identity.[48]

By 1787, Hamilton had built a reputation not only as one of the great talents of the New York bar but also as a civic leader. He took an active role in the affairs of his alma mater and served in the New York State Assembly. At the nexus of these two roles, Hamilton partook in the drafting of a new charter for the college that had to meet with the approval of his fellow legislators. The contents of the charter reflect Hamilton's commitment to religious liberty in general and to Jewry in particular.

During the British occupation of New York, King's College had shut down and been repurposed by the redcoats as a military hospital. The state legislature reopened the college in 1784 under the name Columbia; in the wake of a successful revolution against a monarch, the old name would no longer do. But the success of the college was in doubt because of certain "defects" in its charter.[49] Before Alexander Hamilton and John Jay collaborated on the joint endeavor for which they would long be remembered—their defense of the U.S. Constitution in the Federalist Papers—they first served together on a committee in March 1787 to rewrite the charter of their shared alma mater. (Jay had graduated in 1764, ten years before Hamilton matriculated.)[50]

The new charter revived the college's founding charter from 1754 but with several important modifications in the name of religious freedom. Originally, students were obliged to practice Anglican modes of worship. The 1754 charter had mandated that the twice-daily religious services be "constantly performed" in adherence to "the liturgy of the Church of England." In a repudiation of sectarian conformity, the 1787 charter explicitly revoked the power of the administration to "prescribe a form of public prayer to be used in the said college." Moreover, the initial charter had imposed a religious test on the president: "The President of the said College … shall forever hereafter be a member of and in communion with the Church of England." The new charter now abolished any requirements "which render a person ineligible to the office of president of the college on account of his religious tenets."[51] This was no minor reform. By way of contrast, other colleges with colonial roots, such as Brown and Rutgers, did not ban religious tests for their presidencies until the twentieth century.[52] And in a gesture of great significance to New York Jewry, Columbia's 1787 charter also named as a trustee of the college the *hazzan* of Shearith Israel, Gershom Seixas.[53]

But the new charter was meaningless without a favorable vote from the state legislature, and approval was not a foregone conclusion. The charter provoked opposition from upstate assemblymen who wanted the college under the control of the state rather than its own board of trustees. It was Hamilton, more than any other legislator, who took up the charter's cause and secured its passage in April 1787.[54] Seixas and Hamilton had previously sat together on a board of regents that oversaw education writ large in the state of New York, but now—for the first time since higher education began in America with the founding of Harvard in 1636—a Jew would serve as a trustee of a specific college.[55] Columbia would not have another Jew on its board until 1928.[56] Seixas's appointment at Columbia put him into contact with fellow board members who counted among the city's foremost citizens, including a future U.S. Supreme Court justice, the mayor of New York, and of course the ubiquitous Hamilton.[57] For seventeen years, Seixas and Hamilton would serve alongside one another as trustees.[58]

A Jewish leader of steadfast dignity, the forty-one-year-old Seixas was the ideal choice to represent Jews in this seminal role at Columbia. He was born in New York in 1746 to a Sephardic father from Lisbon and an Ashkenazi mother from London, thus personifying how American Jewry became a melting pot for different European-Jewish subcultures. At the age of twenty-two, Seixas became the first American-born *hazzan* anywhere in the thirteen colonies. One of his first duties was to travel to Pennsylvania to officiate a Jewish wedding.[59] Seixas's father had doubts if his novice of a son was up to the task and wrote a letter to the bride's father in a bid to manage expectations: "He has never been so far from home, and if you find anything amiss in his behavior, impute it favorably to his want of experience and kindly admonish him for it."[60]

Within a few years, the young *hazzan* confronted a far more daunting duty than presiding over nuptials: he would have to lead a Jewish community through the hazards of war. Seixas fled New York with many of his congregants in the summer of 1776 as British troops prepared to invade Manhattan. He carried with him Torah scrolls from the synagogue as both a practical matter of ensuring their safety and a symbolic gesture of his belief in the providential blessing for the Patriot cause. Seixas absconded first to Connecticut and then in 1780 to Philadelphia, where he became the *hazzan* of the local congregation, Mikveh Israel.[61]

He viewed the Revolution as a divine mission and prayed fervently that God would protect George Washington, the members of Congress, and any foreign power allied with America. "May the supreme King of Kings through his infinite mercies, save and prosper the men of these United States, who are gone forth to war," Seixas proclaimed in a sermon.[62] He sent a copy of the address to Hamilton's future client, Isaac Moses. Seixas's commitment to the Patriot cause did not, however, lead him to shun those Jews who stayed in New York and sided with the British. More than once during the war, Seixas risked capture by stealing into New York to conduct weddings for Loyalist Jews (including that of Samuel Lazarus, whose great-granddaughter Emma would write the famous words that appear on the Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free").[63]

As war gave way to peace, and many exiled Jews returned to New York, Seixas was unsure where to build his future. Isaac Moses—whose £115,000 fortune made him the richest Jew in Philadelphia—had bankrolled Seixas's salary during the war. But when Moses left Philadelphia for New York in 1783, Seixas's financial stability went with him. In a letter to the board of Mikveh Israel, Seixas expressed his hope that "your honors will not take it amiss in me applying for some individual security" given Moses' absence.[64]

Meanwhile, the Shearith Israel congregants were keen to see Seixas move back to New York. Seixas, however, had reservations. In a letter written to a friend in December 1783, he voiced several concerns about the prospect of resuming his old post. Despite his Sephardic ancestry, Seixas was "unacquainted with the Spanish and Portuguese languages" used in the synagogue. (It is unclear why this was not an issue for him when he led Shearith Israel prior to the war.) He was also worried about "disunion" among members of the congregation, which he felt undermined their ability "to serve the Deity consonant to our holy law." Finally, the question of sufficient remuneration weighed heavily on him. "As I now have a family to provide for," Seixas explained, "I cannot think of giving up this place till I meet with some encouragement" that "my salary will be made equivalent to what I receive here."[65] His desire for a sound wage was understandable considering that Seixas's growing family was in the process of ballooning to no fewer than sixteen children.[66] In the end, Shearith Israel lured Seixas back to New York in 1784 with the promise of £200 annually, an allotment of hickory wood, and an unspecified amount of matzah.[67]

He delivered a sermon to Shearith Israel in 1784 to mark his return to the congregation. After praising "Almighty Providence" for his "manifold mercies" amid "the course of a perilous and most distressing war," Seixas turned to matters particular to the synagogue. Congregants were engaged in disrespectful behavior, "such as leaving the synagogue in times of prayer" or "talking and laughing" during services.[68] In his role as *hazzan*, Seixas not only led worship (and scolded babblers) but also raised funds for the synagogue and taught children in the Jewish school. Congregants further called upon him to attend to the milestones of their lives—bar mitzvahs, weddings, funerals. Seixas relied on his skill with a knife to supplement his income, conducting circumcisions and slaughtering animals.[69]

While Jews of the Old World were often relegated to their own ghettos, Seixas mingled easily with Gentiles in New York.[70] His predilection for cultivating relationships beyond Jewish circles positioned him well to sit on the Columbia board alongside Christian leaders. Notably, Seixas used his perch at the college to make the case for Jewish belonging in the United States. He authored a commencement address that touted the role of Jews in the Revolution; the speech was delivered by Sampson Simson, the son of Hamilton's legal client and one of the only Jewish students to attend Columbia in the eighteenth century. "In the year 1776," Seixas wrote, "at the time when the people of this country stood up like one man in the cause of liberty and independence, every Israelite that was among them rose up likewise and united in their efforts to promote the country's peace and prosperity."[71] Seixas was overstating the case, for he well knew that many of his own congregants had stayed loyal to the Crown. But his rendition of Jewish fidelity to the Patriot cause had more truth in it than falsehood, and betokened his fervent desire to write Jews into the American story.

That Seixas—thanks in large part to Hamilton—had been elevated to the Columbia board is rather remarkable given the marginal relationship of Jews to eighteenth-century colleges. Almost every college was originally founded by some Christian denomination. Columbia had enrolled only one Jewish student by the time Seixas was tapped as a trustee. Most American colleges had not graduated any.[72] Because colleges were important institutions whose alumni disproportionately supplied the ranks of the political elite, Jews' limited access to higher education is one indication of their relative subordination to Christians. Seixas's appointment at Columbia thus marked an important, if incremental, step toward the leveling of traditional hierarchies. In a young country caught between egalitarian promises and enduring prejudices, Hamilton's reforms at his alma mater demonstrate his commitment to the revolutionary ideal of equality.

Hamilton's labors in the spring of 1787 to win passage of the college charter met with success, but a much grander challenge lay ahead. During the very same legislative session in which the New York assemblymen approved Columbia's new charter, they chose Hamilton as a delegate to the imminent Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. In fact, it had been Hamilton himself—with an apparent gift for surfacing at the center of world-historical events—who several months earlier had drafted the official call for a national convention to address the defective Articles of Confederation.[73]

Approved by the Continental Congress in 1777 and ratified by the states in 1781, the Articles of Confederation governed America. And they were failing. They bound together the thirteen states only tenuously. An impotent Congress could neither levy taxes nor compel individual states to abide by treaties it had negotiated with foreign powers. The Articles did not provide for an executive branch to enforce laws or a federal judiciary to adjudicate legal disputes between citizens of different states. What's more, amendments required unanimity among the states to take effect, giving veto power to any one state over the rest of the country. In 1781, for instance, twelve states agreed to an amendment providing for a 5 percent import duty to be funneled directly to the federal government, but tiny Rhode Island withheld approval and unilaterally sank the measure.[74]

These structural problems with the government exacerbated the economic challenges then bedeviling the nation. By 1786, frustration gave way to political violence in what became known as Shays' Rebellion. A Revolutionary War veteran named Daniel Shays formed a ragtag militia in western Massachusetts in response to the imprisonment of farmers who could not afford to pay their debts. Although creditors eventually hired a mercenary army that quelled the insurrection, the inability of the federal government to help maintain the rule of law in Massachusetts threw into high relief the failures of the Articles of Confederation.[75] The colonial experience under British rule had bred a mistrust of centralized power, but Americans overcorrected—their national government was too weak to function. Hamilton and delegates from across the country now embarked for Philadelphia to salvage a republic whose continued existence was mired in doubt. Jews did not likely imagine that these delegates would propose a radical advance for religious liberty, one that would thrust upon the country the fundamental question of whether adherents to Judaism and other marginal faiths should claim the full prerogatives of national citizenship.

5

Constitutions

THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA was a fitting tableau in which the delegates to the Constitutional Convention were to shape, among other matters, the course of religious freedom—the state had witnessed fervent antisemitism as well as a remarkable bid by its Jewish residents to grasp for civic equality. Prejudice against Pennsylvania's Jews had first surfaced in the colonial era. Their cemetery in Philadelphia was desecrated in 1751 when some "sportsmen" used it for target practice. A local Jew lamented that they "set up marks, and fired several shots against the fence of the Jewish burying-ground, which not only destroyed the said fence, but also a tomb-stone."[1] It is unclear whether the offenders deliberately sought to vandalize the cemetery or were simply reckless, but the fact remains that no Christian graveyard in colonial times was treated with comparable disrespect.[2] Meanwhile, a woman from an elite Quaker family in Philadelphia concluded in 1759 that Jews were "the scum of the earth" after attending a Jewish religious service.[3] The town of Lancaster, home to a sizable Jewish community, saw its share of shopworn stereotypes about Jews as swindlers. One resident in 1766 derided "the Jew landlords" as "terrible people" who "make false claims."[4] A Lancaster clergyman similarly griped in 1772 that Jews "hesitate not to defraud, when opportunity presents."[5]

It might be tempting to dismiss these comments as anomalous. After all, Jews belonged to Philadelphia's various cultural institutions, like the lending library and the Chestnut Street Theater.[6] Yet when the start of the Revolution prompted Pennsylvanians to write a state constitution, the specter of a Jew or other non-Christian in elected office proved broadly threatening. Pennsylvania's colonial charter had required "faith in Jesus Christ" to vote and run for office.[7] In the summer of 1776, a proposed draft of the state constitution tried moving in a more tolerant direction, only to provoke a backlash. The draft included no religious restriction on suffrage and made monotheism, rather than a belief in Christianity, a prerequisite for legislative office. Under this plan, inductees to the state legislature would have taken an oath that included the phrase: "I do believe in one God, the Creator and Governor of the universe." While falling short of religious liberty for atheists or polytheists, this approach was still relatively enlightened—too much so for many Pennsylvanians.[8]

A contributor to the *Pennsylvania Evening Post* suggested that if a mere "belief in God" was all that the constitution mandated for state officials, then undesirable religious minorities could seize power and turn the machinery of government against Christians. "Jews or Turks [i.e., Muslims] may become in time not only our greatest landholders," he predicted, "but principal officers in the legislative or executive parts of our government, so as to render it not only uncomfortable but unsafe for Christians." Such fears amounted to unfounded paranoia—Jews constituted a miniscule fraction of Pennsylvania's population and had shown no desire to oppress their Christian neighbors (and any Muslim presence would have comprised enslaved Africans who posed even less of a plausible threat). The editorialist was willing to concede that religious dissenters should be allowed to live in the Commonwealth but maintained that a Christian oath of office would "prevent, as far as possible, our acting as a state contrary to or in opposition to the general doctrines and laws of Christianity in the New Testament."[9]

A still more heated essay appeared in the same newspaper two days later. It cautioned that the proposed constitution's opening of legislative office to "deists, Jews, Mohamedans [i.e., Muslims], and other enemies of Christ" might summon the "Anti-Christ." The writer shuddered at the anticipated reaction of "the Christian states in Europe" if Pennsylvanians were to approve a "frame of government for themselves, by a Convention, by which Jews, Turks, and Heathens may not only be free men of that land but are eligible for Assemblymen." He was, moreover, appalled that "this new constitution mentions not a word of the Bible, Christ or the Christian religion, much less Protestantism." The author invoked the horror of "a mosque, a synagogue, or heathen temple" enjoying "equal privileges" with a "Presbyterian meeting house."[10] Meanwhile, the founding pastor of the local Lutheran church warned in a fit of hyperbole, "It now seems as if a Christian people were [to be] ruled by Jews, Turks, Spinozists, Deists, [and] perverted naturalists."[11] The term "Spinozist" was a double insult, for Baruch Spinoza—the Dutch philosopher—was both a Jew and an alleged atheist.[12]

Despite the democratic promise of the Revolution, these voices of bigotry ultimately triumphed in Pennsylvania. The state constitution in its final form incorporated the following exclusionary language in the oath of office for members of the legislature: "I do acknowledge the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by Divine inspiration."[13] Only in a place where prejudice against Jews and other minorities was prevalent would opponents of the test clause have ceded such ground.[14] An eminent lawyer living in Philadelphia during these years later recalled that "the Jews were yet a hated and a despised race."[15]

Benjamin Franklin, chair of the state constitutional convention, at first opposed the foregoing religious test. But ultimately he sided with those who favored it. Indeed, it was Franklin himself, at the behest of a Lutheran minister, who introduced the motion for the discriminatory oath to the convention. The historian William Pencak argues that Franklin had sympathy for Jews but “sacrificed the state’s tiny Jewish minority to what he considered the more urgent need of Christians to tolerate each other.” Moreover, Pencak interprets Franklin’s decision to support the oath as a self-serving bid to shore up his credibility with Pennsylvania’s antisemitic majority.[16] Yet even this rendition—in which an instinctively pluralistic Franklin sold out his convictions for the sake of political expediency—is too generous.

Franklin’s initial (and short-lived) resistance to the religious test in the state constitution was hardly rooted in any notion of religious equality for Jews. He was instead motivated by his skepticism about the Jewish faith. In a letter to an English theologian, Franklin explained that his aversion to the oath stemmed from its description of the Hebrew Bible as inspired by God. “There are several things in the Old Testament impossible to be given by divine inspiration,” he insisted. Franklin preferred that the Hebrew Bible be acknowledged as earthly in its origins and consequently disavowed. As he put it, “I should rather suppose it given by inspiration from another quarter, and renounce the whole.” Franklin’s letter raised no objections to the New Testament appearing in the oath.[17]

His concerns about Judaism as a faith were of a piece with his limited regard for Jewry as a people. Franklin repeatedly trafficked in tropes about Jews as money-hungry grifters. He lived in London in the 1760s and there gained membership to the Royal Society, which advanced scientific knowledge. Franklin lamented to a family member that an employee at the Royal Society had been stealing funds. Tellingly, Franklin felt compelled to mention the clerk’s religion. “We have had an ugly affair at the Royal Society lately,” he divulged. “One Dacosta, a Jew, who, as our clerk, was entrusted with collecting our monies, has been so unfaithful as to embezzle near £1300 in four years.”[18] In a letter to a French physicist three months later, Franklin was still bemoaning the clerk’s duplicity while highlighting his Jewish background. “A wicked Jew, entrusted as our clerk and collector, has unobserved run away with our money upon Earth, to the amount of near 1500 pounds,” he reported.[19]

Franklin exhibited similarly stereotypical attitudes toward Jews while serving as a diplomat in Europe in the early 1780s. He was then engaged in negotiations on behalf of the U.S. government with a Dutch Jewish banker named Jean de Neufville. The United States had ordered £50,000 of goods from Neufville and his associates, but they were refusing to convey the goods until they received “the payment of a petty demand for damages,” Franklin relayed in a letter to John Adams. From Franklin’s perspective, the goods should first be delivered and then damages discussed. He derided Neufville’s demand as “not only ungenteel and dishonorable treatment but a monstrous injustice.” Franklin’s letter exclaimed that this disreputable behavior was surprising—even for a Jew—since Neufville had a history of making warm remarks about America. In Franklin’s words, “Though I believe him to be as much a Jew as any in Jerusalem, I did not expect that with so many and such constant professions of friendship for the United

States, with which he lards all his letters, he would have attempted to enforce his demands (which I doubt not will be extravagant enough) by a proceeding so abominable."[20] Neufville's Jewish proclivities had won out over his amiable rhetoric, according to Franklin.

Despite Franklin's wishes to be rid of Neufville, there was still other business to be transacted between the two men—the arrangement of a loan for the United States totaling two million Dutch guilders. Neufville drafted an agreement that would require the U.S. government to pledge all of America's land as collateral. While he assured Franklin that such language was entirely "usual" for Dutch loans given to foreign countries, Franklin deemed it "an extravagant security for a trifling sum." Franklin was especially outraged that Neufville had floated the idea that Congress should pass a law, in gratitude to Neufville, making him the exclusive consignee of American produce to be sold in Europe.[21]

Neufville's English was mediocre, so there were language barriers, and likely cultural ones as well, in these negotiations. Yet in Franklin's eyes, it was Neufville's Judaism that accounted for his supposed avarice. Franklin sarcastically suggested to Adams that Neufville was not quite as Jewish as he could be, since the Dutchman had not gone so far as to outright steal American property or take American lives. "I was wrong in supposing J. de Neufville as much a Jew as any in Jerusalem," Franklin sneered, "since Jacob was not content with any percents, but took the whole of his brother Esau's birthright; and his posterity did the same by the Canaanites, and cut their throats [in] the bargain, which in my conscience I do not think Mr. J. de Neufville has the least inclination to do by us,—while he can get anything by our being alive."[22] To Franklin, greed was an inveterate characteristic of Jews.

He was not unconditionally prejudicial toward Jewry. Whenever any religious denomination raised money for the construction of a house of worship in Philadelphia, Franklin donated, including for the local synagogue.[23] And he displayed some esteem for the heritage of biblical Judaism when, as a member of the Continental Congress, he was tasked with designing the Great Seal of the United States in 1776. Franklin chose to depict Moses summoning the waters of the Red Sea to drown Pharaoh (an image that Congress ultimately rejected).[24] Franklin's inconsistent mix of bias and tolerance toward Jews and their faith made him typical of several other founders—and distinct from Alexander Hamilton, whose writings and correspondence reflect no animus against Jewry and Judaism.

Many of Franklin's fellow Pennsylvanians simply saw no conflict between the egalitarian rhetoric of the Revolution and religious discrimination against Jews. In a 1782 issue of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, a signer of the Declaration of Independence disparaged Jewish merchants for allegedly rigging their scales: "Is not the gravity which retains Jupiter in his orbit, the same gravity which operates on a grain in the scales of a

Jew?"[25] A piece appearing soon thereafter in Philadelphia's *Independent Gazetteer* called Jews "despisers of Christianity" who were "the bane of all countries wherever they are countenanced." The writer gleefully shared an absurd rumor that an "air balloon" had been arranged to transport "all the Jew brokers to New Scotland [i.e., Nova Scotia], where they will be abundantly more thought of than in Pennsylvania."[26] This allusion to New Scotland was ripe with political meaning. The Canadian province was a haven for Loyalists who had deserted America. Contemporary readers would have readily understood the author's implication that Pennsylvania's Jews were faithful to the British rather than to the Patriots. (In reality, the state's Jewish community had overwhelmingly supported the Revolution.)[27]

Doubts about the commercial integrity and political allegiance of Jews were not new—but the willingness of Jews to challenge their opponents was. Many Jews had abandoned their homes, invested their savings, and even risked their lives to defend a revolution that was waged in the name of equality. They would not now passively accept second-class citizenship. Resistance to antisemitism was arguably more pronounced in Pennsylvania than in any other state during the founding era, and with good reason. New York and Virginia had no religious limitations on elected office, so Jews there did not have specific constitutional clauses to protest. Other states, such as Delaware and Maryland, employed religious tests for public officials but lacked concentrated Jewish populations to take umbrage. And because Jews in Pennsylvania had sided with the Patriot cause almost uniformly, the state's failure to reward Jews' loyalty with equality made its discrimination particularly pernicious.

In 1783, Philadelphia Jewry formed a committee to advocate repeal of the state's religious test for legislative office. Among the committee's five members were Jews who would come into Hamilton's circle, including Haym Salomon and Gershom Seixas. The committee petitioned the Council of Censors, an elected body invested with the power to commence a new state constitutional convention for Pennsylvania. The Jewish "memorialists," as they referred to themselves, pointed out the fundamental hypocrisy of a state constitution that paid lip service to religious liberty but then imposed a civil disability on Jews for exercising that very liberty. On the one hand, the constitution's bill of rights stated without ambiguity, "No man who acknowledges the being of a God can be justly deprived or abridged of any civil rights as a citizen on account of his religious sentiments." On the other, the constitution made a belief in the New Testament a prerequisite for service in the state legislature. The memorialists lamented that "this religious test deprives the Jews of the most eminent rights of free men." The constitution thereby imposed a "stigma" upon the Jewish people.[28]

The petition further assured the Council of Censors that citizens of the Commonwealth had nothing to fear from the prospect of Jews in elected office. "In the religious books of the Jews" were to be found "no such doctrines or principles" that "are inconsistent with the safety and happiness of the people of Pennsylvania." The memorialists also cited the manifold contributions of Jewish Patriots to the war as evidence that Jews would be trustworthy public servants, insisting, “The conduct and behavior of the Jews in this and the neighboring states has always tallied with the great design of the Revolution.” They made a practical appeal as well, one that Hamilton himself would echo in later years: religious freedom would help increase immigration, as “men who live under restraints in another country” would find Pennsylvania “attractive.” In concluding their petition, the memorialists requested that the council convene a constitutional convention for the purpose of untethering the oath of office from Christianity.[29] But the council was unmoved by this bid for full civic equality.[30]

The fight against antisemitism in Pennsylvania continued in 1784 after a Quaker lawyer named Miers Fisher recommended to the state legislature the termination of the Bank of North America, which was based in Philadelphia. The bank—a brainchild of Hamilton—had intimate associations with prominent Jews such as Haym Salomon, who served as the bank’s official broker, and Isaac Moses, who used his fortune to help keep the bank afloat. While Fisher’s speech in its entirety is lost, a surviving excerpt reveals that he resorted to stereotypes about usurious Jews. Fisher declared that “the Jews were the authors of high and unusual interest” at the bank.[31]

In the pages of Philadelphia’s *Independent Gazetteer*, a contributor under the name “A Jew Broker” (quite likely Salomon himself) issued a scathing castigation of Fisher. The editorial was addressed directly to Fisher and repudiated “the indecent, unjust, inhumane aspersions you cast so indiscriminately on the Jews of this city at large.” According to the author, Fisher’s antisemitism was evidence of his corrupt character: “The attack on the Jews seemed wanton and could only have been premeditated by such a base and degenerate mind as yours.”[32]

During the war, Fisher’s refusal to serve the Patriot cause had led to his expulsion from Pennsylvania to a detention center in Virginia. He may have had genuinely Loyalist sympathies or, like many fellow Quakers, was simply a pacifist who refused to take up arms. In either case, the “Jew Broker” delighted in reminding readers that Fisher was “once exiled and excommunicated by the state.” Jews, in contrast, had sided with the revolutionaries from the war’s inception and “were second to none in our patriotism and attachment to our country!” This vigorous defense of Jews tried to deflect accusations of Jewish disloyalty by suggesting that Quakers rather than Jews were guilty of “avarice” by charging high interest on loans.[33]

The piece is notable not only for its derisive tone but also for its author’s belief that the birth of the United States was a signal moment for Jewry, which had suffered oppression for centuries. “I exult and glory in reflecting that we have the honor to reside in a free country, where, as a people, we have met with the most generous countenance and protection,” gushed the “Jew Broker.” And although the attempt to expunge the language about the New Testament from the state constitution had not yet met with success, he optimistically predicted, “We shall still obtain every other privilege that we aspire to enjoy along with our fellow citizens.”[34] It is telling that in an editorial defending Jewish financiers, the “Jew Broker” saw fit to allude to the exclusionary oath of office; he surely feared that negative stereotypes about Jews in the marketplace were hamstringing Jewish efforts to access the State House.

Pennsylvania was not the only state where Jews challenged their Christian neighbors to realize the Revolution's promise of equality. In 1785, the circulation of an antisemitic pamphlet in Georgia prompted a local Jew to issue a direct rebuke. The pamphlet, entitled *Cursory Remarks on Men & Manners in Georgia*, invoked the usual clichés about Jews. Under the pen name "Citizen," the author denounced Jews as a greedy people whose "pecuniary interests" were "the life and soul of all their actions." He questioned their fealty to both the country and its republican system, alleging, "If indeed they have any choice as to governments, it must be in favor of a monarchy." He also undertook a survey of Jewish history and concluded, "The Jews always insinuate themselves most into favor among those nations who remain in darkness and in the shadows of death."[35]

At the time, Jews were not on equal footing with a majority of Christians in Georgia—the state constitution limited eligibility for the legislature to Protestants—but the "Citizen" was aghast at the notion of Jewish participation in *any* form of civic life.[36] His impetus for writing the pamphlet had been a ruling from a state judge that a Jew, Mordecai Sheftall, could not be denied the right to file a lawsuit simply because he was Jewish.[37] The "Citizen" warned that the Jews' quest for civil rights would culminate in their seizing power and crushing Christians: "What are we to expect but to have Christianity enacted into a capital heresy, the synagogue become the established church, and the mildness of the New Testament compelled to give place to the rigor and severity of the Old."[38] There was, of course, no evidence that Georgia's Jewish community aspired to persecute Christians. That Jews constituted less than one-tenth of 1 percent of the state's population makes the author's histrionics that much more absurd.[39]

In the pages of the *Georgia Gazette*, Mordecai Sheftall's brother, Levi, admonished the prejudiced pamphleteer in a concise response. Levi remarked that the pamphlet had afforded its author little more than "an opportunity to show his hatred" and advised that "he might have employed his time to some better purpose." Referring to Mordecai, whose right to sue was upheld, Levi asked why "the Jew particularly alluded to … should not also be entitled to the rights of citizenship." He concluded the piece by questioning the patriotism of the self-described "Citizen" and signed off, "A Real Citizen." Georgia's Jews had supported the Revolution with near unanimity—and none more fervently than Mordecai Sheftall—providing Levi Sheftall a strong basis for affirming Jewish claims to the prerogatives of full-fledged citizenship.[40]

That Jews in America would petition for their rights and shame their antagonists set them apart from European Jews, who had more to fear from speaking out. While numerous European countries had banished Jews, none of the thirteen states in the Union had done so, either before or after the Revolution. Moreover, European prejudice was often directed squarely at Jews because they commonly comprised the sole religious minority in a given place. In America, by contrast, Jews were joined by the likes of

Quakers and Catholics as dissenters; bigots in the United States usually grouped Jews together with these other undesirables.[41] And perhaps most importantly, Jews in Europe—unlike their American coreligionists—had not hazarded death to establish a republic whose founding document championed equality.[42]

British Jewry offers an instructive counterpoint to the Jewish-American experience. In 1753, Parliament passed the "Jew Bill," which lifted certain economic restrictions on foreign-born Jews living in Britain. Although the Jew Bill was modest in its reforms, it provoked a fiercely antisemitic reaction and was quickly repealed.[43] British Jews had learned the dangers of seeking even a marginal advance in their rights. Thirty years later, the Jewish Board of Deputies—which formally represented Britain's Jews to the Crown—considered sending a letter of congratulations to King George III upon Britain's successful negotiation of a peace treaty with the United States in 1783. Tellingly, the board in the end abstained. As one Jewish deputy explained, "Peace or war being political concerns, addressing [them] would be taking a part in matters we ought to avoid."[44] So at the very historical moment when Philadelphia Jewry was protesting the discriminatory clause in the Pennsylvania constitution, the Jewish Board in London was fearful of sending even a laudatory message to the king.

Although America was less antisemitic than Europe, the Jewish pursuit of equality in the United States still faced significant opposition. Pennsylvania and Georgia were not alone in codifying prejudice into law. Most of the early state constitutions similarly imposed civil limitations on Jews and other defamed religious groups. Delaware mandated for state officials a belief in the Trinity, which left out some Christians and, of course, all non-Christians. New Jersey was less inclusive still, reserving elected office for Protestants solely. One New Jersey newspaper celebrated that the state constitution "justly restricts your votes to persons professing a belief in the faith of any Protestant sect." The governor of New Jersey unironically praised the oath as a "beautiful" expression of religious freedom, presumably because it did not privilege any particular Protestant denomination over the others. Both Carolinas followed New Jersey's lead and made elected office the exclusive preserve of Protestants. Maryland limited not only public office but religious freedom itself to Christians. It took Connecticut more than forty years to replace its colonial charter with a new constitution; in the interim, the state passed "acts of toleration," but none of them granted equal rights to Jews. Rhode Island did not extend civic equality to its Jewish residents until 1843, and New Hampshire failed to do so until 1877. Several states in the early republic had government-subsidized churches that used tax dollars from Jews and Gentiles alike to fund Christian clergy. And most states barred Jews from practicing law.[45]

Even in New York—which had arguably the most enlightened state constitution in the Union and did not ban Jews from elected office—toleration only went so far. The state considered language for its constitution of 1777 that would have promised "free toleration” to “all the denominations of Christians” as well as “all Jews, Turks, and Infidels.”[46] However, this phrasing was ultimately replaced by a less specific clause: “The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever hereafter be allowed.”[47] Jews were to enjoy freedom of worship by tacit default, not explicit affirmation.

Moreover, New York (like many other states) adopted a blue law that disallowed all business activity on the Christian Sabbath. These laws disproportionately burdened Jews, who were compelled to abstain from work on Saturdays by their faith and on Sundays by their state. Accordingly, Jews had one less day each week to earn a living than did Christians. When the New York state legislature considered resurrecting a colonial-era blue law in 1788, one assemblyman warned that it “would lead to intolerance and persecution.” He observed that “a Jew, to be consistent with himself, is obliged to keep holy the 7th day of the week,” and so a blue law would be tantamount to “taxing” him for being Jewish. “This was not equal liberty, one of the boasted blessings of our government,” the assemblyman lamented. But he did not reflect majority sentiment, and the bill passed.[48] New York’s Jews were still better off than Catholics in at least one respect. The same year that New York revived its blue law, the state legislature also banned from public office any Catholic who refused to forswear the pope as a religious authority.[49]

Hamilton’s fellow New Yorker John Jay was typical of most other founding fathers in that he showed some support for Jewry while also harboring antisemitic views. He was among the principal architects of the state constitution, which afforded the free exercise of faith to Jews and other nonconformists.[50] As mentioned in the prior chapter, Jay teamed with Hamilton to implement pluralistic reforms at Columbia. And, we will see, he lobbied Congress on behalf of the Jewish merchant Solomon Simson, a Hamilton legal client, when Simson sought the establishment of a national mint. Jay’s inclusive sensibilities were rooted in his family history. His grandfather was a Huguenot who faced exile from France when he refused to convert from Protestantism to Catholicism. Jay was thus born into a family alive to the perils of religious oppression.[51]

But Jay nevertheless exhibited bias against Jewry. Although Jews could run for office in New York under the constitution he had helped draft, Jay still hoped voters would reject Jewish candidates. “It is the duty as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers,” he told a fellow politician.[52] Jay’s greatest aspiration for Jews was that they would abandon their faith. As president of the American Bible Society, he remarked in a speech that “individual Jews have, from time to time, been relieved from their blindness, and become Christians.” Jay further explained that for Jews to convert en masse, they must first resume control of the Holy Land—a belief rooted in a Christian prophecy that Jewish reclamation of Judea and conversion to Christianity were critical steps in the return of Jesus. He anticipated that “a time will come when all the twelve tribes [of Israel] shall be restored to their country, and be a praise in the earth,” but until then “their blindness will not be sooner removed" and thus "their conversion is not to be sooner expected."[53] These views were popular not just with Jay but a number of contemporary Christians.

A pamphlet of the era entitled *Israel Vindicated* denounced this kind of thinking as antisemitic. Its anonymous author sought to rebuke the idea that Jews were a benighted people, dwelling in a Christian America, who might yet embrace the light of Christianity. The pamphleteer inveighed against any depiction of Jews as "degraded and uncultivated" in contrast to their Christian compatriots who fashioned themselves "completely civilized." Such a mentality erroneously proceeded from "the impolitic principle" that the United States was a Christian, rather than nonsectarian, nation. *Israel Vindicated* acknowledged that such Christians were acting on a prophecy, and scoffed at how "they think they pay us [i.e., Jews] a compliment" when they see a role for Jews, as converts, in Jesus's return.[54] Jay's comments about the necessity of Christian rulers and the defects of Judaism—common enough in his day—never flowed from the pen of Hamilton.

John Adams is yet another founder who assumed a key role in drafting a state constitution and whose liberality toward Jews had its limits. He wrote the Massachusetts constitution, which promised religious liberty in the abstract but discriminated against non-Christians in practice. Prefiguring the Free Exercise Clause in the federal Bill of Rights, the constitution in Massachusetts stipulated that "no subject shall be hurt, molested, or restrained, in his person, liberty, or estate, for worshipping God in the manner and season most agreeable to the dictates of his own conscience." Adams, however, included a religious test for governors and legislators in the form of an exclusionary oath: "I, A.B., do declare that I believe the Christian religion, and have a firm persuasion of its truth." Jews found mere toleration, not civic equality, in Adams's commonwealth.[55]

The mixed picture that Massachusetts's constitution presents was of a piece with Adams's varied views on both Judaism and its adherents. At times, Adams belittled the Jewish faith. He suggested to Thomas Jefferson that the study of Jewish law and Jewish mysticism would take nearly a millennium, time that "would be wasted to very little purpose." Jewish law was worse than just an exercise in squandered effort, Adams claimed—it was demonic. Referring to the two components comprising the Talmud, he lamented, "The demon of hierarchical despotism has been at work both with the Mishna and Gemara."[56] And in a wartime letter to the president of the Continental Congress, Adams unfavorably alluded to biblical Jews. He reported that the British in their arrogance mistakenly assumed that "the People of America will dethrone the Congress and like the Israelites demand a King."[57]

In several instances, Adams derided someone or some group by analogizing them to Jews. He employed the word "Jew" as an insult to demean a Gentile. "Tom is a perfect Viper—a Fiend—a Jew—a Devil," Adams remarked about a disliked relative.[58] During the Revolution, he drew disparaging parallels between Brits and Jews. "Quite as selfish and as blind as the Jews," Adams said of the British, "there is no present probability of their opening their eyes to their true interest and safety."[59] He served as the U.S. minister in the 1780s to the Netherlands, where he bemoaned the greed of Dutch creditors by likening them to Jews. As he grumbled to John Jay, "Five or six people have all the money under their command, and they are as avaricious as any Jews in Jews Quarter."[60] Adams soon issued a similar complaint that Jews and Jew-like Christians throughout Europe were speculating on American currency. "My indignation is roused beyond all patience," he wrote to Jefferson from London, as Americans fell "prey to every robber, pirate and cheat in Europe. Jews and Judaizing Christians are now scheming to buy up all our Continental notes at two or three shillings in a pound, in order to oblige us to pay them at twenty shillings a pound."[61] In casting such aspersions, Adams was trading in well-worn stereotypes about Jewish moneylenders.

He could also be critical of his own country, and once again found in Jewry a useful point of pejorative comparison. As Adams told a fellow signer of the Declaration of Independence, "We are not a chosen people that I know of, or if we are, we deserve it as little as the Jews."[62] His penchant for antisemitic smears even combined with his hatred for Hamilton. Reviving an old canard that Hamilton's true loyalties lied with the Tories (that is, Loyalists) rather than with the Patriots, Adams insisted, "He was followed, by all the Tories on the continent, as false messiahs were always followed by the Jews."[63] Because Jews were often condemned as globetrotting cosmopolitans whose allegiance to the United States was dubious, they constituted a particularly useful group for Adams to invoke as he cast doubt on the fidelity of Hamilton and his supporters to America.

Just like John Jay, Adams endorsed the Jewish reclamation of the Holy Land. "I really wish the Jews [to be] again, in Judea, an independent nation," Adams wrote to the Jewish leader Mordecai Noah. His motivations for the creation of a Jewish state in the Holy Land did not likely resonate with Noah—Adams believed it would help cure Jews of their shortcomings and hasten their conversion to the Christian faith. As he explained, "Once restored to an independent government and no longer persecuted, they would soon wear away some of the asperities and peculiarities of their character and possibly in time become liberal Unitarian Christians."[64] That Adams had been taught Hebrew at Harvard by a Jewish convert to Christianity perhaps informed his hope about the prospects for widespread conversion.[65]

Adams did, however, convey appreciation for Jewry at times. In another letter to Noah, he praised Jewish people as upstanding members of society. The Jews whom Adams had encountered were "men of as liberal minds, [and] as much honor, probity, generosity and good breeding, as any I have known in any sect of religion." Given these commendable traits, he reasoned, Jews were worthy of full-fledged citizenship anywhere on the globe: "I wish your nation may be admitted to all the privileges of citizens in every country of the world."[66] Adams's letter failed to mention that he himself had drafted a constitution for Massachusetts that banned Jews from elected office.

Still, his positive appraisal of the Jewish people was not exclusive to correspondence with a Jew. Writing to a Christian friend, Adams criticized the French philosopher Voltaire for his antisemitic take on Jews. “How is it possible this old fellow should represent the Hebrews in such a contemptible light?” he inquired. “They are the most glorious Nation that ever inhabited this Earth. The Romans and their Empire were but a bauble in comparison of the Jews.” Adams also exalted Judaism for being the first of the three Abrahamic faiths, observing of Jews, “They have given religion to three quarters of the Globe.” His esteem extended to Jews from antiquity to the present, for throughout history Jews “have influenced the affairs of mankind more, and more happily, than any other nation ancient or modern.”[67]

Overall, then, Adams’s attitude toward Jews and their religion was inconsistent. As with other founders, he offers a useful benchmark by which to measure Hamilton. Like Adams, Hamilton expressed admiration for the people and faith of Judaism but, unlike Adams, Hamilton did not mitigate that admiration with bigoted comments. In a world where prejudice toward Jews was commonplace, Hamilton is almost as noteworthy for what he did *not* say as for what he did.

Exclusionary constitutions, discriminatory statutes, and cultural antisemitism throughout the various states would have been strong reason for Jews to experience anxiety on the eve of the federal Constitutional Convention. In the eleven years since the colonies declared their independence, Americans showed a willingness to tolerate Jewry but resisted fulfilling the promise of equality enshrined in the Declaration of Independence. Precedent would now seem to suggest that a national constitution, to be drafted behind closed doors by an entirely Gentile body of delegates, would likely infringe on Jewish rights. Just a year before the convention, a French diplomat in New York reported back to Paris that the high ideals of the American Revolution had failed to vanquish antisemitism in the United States. “It would be very remarkable if this people, after having suffered the contempt of all ages and nations, should succeed in America in taking part in the affairs of government,” he wrote. “But this revolution is not yet ripe … prejudices are still too strong to enable the Jews to enjoy the privileges accorded to all their fellow-citizens.”[68] It was in the midst of this paradox—a new nation conceived in the name of equality yet riddled with old bigotries—that Hamilton and his fellow delegates convened in Philadelphia in May 1787.

Philadelphia was an energetic but tidy urban center. A Scottish military officer praised “the great and noble city of Philadelphia” as “perhaps one of the wonders of the world.”[69] A traveler from Germany was equally impressed: “The city, if not greatly beyond others in America in wealth and number of houses, far surpasses them all in learning, in the arts, and public spirit.” Indeed, Philadelphia was home to numerous cultural institutions, printing shops, and the University of Pennsylvania.[70]

Stretching west from the Delaware River, Philadelphia had been organized along a grid by William Penn when he founded the colony of Pennsylvania in 1681.[71] Roads parallel to the river that ran north-south were numbered—Second Street, Third Street, and so forth—while east-west avenues typically bore the names of trees such as Chestnut, Spruce, and Pine. In Hamilton's day, the streets were often well maintained by the locals,[72] although one resident griped that "dead animals—horses and cows—are left to putrify on vacant lots."[73] Pedestrians strolling down lamplit sidewalks in the evenings could hear night watchmen announcing the time and weather. Church bells were commonly rung, occasionally thirteen times in a row to honor the states of the Union. "At Philadelphia there is always something to be chimed," remarked a visitor, "so that it seems almost as if it was an Imperial or Popish city."[74]

Houses lining the roads were largely uniform: brick architecture on the outside and English-style décor within. Rooms usually featured a fireplace and, for those able to afford it, mahogany furniture. A garden or courtyard could be found behind each home; during the Constitutional Convention, Benjamin Franklin was known for chatting with Hamilton among other delegates in his courtyard under a mulberry tree. In the eyes of one observer, Philadelphians managed their residences with an ideal balance between the austerity of Amsterdam and pomposity of Paris: "The taste generally is for living in a cleanly and orderly manner, without the continual scrubbing of the Hollanders or the frippery and gilt of the French."[75]

How newcomers experienced Philadelphia often suggested more about the origins of the traveler than about the local inhabitants. A planter from the Virginia countryside found Philadelphians to be pretentious and complained that he was "heartily tired of the etiquette and nonsense so fashionable in this city."[76] But a European visitor, accustomed to the social hierarchies of the Old World, saw in Philadelphia a remarkable spirit of equality: "People think, act, and speak here precisely as it prompts them; the poorest day-laborer on the bank of the Delaware holds it his right to advance his opinion, in religious as well as political matters, with as much freedom as the gentleman or the scholar."[77]

To be sure, Philadelphia had its problems. Crime was a concern; eighteen convicts escaped the municipal prison just two months before the Constitutional Convention. Disease also posed a recurrent threat. The city had already endured several yellow fever epidemics mid-century and would suffer its worst outbreak yet just a few years after the convention.[78] Because doctors and laymen alike mistakenly believed that unpleasant smells caused disease, Philadelphians who lived near the dock, with its noxious odors, were particularly distressed.[79] A petition they submitted to the Pennsylvania General Assembly bemoaned "the stench of mud and putrifying filth" that wafted from the dock, which was not only "offensive to the senses" but supposedly "dangerous and injurious to the health of neighboring inhabitants."[80]

Philadelphia's numerous taverns offered lodging, food, and of course alcohol. These taverns were also important meeting places for political and commercial discussion.[81]

When Hamilton first arrived in the city, he congregated with other delegates to dine at the Indian Queen Tavern around the corner from Fourth Street and Chestnut.[82] Upon entering its luxurious premises, Hamilton may have regretted that he had arranged for a bed elsewhere. One patron described having his bags handled by a servant in extravagant attire, complete with a "blue coat, sleeves and cape red, and buff waistcoat and breeches, the bosom of his shirt ruffled, and hair powdered." Needs were dutifully met at the Indian Queen, whether the guest desired tea, magazines, or even a haircut.[83]

Two blocks away, just off Second Street and Walnut, was another locale popular with convention delegates, City Tavern. It was less glamorous than the Indian Queen. A British antique dealer described having "slept at this house two nights, and met with my old tormentors, the bugs." While the bugs paid this Brit too much attention, the hotel staff gave him too little: "We could get hardly any attendance from the waiters, though we rang the bell incessantly." Nevertheless, City Tavern was a focal point for business in Philadelphia. The tavern kept records of incoming and departing ships, and merchants frequented its coffee house daily.[84] At the summer's end, the convention delegates would have their farewell supper there.[85]

Hamilton lodged at Mrs. Dailey's boardinghouse at the intersection of Third Street and Market Street. Mrs. Dailey's stood at the end of an alfresco market abuzz with shoppers. People poured in from the countryside to hawk their wares and purchase provisions. Among the meats to be found at the market were cuts unknown to European taste buds, from raccoon to possum.[86]

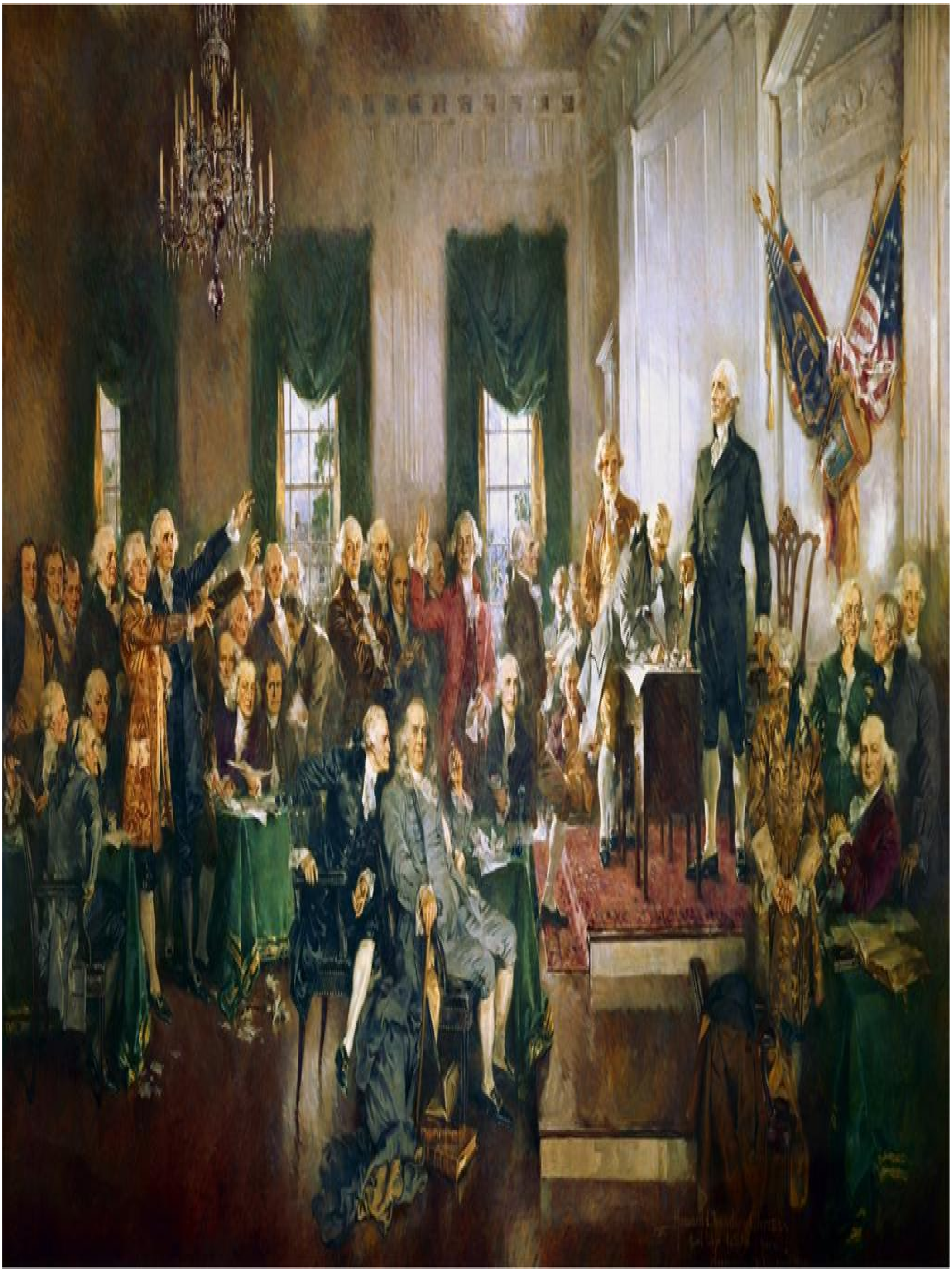
During the convention, Hamilton had a short walk to the State House on Chestnut Street for the delegates' daily deliberations. It was there, eleven years earlier, that the Declaration of Independence had been signed, and the building would in time become known as Independence Hall. The State House was elegant in its simplicity. As a contemporary recorded, "The façade is of tiled brick, with no particular decoration, but in comparison regular and handsome."[87] In the East Room, the delegates sat in rows of wooden chairs facing the president of the convention, George Washington.[88]

Two blocks due east from the State House, and another three up Third Street, on a small lane called Cherry, was the center of Philadelphia Jewry: the Mikveh Israel synagogue.[89] It is a striking fact about the Constitutional Convention that among the nation's more than three million people, the only one to petition the delegates on the topic of religious freedom was a member of Mikveh Israel, Jonas Phillips. A war veteran and former president of the synagogue, Phillips submitted a letter to the convention in its waning days.[90] He described himself as "being one of the people called Jews" and noted with consternation that the Pennsylvania oath of office was "absolutely against the religious principle of a Jew." Phillips decried the distance between the democratic promise of the Revolution and the prejudicial reality of the early republic: "It is well known among all the citizens of the 13 United States that the Jews have been true and faithful Whigs, and during the late contest with England they have been foremost in aiding and assisting the states with their lives and fortunes. They have supported the cause, have bravely fought and bled for liberty which they cannot enjoy.” Phillips emphasized that if the delegates instituted an oath that was free of the kind of exclusionary clause found in the Pennsylvania constitution, “then the Israelites will think themselves happy to live under a government where all religious societies are on equal footing.” In closing, he offered a prayer for George Washington, the convention delegates, and the American people.[91]

Phillips’s petition was unnecessary, as it turns out. Because the convention’s proceedings were strictly confidential, Phillips was unaware that eight days earlier the delegates had already decided to make federal office blind to religion.[92] Article VI, Section 3 of the Constitution contained this radical clause: “No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.” In light of the discriminatory state constitutions, the decision to open federal posts—both elected and appointed—to people of all religious backgrounds was extraordinary. This clause was arguably more significant in expanding religious liberty than would be the First Amendment’s guarantee of free exercise (which was not part of the original Constitution). After all, many state constitutions nominally granted religious freedom yet still imposed civil disabilities on members of minority faiths, thereby demonstrating how an abstract promise of religious liberty could mean very little in practice. The U.S. Constitution’s ban on religious tests was a concrete provision in a way that the Free Exercise Clause was not; the ban extended substantive equality to Jews and other dissenters in the most important realm of American civic life.[93]

While the prohibition on religious tests found favor with most delegates, support was not universal at the convention. North Carolina’s delegates resisted the clause; the delegations from Maryland and Connecticut were both split. The other states approved Article VI, Section 3.[94] One delegate who advocated the ban on religious tests recalled those who did not: “There were some members so unfashionable as to think … in a Christian country, it would be at least decent to hold out some distinction between the professors of Christianity and downright infidelity or paganism.”[95] Little else is known about what the delegates said concerning the merits of Article VI, Section 3 in the summer of 1787. James Madison’s notes make clear that it was Charles Pinckney, a delegate from South Carolina, who moved to bar religious tests. But the historical record is otherwise sparse. Despite the clause’s profound advance for religious freedom, it appears to have prompted scant commentary among the delegates during the convention.[96]

Hamilton did not partake in the discussion about Article VI, Section 3, as he was away in New York on business that week.[97] Nor, if present, would he have been eligible to vote on the measure. His two fellow delegates from New York—aghast at the convention’s push for a stronger national government—had abandoned the proceedings nearly two months earlier, and quorum rules disallowed Hamilton from unilaterally casting New York’s vote on any individual provision of the Constitution. He was, however, afforded the opportunity to lend his signature to the final document that exalted religious equality as a paramount principle, much as the Columbia college charter had done thanks to Hamilton's help earlier that year. With Rhode Island boycotting the convention and Hamilton the sole delegate representing his state, the Constitution was approved by "11 States and Col. Hamilton," as George Washington put it.[98]



In this rendering of the 1787 Constitutional Convention, Hamilton and Franklin in the foreground appear to be sharing a private word. *Source*: Howard Chandler Christy, *Scene at the Signing of the Constitution of the United States*, 1940.

On the very day that the delegates to the Constitutional Convention completed their final draft, three vandals desecrated Charleston's synagogue.[99] Antisemitism soon found new expression after the Constitution was made public and came under the consideration of the states for ratification. Proponents of ratification called themselves Federalists and branded their adversaries Anti-Federalists; many in the latter camp abhorred the prospect of Jews and other religious minorities serving in federal office. Madison remarked to Thomas Jefferson that Article VI, Section 3 provided for a measure of equality that some found disconcerting: "One of the objections in New England was that the Constitution, by prohibiting religious tests, opened a door for Jews, Turks and infidels."[100] Indeed, a number of voices in New England did speak out in opposition to the clause. The *Worcester Magazine* in Massachusetts published an essay that argued "this new constitution is deficient" in part because "there is a door opened for the Jews, Turks and Heathen [*sic*] to enter into public office and be seated at the head of the government of the United States."[101] At the Massachusetts ratifying convention, one delegate voiced exasperation that "a Turk, a Jew, a Roman Catholic, and what is worse than all, a Universalist, may be the President of the United States."[102] A fellow Massachusetts delegate insisted that "a person could not be a good man without being a good Christian."[103] Meanwhile, the *Newport Mercury* recorded how an opponent of the Constitution "had observed something in it truly abominable, which was, that they had so contrived the doors that a Turk or a Jew might go in and out like a Christian."[104]

Antisemitic hostility to the Constitution was not limited to New England. At North Carolina's ratifying convention, a delegate cautioned that the Constitution was "an invitation for Jews and pagans of every kind to come among us," which "might endanger the character of the United States."[105] Even in relatively tolerant New York, a local newspaper warned that the military could become a tool of Jewish interests, for the Constitution "gives the command of the whole militia to the President—should he hereafter be a Jew our dear posterity may be ordered to rebuild Jerusalem."[106] Alarm at the possibility of a Jewish president was sufficiently widespread that newspapers in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire saw fit to reprint the foregoing piece from New York.[107] It is difficult to know the extent to which anti-Jewish fearmongering stemmed from sincere bigotry versus a calculation that arousing the bigotry of others would help derail ratification. Both motives were surely at play in many cases.

In proposing a historic expansion of religious liberty, the framers of the Constitution had unwittingly provoked a torrent of vitriol about Jews and other out-groups. To be sure, Anti-Federalists did not predicate their resistance primarily on eligibility for office. They were more concerned about centralized power in general. Still, a pattern had emerged wherein the forces of antisemitism and Anti-Federalism overlapped.[108] It was against this backdrop that the most prolific champion of the Federalist cause, Alexander Hamilton, launched his bid for ratification of the new Constitution.

6

Statesmanship

AS A FIERCE DEBATE erupted in New York over the Constitution, Alexander Hamilton well understood that prejudice against Jews played a role in resistance to ratification in his home state. He pleaded with a prominent Anti-Federalist congressman from Albany, Abraham Yates Jr., to endorse the Constitution, warning that New York's failure to ratify would "divide the Southern from the Northern states and so divide the Union." Unmoved, Yates replied that he would sooner break up the country than "adopt the Constitution" and thereby "risk a government of Jew, Turk, or Infidel."[1] Anti-Federalists in Yates's mold may have been bigoted, but in a sense they were not wrong—the Constitution, if approved, really *would* benefit Jews by granting them equality in the eyes of the federal government. The Jewish community understood this as fully as the antisemites did. Hamilton and American Jewry thus found themselves aligned on the momentous question of ratification.[2]

Among Hamilton's many contributions to the ratification effort was his primary authorship of what became known as the Federalist Papers. He envisioned a series of essays designed to rally New Yorkers behind the Constitution. To assist in the enterprise, Hamilton first recruited John Jay, who was then the nation's secretary of foreign affairs and had collaborated with Hamilton earlier that year to revise the Columbia charter. They were aided by James Madison, the most influential delegate at the Constitutional Convention and an acquaintance of Hamilton's from the early 1780s when they had both served in Congress. Though Hamilton, Jay, and Madison divided the work and largely wrote independently, they published under a single pseudonym, "Publius," the name of a Roman statesman who helped depose a monarch and establish a republic. Pseudonyms were standard at the time for political debate in print; an essay was supposed to stand on the rigor of its argument rather than rest on the public stature of its author. In the end, the Federalist Papers comprised eighty-five installments, most of which appeared in newspapers between October 1787 and April 1788. Hamilton penned fifty-one of them, churning out his forceful defense of the Constitution at a rate of productivity that was impressive even by his standards.[3]

He also lobbied for the Constitution in less anonymous ways. Hamilton was a delegate at the New York ratifying convention during the summer of 1788 in Poughkeepsie, some seventy miles north of Manhattan. Hostility to ratification in New York was intense; even the chair of the convention was an Anti-Federalist. As the sole delegate in Poughkeepsie to have signed the Constitution in Philadelphia, Hamilton shouldered the primary burden of swaying the state convention toward approval. So impassioned were his pleas that spectators were moved to tears.[4]

Article VII of the Constitution specified that the document would take legal effect if nine of the thirteen states ratified it, and this breakthrough was reached with New Hampshire's approval on June 21, just as New York was beginning its convention.[5] Although the nine-state threshold had been crossed, the ongoing New York convention remained critical. After all, the Constitution would apply only to states that ratified, and given New York's sizable population and geographic centrality, the success of the Union likely hinged on an affirmative vote from the delegates in Poughkeepsie.[6]

As Hamilton labored for ratification in New York, Philadelphia played host to a "Grand Federal Procession," a parade conducted on the Fourth of July to celebrate the nine-state milestone.[7] The event exhibited the Jewish embrace of the Constitution at a time when enthusiasm for the new frame of government was far from universal among Americans. Benjamin Rush—who had been a delegate to the Continental Congress and signer of the Declaration of Independence—marveled at the parade's demonstration of unity across religious divides: "The Rabbi of the Jews, locked in the arms of two ministers of the Gospel, was a most delightful sight." (This "Rabbi" was, in fact, the *hazzan* of Philadelphia's synagogue.) To Rush, these intertwined religious leaders personified the constitutional prohibition on religious tests. "There could not have been a more happy emblem contrived of that section of the new Constitution, which opens all its powers and offices alike not only to every sect of Christians, but to worthy men of every religion," he reflected.[8] A minister interpreted the same sight as "a complete triumph over religious prejudices. The Jew joined the Christian … arm in arm, exhibiting a proof of brotherly affection and testifying [to] their approbation of the new Constitution."[9] The respect for Jews extended to culinary matters as well. At a feast that concluded the day's fete, the Committee of Provisions for the parade had arranged a kosher table with raisins, crackers, and—according to one Jewish participant—a "full supply of soused salmon."[10]

In a similar parade that Federalists organized in New York City later that month, the political stakes were higher. Philadelphia's Grand Federal Procession celebrated a feat already accomplished, but New York had yet to ratify the Constitution. The Federalists in New York City hoped that their parade would galvanize support for the Constitution in a state deeply divided over ratification.[11]

The parade's Committee of Arrangements had scheduled the procession for July 22, but this conflicted with the Fast of Tammuz, a mournful Jewish holiday marking the date that the Romans breached Jerusalem's walls in the year 70 CE. Remarkably, the parade organizers postponed the event for a day so that the city's Jews could partake. Perhaps the Jew most relieved by this turn of events was the artisan Asher Myers, who would now be available to claim the honor of leading the coppersmiths in the procession.[12] One Gentile explained in a letter to a business associate that the purpose of the delay was "to give the Jews an opportunity to join in the festivals, the 22nd being one of their holidays."[13] And another noted to his brother that the "procession is put off to the 23d," which he thought "a great compliment paid the Jews."[14] Indeed. With the state ratifying convention deadlocked, time was of the essence. What's more, Jews comprised little more than 1 percent of New York City's population.[15] The postponement of the parade underscores the strength of the Jewish alliance with the Federalists; such an extraordinary gesture would not have been made for a religious community whose allegiance to the Constitution was in doubt.

If the timing of the event was a courtesy to the Jews, then the substance of it was an effusive homage to New York's premier proponent of the Constitution: Alexander Hamilton. The central feature of the parade was a model warship called the "Hamilton" that rolled on wheels pulled by a team of ten horses. Though much smaller than an actual warship, the twenty-seven-foot "Hamilton" was still large enough to maintain thirty-two guns and about as many sailors. At various points along its journey through Manhattan, the ship would fire thirteen times to recognize the thirteen states of the Union. The "Hamilton" concluded its journey in Bowling Green near the southern tip of the island, where a crowd of thousands cheered its arrival.[16]

New York's tradesmen, who marched in the parade grouped by profession, considered Alexander Hamilton to be the human embodiment of the Constitution. The sailmakers unfurled a flag with a depiction of Hamilton at its center. Grain measurers, too, displayed a flag, featuring the likeness of Hamilton on one side and of George Washington on the other. As for the candlemakers, they opted to place Hamilton and Washington on the same side of their flag, with the image of thirteen candles between the two civic leaders. Each candle bore the name of a state, with those that had already approved the Constitution sharing a common flame and those yet to ratify featuring singular flames. Meanwhile, the flag of the cartmen offered a poetic tribute to "Hamilton" the warship:

> Behold the Federal ship of fame
> The "Hamilton" we call her name
> To every craft she gives employ
> Sure cartmen have their share of joy.[17]

The day culminated with an interdenominational meal that included representation from several of New York's religious communities: Anglican, Lutheran, Calvinist, Presbyterian, Catholic, and Jewish.[18] Meanwhile, Hamilton—the person—was still procuring votes for ratification in Poughkeepsie. Three days after the parade, New York became the eleventh state to endorse the Constitution. The 30–27 vote was the slimmest majority yet of any state ratifying convention.[19]

With the Constitution duly enacted, the first representatives and senators soon convened in the new Congress, and George Washington ascended to the presidency. Congress formally recommended that Washington decree a countrywide day of thanksgiving, and he chose the fourth Thursday of November in what would eventually become a recurring national holiday. His Thanksgiving Proclamation of 1789 called on the American people to "unite" in expressing gratitude to "Almighty God" for "protection" during the war and "for the peaceable and rational manner, in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government … particularly the national one now lately instituted." Washington further gloried in "the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed."[20]

Among those clergy heeding the president's call was the leader of Shearith Israel, Gershom Seixas, who delivered a Thanksgiving sermon to his congregants in New York. Keenly aware that most state constitutions denied a measure of religious freedom that the national Constitution upheld, Seixas did not share the Anti-Federalist fear that a strong central government posed a threat to individual liberty. Instead, his sermon celebrated the federal government for protecting freedom.[21] Seixas praised the Constitution as a legal charter inspired by God himself that ensured equality for Jews. "We are, through divine goodness, made equal partakers of the benefits of government by the Constitution," he affirmed in an allusion to the ban on religious tests for office. It now fell upon Jews, Seixas maintained, to prove themselves worthy of a government that afforded them first-class citizenship. He asked his congregants to "behave in such a manner as to give strength and stability to the laws entered into by our representatives" and "to support that government which is founded upon the strictest principles of equal liberty and justice."[22]

Hamilton—who served with Seixas on the Columbia board—had recently been tapped to run the Department of the Treasury, and Seixas's sermon called upon the members of Shearith Israel to "consider the burden imposed on those who are appointed to act in the executive department." Then came a benediction for government officials: "May the Supreme King of Kings, through his infinite mercies, preserve them, and grant them life, and deliver them from all manner of trouble and danger." The congregants also chanted the festival morning prayer service and concluded with the singing of *Adon Olam*, a hymn that had been a staple of Jewish liturgy for centuries.[23]

That the Jewish veneration of the Constitution was genuine and not just politically prudent was manifest in the constitution that Shearith Israel adopted for itself around 1790, which broke from the synagogue's colonial-era conventions. Before the Revolution, power was concentrated in the hands of a few elite congregants, consistent with the hierarchical structure of Sephardic synagogues back in Europe. Shearith Israel's presidents, together with a board of elders, controlled most congregational matters. To the extent that decisions were made beyond this small circle, only those Jews who paid dues were entitled to vote. Sitting presidents in consultation with the elders chose the succeeding presidents, and dues-paying members alone were eligible to serve as president.[24]

The synagogue's constitution of 1790 reflected the influence of the federal Constitution in both style and substance. Its opening lines echoed the famous "We the People …" preamble: "We the members of the K. K. Shearith Israel …" (K. K. was shorthand for *Kahal Kadosh*, meaning "Holy Congregation"). In contrast to the prewar era, now all men age 21 who adhered to the tenets of the Jewish faith (except indentured servants) "shall be entitled to every right and privilege belonging to this society and are hereby declared to be in every respect on an equality with those now convened." No longer would the board of trustees choose the congregation's presidents. Election of all officers was instead vested in the synagogue members. The new charter was explicit in drawing parallels between the broader political context and Shearith Israel's new mode of self-governance, championing "the principles of equal liberty, civil and religious."[25]

The synagogue's constitution even included a bill of rights animated by the same Enlightenment ideals about sovereignty and liberty that informed the federal Bill of Rights (which the states were still in the process of ratifying). Shearith Israel's version began, "In free states all power originates and is derived from the people, who always retain every right necessary for their well being individually." Among the rights "which ought to be preserved inviolate" for congregants were the prerogative to read from the Torah at services, to have the *hazzan* present at weddings and funerals, to discuss "any subject whatsoever with decency" in synagogue meetings, and to receive a copy of the Shearith Israel constitution.[26] Hamilton's former client Solomon Simson, then serving as the congregation's president, was the most likely architect of the synagogue's 1790 code.[27]

These developments at Shearith Israel were part of a democratic movement at Jewish congregations throughout the country. In Richmond at newly founded Beth Shalome ("House of Peace"), the synagogue's constitution also drew inspiration from the preamble of the federal Constitution: "We the subscribers of the Israelite religion …" Beth Shalome, too, extended equal standing to all of its adult males. Charleston's Beth Elohim congregation ("House of God") soon followed suit. Farther south, in Savannah, Mickve Israel ("Hope of Israel") formulated a code of laws with the democratic tenet that any three congregants could challenge a decision of the board by presenting the matter to the synagogue's membership at large for its collective consideration.[28] The fact that these synagogues used the word "constitution" to describe their new charters is itself revealing of the influence of democratic values on Jewish life. Congregations traditionally had called their governing codes *haskamot*, which roughly translates to "covenants," but in postrevolutionary America, synagogues preferred to use the civic term over the religious one.[29]

Unlike these synagogues' constitutions, the U.S. Constitution did not speak to the question of eligibility for suffrage; that matter was the prerogative of each state to determine for itself. Still, it is telling that Jewish congregations looked to the federal Constitution as a model worthy of emulation *and* simultaneously embraced a relatively democratic system of synagogue governance. This suggests that American Jewry perceived the national Constitution as reflecting the egalitarian ideals of the Revolution, versus the Anti-Federalists who often depicted the Constitution as an elitist scheme that would imperil freedom.[30] George Mason, for instance, was a Virginia delegate to the Constitutional Convention who refused to sign it, predicting that the new frame of government would "produce a monarchy or a corrupt oppressive aristocracy; it will most probably vibrate some years between the two, and then terminate in the one or the other."[31] An Anti-Federalist delegate to South Carolina's ratifying convention employed even more dire language about the Constitution: "It evidently tends to promote the ambitious views of a few able and designing men, and enslave the rest."[32] These kinds of critiques would have sounded erroneous to those Jews who bristled at religious limitations for office at the state level and celebrated the explicit ban on religious tests in the federal Constitution. It was a quintessentially Hamiltonian position for them to believe that an energetic central government could flourish alongside robust individual liberty.[33]

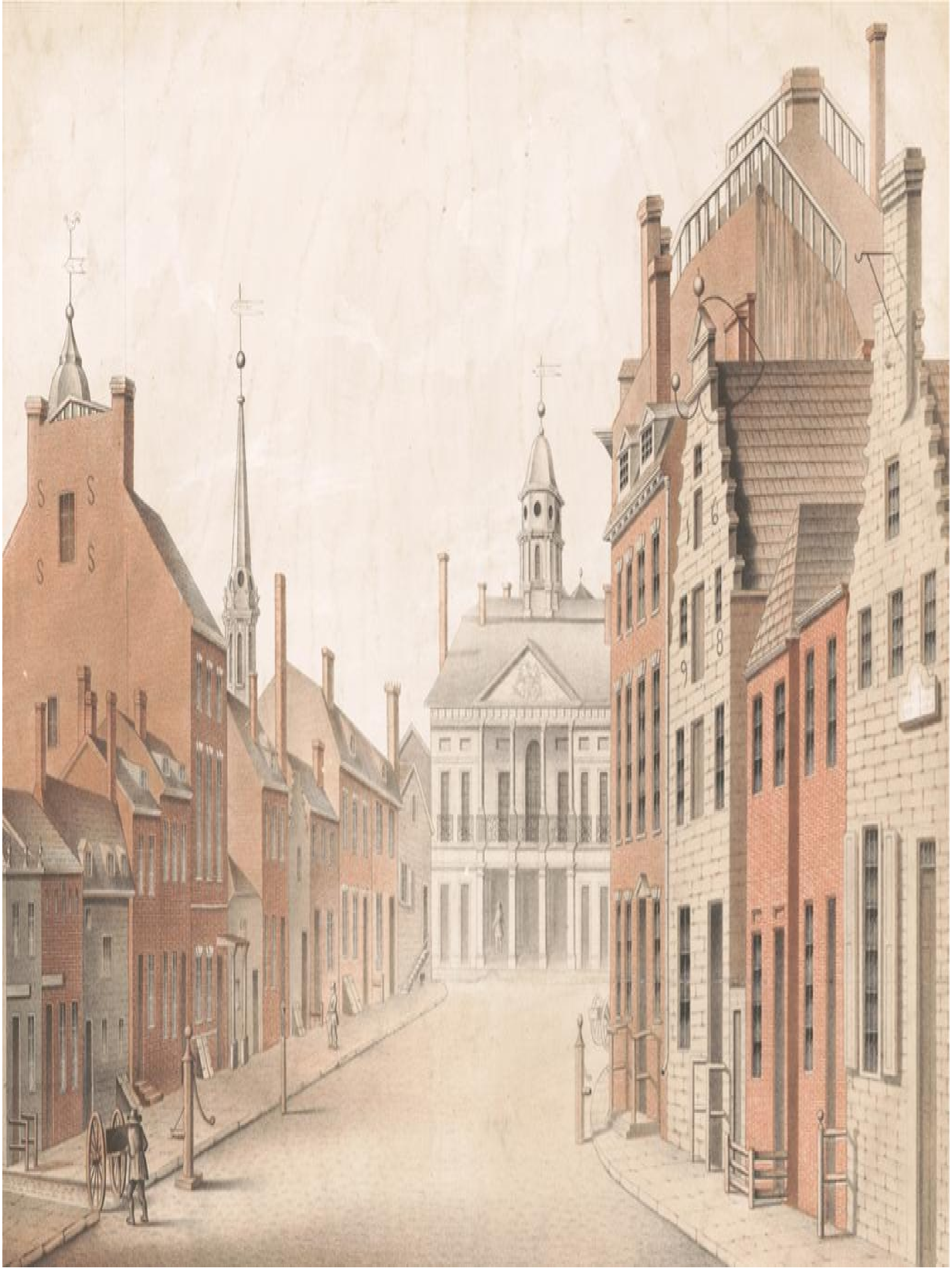
With the U.S. Constitution ratified and the new federal system in effect, Hamilton assumed the role of treasury secretary in September 1789. He took office with a bold economic vision in mind for the young country, one that would prove highly divisive. Hamilton's opponents had already weaponized antisemitism amid the ratification debates, and that tendency only intensified during his tenure at the Treasury. As we will see, tropes about conniving Jewish financiers, bankers, and merchants were sufficiently widespread that they provided ready fodder for those who hoped to derail Hamilton's plans. Motivated by genuine prejudice or a perception that popular antisemitism could be gainfully exploited—or both—a number of his adversaries would repeatedly accuse him of peddling policies to enrich greedy Jews. In all likelihood, no other self-professing Christian in the early republic saw antisemitism invoked against him with greater frequency than did Hamilton.

Reflecting on his appointment to the federal government, Hamilton would later write that he had felt "an obligation to lend my aid towards putting the machine in some regular motion."[34] His modest language belied the enormity of the task that confronted him in those early days of the Washington administration. It was not at all clear that the nation would survive much longer. The political and economic turbulence of the 1780s bred legitimate fears that the country might descend into anarchy. Shays' Rebellion demonstrated in bloody terms that citizens could see violence as a proper remedy for their frustration. Moreover, a sense of a national identity among the citizens was underdeveloped, and civil war between American states seemed a disturbingly real prospect. As the founders were well aware, history was replete with failed attempts to establish republics. The creation of the new central government now offered them a unique, and perhaps final, opportunity to cohere the thirteen states into an enduring union.[35]

Hamilton understood that the fate of the country hinged on the imminent performance of its civic leaders. Shortly after the Constitutional Convention, he predicted that the future depended upon "a wise choice of men to administer the government." While "a good administration will conciliate the confidence and affection of the people," conversely the absence of capable leadership would foment "in the course of a few years" the nation's "dissolution."[36]

Because the government had only recently come into existence and was thus unencumbered by precedent, Hamilton enjoyed enormous latitude to craft policy. This novel occasion to create federal programs from scratch meant that he could succeed on a grand scale—or fail just as spectacularly. A man of towering ambition, Hamilton had the right disposition for the moment. Recall that he had studied monetary and fiscal matters during the war. Now as the steward of the country's finances, Hamilton wasted little time in advancing an audacious agenda to revive the economy.[37]

His sweeping policy prescriptions polarized the American political scene, dividing the cabinet, the Congress, and the country. Resistance to Hamilton was not well organized at first because political parties did not yet exist in the early years of the Washington administration. The Federalists simply thought they *were* the government; in reality, they were a political faction within the government (granted, the dominant one at that moment). Federalists considered their critics to be seditious traitors rather than members of a loyal opposition.[38]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Federal Hall, on Wall Street in lower Manhattan, housed all three branches of the newly instituted national government. *Source*: George Holland, *A View of the Federal Hall of the City of New York, as Appeared in the Year 1797; with the Adjacent Buildings Thereto*. New York: H. R. Robinson. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division [1847].

The anti-Hamilton faction included many Anti-Federalists who had unsuccessfully tried to rally their countrymen against the Constitution during the ratification debates. In the wake of their defeat, Anti-Federalist leaders tended to reconcile themselves to the Constitution, run for office, and combat government overreach from within the system. Opposition to Hamilton was not limited to Anti-Federalists. Joining them were erstwhile Federalists who had advocated ratification but grew increasingly alarmed that Hamilton's vision of federal power was far more expansive than their own.[39] Foremost among these figures in Congress was James Madison, Hamilton's onetime collaborator on the Federalist Papers. Hamilton was saddened by what he considered Madison's betrayal of both personal friendship and political principle.[40] Madison had a staunch ally in Washington's cabinet, Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson. Hamilton and Jefferson each suspected that the other, if left unchecked, would destroy the republic. Perhaps never again in American history would cabinet infighting reach such fevered intensity.[41] The anti-Hamiltonians would become known in time as Republicans.

Hamilton spent his first months as treasury secretary drafting a report for Congress on how the nation should remedy its budgetary woes. America's chief fiscal challenge was the colossal public debt. The national and state governments alike had funded the Revolutionary War with borrowed money that now amounted to $54 million for the federal government and a combined $25 million for the states. On January 14, 1790, Hamilton submitted his fifty-one-page *Report on Public Credit*, a historic blueprint for the country's financial future.[42]

The key insight in the report was that the national debt, when properly managed, could actually become a "national blessing." Hamilton posited that if the country were reliable in its debt payments, then the value of depreciated government bonds would fully recover. Those bonds, in turn, could stimulate the domestic economy by serving as currency. At that time, bartering was commonplace throughout much of the United States, an inefficient practice that hamstrung growth. The report set forth how liquid capital in the form of stable government bonds would allow a nation as rich in entrepreneurial spirit and material resources as America to realize its full potential in trade, manufacturing, and agriculture. Consistent debt payments would also serve to lower interest rates on loans for both the government and private individuals. In addition to suggesting import duties to reduce the debt, the report called for a luxury tax on spirits, wine, coffee, and tea to help ensure the regularity of debt payments.[43]

A centerpiece of Hamilton's scheme was "assumption"—that is, the federal government's assumption of the states' debts into a singular national debt. Hamilton hoped to "cement more closely the union of the states" at a time when the perpetuity of the Constitution was not yet assured and the future unity of the thirteen states remained very much in question.[44] If the nation but not the states were in debt, then creditors would have a significant stake in ensuring the survival of the federal government. It was a deft move on Hamilton's part to leverage an economic problem toward a political goal.[45] Although he was often condemned—in his lifetime and beyond—as a lackey of the moneyed elite, Hamilton's aim was not to exploit the government to advantage the already affluent. Rather, he sought to incentivize those with financial clout to lend their support to the preservation of the republic.

As Congress and the nation debated whether the *Report on Public Credit* should translate into legislation, many of Hamilton's opponents infused their animosity toward his agenda with antisemitism. They accused Hamilton of crafting policies to favor Jews. A "Farmer" writing for the *Pennsylvania Gazette* warned of "the dangerous consequences of the Secretary's funding report to the true interests of our country." Hamilton and his allies—the "Farmer" alleged—were overly concerned that "there is not a Jew nor a broker in London or Amsterdam that will ever trust" the United States for failure to pay the debt. In other words, the Hamiltonians would sooner sacrifice the prosperity of genuine patriots than lose credit with Jews. Not coincidentally, London and Amsterdam were two major centers of Jewish banking at the time.[46] Although this "Farmer" expressly mentioned foreign rather than domestic Jews, given the common view of Jewry as a network of border-crossing swindlers, negative depictions of European Jews could only redound to the detriment of their American coreligionists.

One aspect of Hamilton's plan engendered more antisemitism than any other: government bonds. The government had paid veterans of the war in bonds whose worth was severely eroded by the economic and political uncertainties of the 1780s. Some speculators had bought these bonds from veterans for as little as one-seventh of their face value. But now the prospect of invigorated public credit meant that these bonds could rebound. Even the mere anticipation of Hamilton's report spurred a rise in the value of government bonds. If Congress approved Hamilton's proposal, speculators stood to reap windfall profits.[47]

Hamilton understood the problematic optics of speculators prospering off bonds originally conferred to soldiers. In his report he acknowledged the commonplace argument that the original bondholders should be the ones to collect the rewards but insisted that such a scenario was untenable. The financial marketplace could not function in the future if the government voided contracts from the past, Hamilton explained, because markets rested on the foundational principle that when a buyer acquires an asset, that buyer enjoys all future earnings and suffers all future losses. He pointed out that the text of the Constitution itself expressly upheld the validity of transactions predating its ratification. His report further contended that soldiers who willingly sold their bonds in exchange for cash had showed little faith in the country's future, whereas the speculators who purchased these bonds had demonstrated their confidence in America.[48]

According to some of Hamilton's adversaries, the beneficiaries of these inflated government bonds were sure to be Jews and other voracious groups. A piece in the

Poughkeepsie Journal listed “brokers, speculators, Jews, members of Congress, and foreigners” as exploiters of the “dupes” who “are likely to become the victim of the specious artifice.”[49] In the same vein, the pages of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* featured a satirical verse that referred to Hamilton as “Belcour,” a character in a play who, like Hamilton, was of Caribbean origin:

> “Tax on Tax,” young Belcour cries,
> More imposts and a new excise.
> “A public debt’s a public blessing,
> Which ’tis of course a crime to lessen.”
> Each day a fresh report he broaches,
> That *Spies* and *Jews* may ride in coaches.
> Soldiers and Farmers, don’t despair,
> Untax’d as yet, are Earth and Air.[50]

By alluding to Hamilton’s West Indian roots, and by associating spies with Jews, the poet’s unsubtle implication was that Hamilton and his Jewish allies were not true Americans but malevolent foreign agents conspiring to bilk ordinary veterans and soil tillers. This poem was of a piece with novels of the era that frequently depicted Jews as shady operatives in covert international networks. In an age when Americans were anxious about foreign interference in their fledging republic, Jews were often maligned as rootless outsiders whose loyalty to the country was doubtful.[51]

A column in the *New York Journal* assumed a somewhat different form of antisemitism. It condemned those Christians who were poised to profit off the inflated bonds for *acting* like Jews. “In our Christians, who tampered with the distress of their fellow soldiers, avarice was the homogenous quality of their souls,” the author fumed. Referring to the character of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, he remarked, “Shakespeare’s Jew, the character of a vigorous imagination, is surpassed in avarice by the real character of these Christians.” The editorialist suggested that although these greedy Christian speculators still had their foreskins, they were no better in their behavior than circumcised Jews. He used asterisks to denote male genitalia in lamenting, “The ***** of these people may be unmutilated, and may be in the original Christian state, but their minds are far gone in Israelitish avarice.”[52]

In the face of resistance, Hamilton and his acolytes vigorously lobbied Congress to pass his plan into law. One critic commented that Hamilton’s relentless campaign included “nightly visits—promises—compromises—sacrifices—and threats.”[53] The prospect of federal assumption of states’ debts was proving especially contentious. Those states that had already paid off their war debts decried the notion that other states’ outstanding debts would now become a shared national obligation. In response, Hamilton maintained that the war had been a mutual endeavor, the benefits of freedom were shared by all states, and the debts accrued in the course of winning independence hence comprised a collective responsibility. And at the same time that Congress was torn on the question of assumption, the future location of the country's capital emerged as another controversial issue. The capital was then in New York, and some prominent Virginians were eager to see the locus of federal power migrate considerably southward.[54]

On June 20, 1790, Hamilton sat down for a fateful meal with the two most influential Virginians other than the president: Jefferson, who hosted the meal, and Madison. (There may have been another guest or two.) While Hamilton *wanted* the capital in New York, he *needed* assumption, and was willing to trade away the former to ensure congressional approval of the latter. And so—over a decadent meal of stuffed rooster, French pot roast, and, for dessert, cookies and ice cream—these leaders brokered one of the most significant deals in American political history. Hamilton agreed to use his sway in Congress to transfer the capital to Philadelphia for ten years before a permanent move to a site on the banks of the Potomac River, where it would sit adjacent to Virginia. Negotiations along these lines were already afoot between the Virginia and Pennsylvania delegations. Now with Hamilton's backing, a southern capital would be sure to come to fruition. In turn, Jefferson and Madison (while not openly endorsing assumption) lined up sufficient votes for Hamilton's bill to pass. The debt plan that Hamilton dreamed up became codified as the Funding Act of 1790 in August.[55]

The legislation was an extraordinary feat for the thirty-six-year-old treasury secretary. Although he bargained away to the Virginians the seat of government, Hamilton had won the more important concession on the reach of government. He understood far better than Jefferson and Madison that his funding system would irreversibly consolidate power in the federal state.[56] Hamilton—haunted by the specter of anarchy—had forged a national government potent enough to ensure its own survival. And the Funding Act was merely the beginning of his grander vision.

In December 1790, just four months after the Funding Act garnered approval, Hamilton submitted a second major treatise to Congress, his *Report on a National Bank*. He set forth, in typical Hamiltonian fashion, a deluge of arguments for why America needed a central bank. The country still suffered from a shortage of sound currency; such a bank could increase the money supply by printing paper currency based on deposits of gold and silver. Another advantage of a bank was that it would retain a repository of funds from which the government could draw during emergencies. Tax collection would also become more effective because the bank could loan money to individuals who were otherwise unable to meet their tax obligations and because the proliferation of paper currency would obviate the onerous practice of paying taxes in coin. The bank would be a joint public-private enterprise. Individual investors would hold most of the bank's stock, while the government would become a minority shareholder—albeit one with sufficient weight to influence the bank's course of business. Hamilton noted that the Bank of North America, which he conceived a decade earlier and Robert Morris made a reality, was now operating under a new charter from Pennsylvania that rendered the bank more local than national in character. Hamilton's plan hence required an entirely new bank whose operations extended beyond the limited remit of the Bank of North America.[57]

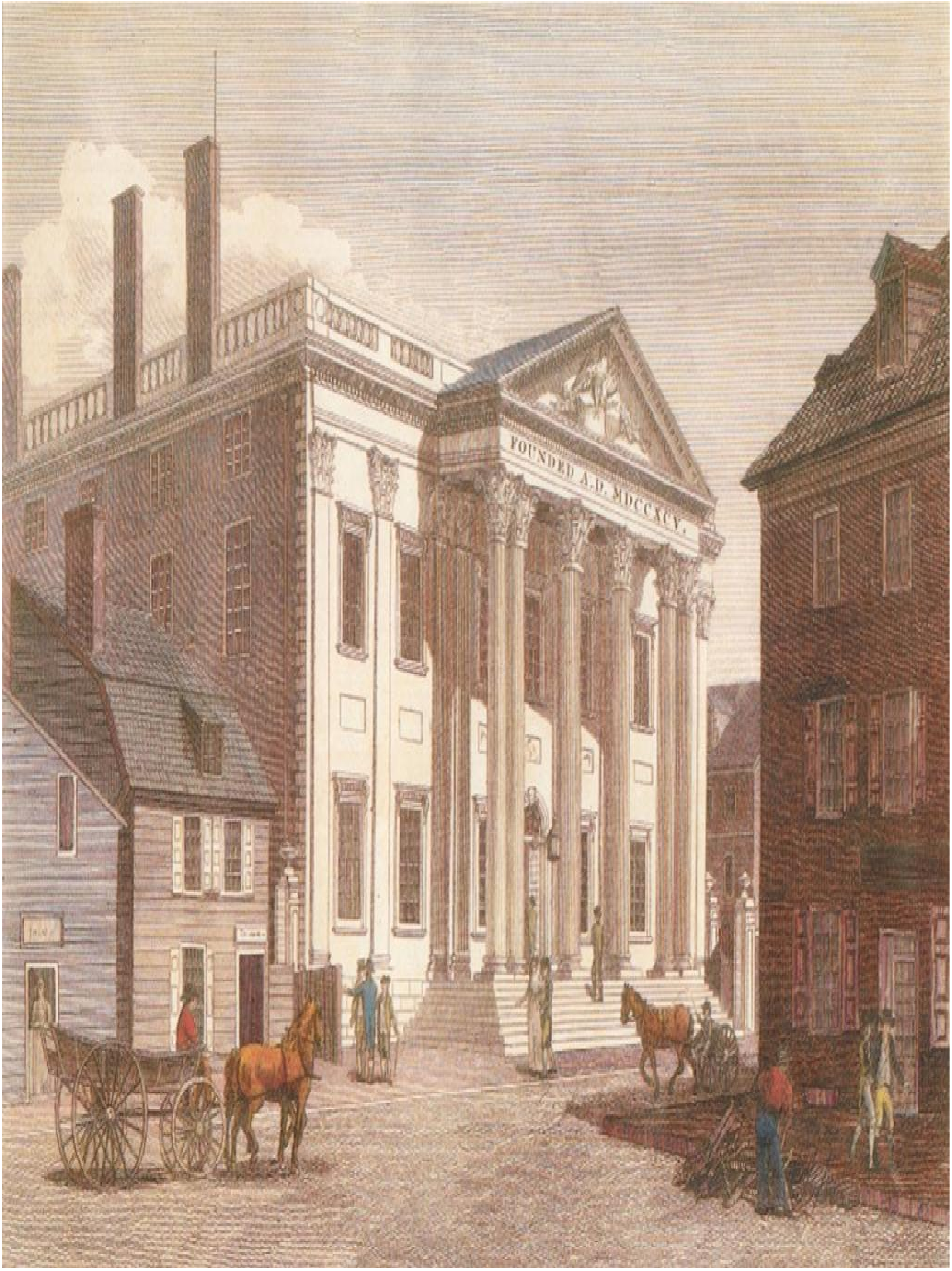
Jefferson and Madison once again emerged as Hamilton's principal adversaries, fearing that his scheme privileged northern mercantile interests over southern agrarian ones. When Congress passed legislation for the Bank of the United States in early 1791, the Virginians had one recourse left—persuade the president to veto the bill.[58] Jefferson wrote to Washington that establishing the bank was unconstitutional. Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution enumerates several financial powers that belong to Congress: "borrow money," "regulate commerce," and "coin money." Section 8 additionally stipulates that Congress can "make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers."[59] Whether a central bank was a necessary instrument for facilitating the enumerated powers hinged on the meaning of "necessary." To Jefferson, any justification for the bank would require a tortured reading of that word. "The constitution allows only the means which are 'necessary,' not those which are merely 'convenient' for effecting the enumerated powers," he opined. Jefferson warned that a loose construction of "necessary" would expand federal authority beyond constitutional limits.[60]

Hamilton issued a forceful rebuttal with characteristic verbosity—a handwritten draft extended fifty-eight pages—for Washington's consideration.[61] "So erroneous a conception of the meaning of the word *necessary* should be exploded," maintained Hamilton. "*Necessary* often means no more than *needful, requisite, incidental, useful*, or *conducive to*." He further insisted that the delegates' intent at the Constitutional Convention was not to unduly debilitate the government with a restrictive reading of "necessary."[62]

Jefferson and Hamilton construed the Constitution differently because they were plagued by different anxieties. Whereas Jefferson dreaded a government of boundless power, Hamilton feared a government too feeble to function. Their battle over the bank set the terms of a larger debate over how to interpret the Constitution—narrowly or broadly—that would engage every successive generation. In 1791, it was the Hamiltonian approach that won over Washington.[63] When the Bank of the United States opened on the Fourth of July of that year, aspiring investors rushed the building, and stock subscriptions were sold out in under an hour.[64]

Yet again, some of Hamilton's antagonists saw in his design a plot to fill Jewish coffers. A contributor to the *Philadelphia General Advertiser* bemoaned, "The only infallible way to wealth in our country is to be neither honest nor industrious.… The late sudden subscriptions to the national bank are ample proofs." He suggested "Amsterdam Jews" were among those lacking in "honesty or industry" who profited from the bank.[65] The piece was signed with the symbolic pseudonym "Square Toes." This reference to thrifty wooden shoes intended to convey to readers that the author counted himself among the honorable poor whom rapacious Jews and other elites supposedly victimized.[66] His association of Jews with the Hamiltonian agenda resonated beyond Pennsylvania, as several newspapers in other states reprinted his commentary.[67]

Even before Congress approved Hamilton’s bank in February 1791, he managed to produce yet another exhaustive treatise on economic matters: his *Report on the Mint*, tendered to Congress in late January. Hamilton was distressed at the condition of coinage. Coins had no uniform value across states. Merchants were hesitant to accept gold and silver coins, which were often alloyed with cheaper metals that debased their value. Counterfeit coins circulated widely.[68]



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Bank of the United States. *Source*: *The City of Philadelphia, in the State of Pennsylvania, North America; as It Appeared in the Year 1800 consisting of 28 Plates Drawn and Engraved by W. Birch and Son*. Published by W. Birch, Springland Cot, near Neshaminy Bridge on the Bristol Road, Pennsylvania, December 31, 1800.

As early as 1781, Robert Morris had discussed the prospect of a mint with Benjamin Franklin, and the following year Congress approved a plan for one. But the endeavor stalled and no mint came to fruition.[69] The Jewish merchant Solomon Simson, a legal client of Hamilton's, sought to revive congressional interest in a national mint in 1785. By that point in time, Hamilton's tenure in Congress had come to an end, and Simson turned to the like-minded John Jay, then serving as the country's secretary for foreign affairs, to forward his blueprint for a mint to lawmakers. While the text of Simson's plan no longer exists, Jay's covering letter to the head of Congress still does: "At the request of Mr. Simson, who sustains the character of a Whig citizen and an honest man, I take the liberty of transmitting to your Excellency, herewith enclosed, a paper containing proposals for establishing a mint."[70] It is difficult to say what, if any, credit is due Simson for spurring Congress to action, but the following year, Congress did pass another law providing for a mint. Yet once again, no mint actually materialized.[71]

Hamilton resuscitated the cause with his *Report on the Mint*, where he lamented the "immense disorder" of coinage in the United States and advised that the creation of a mint would benefit "trade and industry, the value of all property, [and] the whole income both of the State and of individuals."[72] The report was consummately Hamiltonian in its fine-grained detail; he had well-informed thoughts on such matters as the ideal thickness and breadth of coins. It also reflected the systematic thinking of a man who carefully designed his various programs to work in tandem. He explained how a national mint would help facilitate key goals outlined in his earlier reports, such as fortifying public credit.[73]

In 1792, Congress heeded Hamilton's call and passed the Coinage Act, which authorized a mint and instituted the silver dollar as the official unit of lawful currency.[74] Although coin manufacturing would have naturally fit within the purview of the Treasury, the mint was instead placed under the auspices of the Department of State to appease Thomas Jefferson, who had long nursed an interest in coinage.[75] Jefferson stepped down as secretary of state the following year, but the mint remained at the State Department, much to Hamilton's chagrin. Even on Hamilton's final day as treasury secretary in January 1795, he was trying, unsuccessfully, to persuade Washington that the mint ought to relocate to his own department.[76]

Hamilton had greater luck in vouching for a Jewish merchant, Jacob Mark, who sought to furnish copper for the mint. Mark, along with some business partners, had acquired the rights to a copper mine in New Jersey. In 1794, they reached out to Hamilton in the hopes of securing a government contract.[77] "If you have not already ordered the quantity which is required for the mint," Jacob Mark and Company wrote to Hamilton, "we beg to be favored with the preference of your commands."[78] Because coinage fell within the remit of the State Department, Hamilton took up the matter on

Mark's behalf with then–Secretary of State Edmund Randolph, assuring Randolph, "the copper from that mine has always had the reputation of being particularly good."[79] Randolph, in turn, requested that Hamilton investigate "whether the contract can be punctually filled." If so, then Hamilton was free to "enter into an engagement [on] behalf of the United States, at a price not exceeding that of imported copper."[80] In a letter to Hamilton, Jacob Mark and Company confirmed that its mine could indeed expeditiously fill the order for eighty tons of copper and, at an affordable 36 cents per pound, Mark's copper would cost "very considerably less than it can be imported for."[81] Hamilton forwarded this message to Randolph and explained that his own involvement in the transaction could legally go no further, as Congress had reserved to the mint director the power to purchase copper for coinage.[82]

Hamilton's vast financial system succeeded brilliantly, even as antisemitic critics remained stubbornly blind to its merits.[83] In 1793, with the benefits of Hamilton's programs accruing, an obstinate "American Farmer" writing for the *National Gazette* claimed that the nation's debt enriched Jews and passed the burden to future generations. "Borrowing money from the bankers and Jews of Europe" served to "mortgage the labor of posterity to discharge debts thus contracted," he alleged.[84] But in reality, Hamilton had always considered it incumbent on the present generation to reduce the debt. The reliability of payment to the country's creditors was a centerpiece of his plan, and in practice it produced just the tonic effects he predicted. America had been bankrupt when Hamilton became treasury secretary; by the end of his tenure in that office, the United States would boast a credit rating on par with the world's greatest powers.[85]

That Hamilton's opponents often employed antisemitism against his agenda speaks to the persistence of Old World bigotries in the early republic. It also serves as a testament to the Hamiltonian-Jewish alliance. After all, the Jewish mercantile class *did* stand to gain from Hamilton's far-reaching economic vision—but not owing to some nefarious ruse, as his opponents sometimes alleged. Rather, Jews found themselves by virtue of their marginality in the very sectors of the economy that attracted Hamilton's attention. Jewish prominence in trade and banking was a reality rooted partly in the want of access to other professions. Jews could not easily pursue many other careers—attorney, legislator, professor—owing to legal prohibitions and cultural prejudices. In contrast, the financial and commercial spheres that Hamilton invigorated did provide opportunities to industrious outsiders, Jews and Gentiles alike. To deride Hamilton as elitist is to ignore that the marketplace of his day was more of a meritocracy than the courtroom, statehouse, or college.

Hamilton, to be sure, was not a populist crusader. He feared mob rule, as did most of the founders. But his concerns about populism hardly meant that he was endeared to the prospect of a self-contained oligarchy.[86] Hamilton saw danger in both populism and elitism, warning his fellow delegates at the Constitutional Convention, "Give all power to the many, they will oppress the few. Give all power to the few, they will oppress the many."[87] He championed meritocratic principles, unsurprisingly so given his own humble origins. As Hamilton wrote in the Federalist Papers, "There are strong minds in every walk of life that will rise superior to the disadvantages of situation, and will command the tribute due to their merit."[88] Any movement away from hereditary hierarchy and toward meritocracy would tend to improve the condition of talented immigrants—a reality that Hamilton and any number of his Jewish compatriots well understood.

While many Jews were favorably positioned to reap rewards from Hamilton's financial programs under Washington, economic opportunity for Jews was not singular to the United States. Jews had found a measure of material success in other tolerant nations. It was in the realm of civic equality more than commercial prosperity where the Washington administration would take an unprecedented step in the history of the Jewish people.

7

Church and State

WHEN GEORGE WASHINGTON first assumed the presidency, the question of Jews' political rights was still unsettled. The U.S. Constitution's ban on religious tests for office seemed to indicate that national citizenship would be independent of religious identity. Yet the Constitution as it was ratified in 1788 remained silent about the free exercise of faith. Nor did it mention government establishment of religion—that is, whether the federal state could sponsor an official church. Theoretically, the national government could mitigate Jewish gains by encroaching on free exercise or requiring Jews to contribute tax dollars to a state-sanctioned religion. The proposed Bill of Rights promised to preclude those prejudicial outcomes by protecting free exercise and prohibiting an established church. But the process of ratifying the Bill of Rights had ground to a halt in the early days of the Washington administration. It was unclear whether free exercise and disestablishment would ever achieve constitutional status.[1]

George Mason had been the first to advocate a bill of rights, recommending in the closing days of the Constitutional Convention that one be included in the Constitution's original text. Mason's fellow delegates, however, proved resistant for numerous reasons. Having toiled over constitutional language amid the heat of a long Philadelphia summer, they were understandably anxious to return home. Moreover, they feared that drafting a bill of rights would take longer than the few hours Mason anticipated, and that debate over the specifics of such a bill might jeopardize tenuous compromises forged earlier in the convention. Opponents of a bill of rights also believed it was unnecessary, as the Constitution provided for a government of limited power with no authority to infringe on essential freedoms. Some delegates worried that enumerating fundamental rights might, counterintuitively, curb liberty because a finite list of rights could wrongly imply that other unlisted rights *were* subject to government encroachment.[2] Alexander Hamilton stood among those who were concerned that a bill of rights might unwittingly limit freedom.[3]

In rebuffing Mason, the framers failed to foresee that most people, upon reading the product of the convention, would want their most vital liberties enshrined in a bill of rights. The Constitution was ratified with the common understanding that a bill of rights would soon follow. In 1789, Congress approved the Bill of Rights, and the president sent the proposed amendments to the states for their consideration. Yet despite widespread enthusiasm, hopes for ratification soon began to dim. Amendments required approval of three-fourths of the states to take effect. Georgia, Connecticut, and Massachusetts had not ratified the Bill of Rights. The determining vote thus fell to the Virginia General Assembly, where the push for ratification became mired in protracted wrangling between the legislature's upper and lower houses.[4] Meanwhile, religious discrimination persisted at the state level. Most states denied Jews either the right to vote, hold office, or practice law—or some combination thereof.[5]

Jewish-Americans thus had just cause to be anxious about their civil status and eager for affirmation from the country's first president. Soon, leaders of America's various synagogues began discussing how to convey to George Washington their support for him and their aspirations for the Jewish people in the country he now led.[6] The effort began on June 20, 1790, with a circular that Shearith Israel in New York sent to sister congregations in Newport, Philadelphia, Richmond, and Charleston to collect their thoughts on a possible joint letter to Washington. Two of Hamilton's legal clients, Isaac Moses and Solomon Simson, authored the circular.[7] Shearith Israel explained, "We are desirous of addressing the President of the United States in one general address, comprehending all the congregations professing our holy religion in America, as we are led to understand that mode will be less irksome to the president than troubling him to reply to every individual address." In truth, Shearith Israel meant all the congregations save one—the Jews of Savannah had already sent their own letter to the president, and Washington had written a gracious response. Shearith Israel's circular reflected its frustration with the Savannah congregation, bemoaning, "We do not, by any means, conceive ourselves well treated by the Georgians," whose failure to give Shearith Israel any "previous notice" of their solo missive was "hurtful to our feelings."[8]

Washington had already taken his oath of office nearly fourteen months earlier, and in its circular Shearith Israel insisted that it would have contacted the other synagogues sooner about a collective letter but mitigating circumstances intervened. Just what those circumstances were is unclear; the circular vaguely alluded to a "situation" which for "some time past prevented us" from taking timely action. Shearith Israel now requested that the other congregations suggest language for a letter that would then be combined into a single address.[9]

Moses Seixas was the warden of the Touro Synagogue (also known as Yeshuat Israel, meaning "Salvation of Israel") in Newport, and he issued his response to Shearith Israel on July 2. His home state of Rhode Island had ratified the Constitution only weeks earlier. Not even the Rhode Island General Assembly and other important bodies in the state had found opportunity to write to Washington yet. Seixas feared that it would entail "a great degree of indelicacy for us to address the President of the United States previous to any of them and therefore from motives of diffidence, and an ardent desire to avoid giving umbrage, [we] would wish to decline at present."[10]

While the Newport synagogue had ample reason for having delayed an address to Washington, Shearith Israel had none, in Seixas's view. After all, Shearith Israel was situated in New York, a state that had ratified the Constitution two years prior and thus been properly in the Union for the entirety of Washington's presidency. According to Seixas, Shearith Israel's delay was all the more egregious given its status as the first Jewish congregation in America and its location in a city that was, at the time, the national capital. "What plea you can now make to him for your apparent neglect, which almost amounts to disrespect, we cannot conceive," scolded Seixas.[11]

Not only did Seixas reprimand Shearith Israel, but he defended the Savannah Jews for having unilaterally sent a message to Washington. "We do not blame the conduct of the Georgians, they had an undoubted right to do as they did" after Shearith Israel had opted to "procrastinate," he protested.[12] That Moses Sexias's brother, Gershom, was the *hazzan* of Shearith Israel makes Moses's caustic attitude surprising at first glance. Then again, the authors of Shearith Israel's circular were on the board of trustees, a board that had routinely frustrated Gershom Seixas in negotiations over his salary. Moses Seixas's pique may have been a testament to, rather than betrayal of, brotherly loyalty.[13]

Toward the end of the letter, Seixas tempered his tone somewhat. He reserved the possibility that Shearith Israel had deliberately waited until Rhode Island's ratification of the Constitution because New York Jewry wanted to include their Newport coreligionists in a letter to Washington. If that were indeed the case, then the Touro Synagogue would sign on, Seixas offered. Still, he would not accede to Shearith Israel's request that his congregation draft a letter to the president for Shearith Israel's review. Sexias instead directed Shearith Israel to furnish *him* with a draft so that the Newport congregants could respond with "our opinion thereon in a few hours after we have perused it." In closing, he conceded that some of his diction was perhaps too heated: "You'll excuse my language."[14]

Meanwhile, the Beth Elohim congregation in Charleston was similarly irked by Shearith Israel. Beth Elohim had sent a draft letter on July 15 for Shearith Israel to incorporate into a joint address. When Shearith Israel failed to acknowledge receipt in due time, Beth Elohim complained, "We are left in the dark."[15]

As the first synagogue in America, Shearith Israel was the foundational congregation that had served as a model for—and provided money to—Jewish communities along the Atlantic seaboard. But the congregations in Savannah, Newport, and Charleston illustrate how Shearith Israel did not enjoy blind deference from other synagogues. An aversion to hierarchy was part of what made American Jews distinct from their coreligionists in Europe and the Middle East, where Jewish authority was not so decentralized.[16]

With Shearith Israel's attempt at a collective letter showing little momentum, the Touro Synagogue of Newport received news that prompted Moses Seixas to begin writing his own address to the president, independent of the other synagogues—George

Washington was coming to Rhode Island. The president was slated to visit Newport, the state's capital city, where Seixas would be afforded an opportunity to read aloud a letter on behalf of his congregation in Washington's presence.

It is not without irony that this event, which would prove of great historical significance owing to the famous reply it elicited from Washington, came at an otherwise trying time for Newport and its Jews. The war had resulted in the evacuation of much of the city's population, especially of Jews faithful to the Patriot cause. British troops had destroyed many buildings, and postwar recovery was slow in coming to Newport. In 1790, the Jewish community, like the city at large, was still a poor imitation of its earlier self.[17]

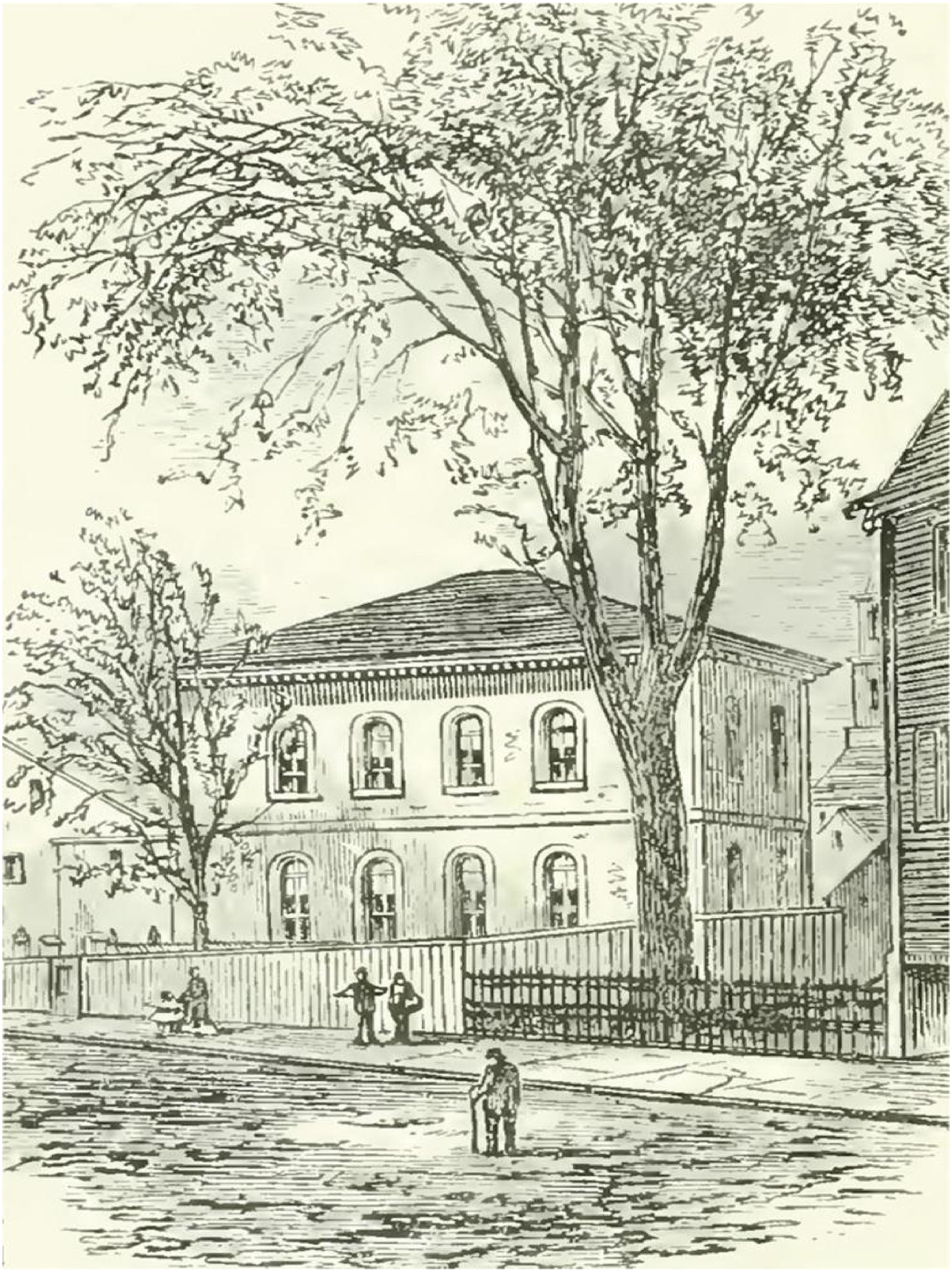
Washington chose to make a celebratory trip because Rhode Island finally had ratified the Constitution. That Rhode Island became the last of the original thirteen states to do so was unsurprising. The state was something of a problem child in the early republic. Under the Articles of Confederation, which required unanimity among the states for amendments, Rhode Island sank more than one endeavor that otherwise enjoyed broad support. In so doing, the state unwittingly illustrated the shortcomings of the Articles and inadvertently helped hasten the call for the Constitutional Convention. Rhode Island was the only state that declined to send delegates to Philadelphia in the summer of 1787.[18] And even though in 1788 the Constitution garnered the approval of enough states to take effect, Rhode Island refused to ratify for another two years. Dubbed "Rogue's Island" by its critics,[19] the state had a unique political culture and economic system that made it fiercely protective of its autonomy.[20] But faced with the prospect of being treated as a foreign country, and thus subject to import duties, Rhode Island belatedly ratified the Constitution in May 1790.[21]

Washington left New York by boat on August 15 and headed east through Long Island Sound toward Newport.[22] A number of dignitaries joined the president on his excursion, including a U.S. Supreme Court justice, the governor of New York, two congressmen, and Hamilton's rival in the cabinet, Thomas Jefferson.[23] On the morning of August 17, expectant Newport residents spotted the ship approaching the harbor. The townsfolk quickly went into motion, raising the state flag, ringing bells, and firing thirteen cannons in honor of the states of the Union.[24]

Washington and his cohort were greeted at the wharf by a committee of leading citizens.[25] During his ensuing tour of Newport, the president was almost certainly shown the local synagogue, as it was the best preserved building in a city otherwise ravaged by war.[26] A contemporary magazine noted of Newport, "The whole appearance of the place is shattered and out of repair" and its "churches have not much of the beauties of architecture to boast of." However, "the Jews' synagogue is the most ornamented of them all," with a "rich and elegant" interior featuring impressive brasswork.[27]

While in Newport, Washington met an elderly but entrepreneurial Jewish resident named Jacob Isaacks. The septuagenarian Isaacks had pioneered a technique for desalinating ocean water, thereby making it safe “for all common and culinary purposes,” according to the *Newport Herald*. Isaacks gifted a fresh bottle of his water to the president, who was reportedly “pleased to express himself highly satisfied therewith.”[28] Lest Washington entertain any doubts about the potability of the bottle’s contents, Isaacks also handed him two certificates from local townsmen vouching for his purification process.[29]

A formal banquet with eighty attendees commenced at 5:00 p.m. in the State House.[30] As these were years of scarcity for this once bustling seaport, local families had to volunteer tableware from their homes so that every dish, goblet, and pitcher at the supper would be silver.[31] Thirteen toasts followed the meal, as was the tradition in that era. Participants raised their glasses to such admired subjects as the U.S. Constitution, the fallen soldiers of the Revolution, and the women of America. “May the last be the first,” rang one toast, expressing the hope that the last state to ratify the Constitution would be the first in its defense. A local federal judge, Henry Marchant, offered the evening’s final toast to “the man we love,” and those present stood up in Washington’s honor.[32] The president and his contingent retired after dinner to an upscale boardinghouse, where they slept two or more men to a room, except for Washington, who enjoyed private quarters. He slumbered under a blue quilt made of silk (which no subsequent guest would be allowed to use until another president, Rutherford B. Hayes, visited Newport eighty-nine years later).[33]



Touro Synagogue. *Source*: Samuel Adams Drake, *Nooks and Corners of the New England Coast*. New York: Harper, 1875.

The next morning, the community organized a series of orations to commemorate the occasion. Judge Marchant was scheduled to speak first, but he became overwhelmed by the moment and someone else stepped in to give his remarks. An address from the Christian clergy was then read aloud. Finally, Moses Seixas delivered not one but two speeches, the first in his capacity as master of the local Masonic fraternity known as King David's Lodge—Washington was himself a Mason—and the second as warden of the Touro Synagogue.[34]

Amid all their ritual and secrecy, Masonic lodges were foremost social gatherings where men found respite from their professional and familial obligations. That Seixas was Jewish and an officer at a lodge named after a legendary Israelite king was not coincidental; Jewish colonists had established King David's Lodge some twenty years earlier. There were Jewish masons on both sides of the Atlantic. Unlike religious institutions, Masonic lodges were open to Jews and Gentiles alike, thereby providing a unique space where a Jew could retain his religious identity while cultivating ties with those Christian neighbors who were amenable to interfaith friendship.[35] Seixas's address from King David's Lodge to Washington comprised a short series of pleasant platitudes, praising the president's "exemplary virtues and emanations of goodness."[36]

He then turned to his second oration of the day, this one on behalf of the Jewish community to Washington. "Permit the children of the Stock of Abraham to approach you with the most cordial affection," Seixas opened. After celebrating that the "God of Israel" had "shielded your head in the day of battle," he contrasted the denial of rights for Jews in the past with the commitment to political equality that the Constitution seemed to promise: "Deprived as we heretofore have been of the invaluable rights of free citizens, we now … behold a Government, erected by the majesty of the People—a Government, which to bigotry gives no sanction, to persecution no assistance—but generously affording to all liberty of conscience, and immunities of citizenship."[37] Seixas's remarks were, in some sense, aspirational. Although the Constitution's explicit repudiation of religious tests for office suggested that Jews (and other religious minorities) were in fact entitled to first-class citizenship, the political climate remained worrisome, with most state constitutions discriminating against Jews and ratification of the federal Bill of Rights still languishing. Seixas's speech embodied the Jewish hope that their national government did indeed see them as full-fledged citizens.

Following Seixas's address, the president and his coterie headed toward the wharf, as they were due to sail to Providence. Washington passed a store during this walk and sent an aide inside to purchase a pair of gloves. The shopkeeper stood at the window, mesmerized by the sight of the nation's first head of state on her street. She was unaware that the man requesting to see her stock of gloves did so on Washington's behalf and refused to serve him, fixated as she was on the president outside. The failure of the aide to speedily return prompted Washington to enter the store himself. Gloves were quickly furnished. No one else had such a hold on the American people; as Jews like Moses Seixas understood, no one else could lend greater prestige to the principle of religious liberty.[38]

After Washington and his travel companions boarded their boat, a final salute of thirteen cannons thundered as they passed Newport's fort.[39] Their ensuing visit to Providence was brief, for pressing business awaited the president—the relocation of the capital from New York to Philadelphia.[40] But despite the claims on Washington's attention in the aftermath of his trip, he found time to issue a response to the Touro Synagogue. The president had a critical opportunity to give voice to his belief in civic equality for Jews. Washington well understood that his words would reach far more people than just Moses Seixas and his fellow congregants. Presidential replies to constituents were often reprinted in newspapers and thus an essential means by which Washington communicated the policy of his administration to the country.[41] The message that he crafted to Newport's Jews would become among the most important in the annals of religious freedom.

Washington mixed his own wording with language borrowed from Seixas's oration, affirming, "All possess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship."[42] This marked the first time in world history that the head of a modern state recognized Jews as citizens.[43] He continued in the letter's most famous passage: "It is now no more that toleration is spoken of, as if it was by the indulgence of one class of people that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights. For happily the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens."[44] That the president lifted this phrasing nearly verbatim from Seixas's speech could leave the Jews of Newport with no doubt that their aspiration and the position of the Washington administration were one and the same.[45]

The letter's distinction between mere religious toleration and genuine religious liberty is significant. Toleration is probationary; liberty is permanent. The process of Jewish "emancipation"—that is, the granting of citizenship—in Europe illustrates the precarious nature of toleration. When European nations gradually emancipated their Jews (beginning with France in 1791 and culminating with Romania in 1923), the measures were often provisional. The specter of reversal loomed. Citizenship was indeed an indulgence.[46] In the Newport letter, by contrast, Washington exalted religious liberty as an inherent natural right, signaling to Jews that the free exercise of their faith was not simply tolerable for the moment—it was an inviolable element of life in the American republic. The Newport letter stands as close to a formal emancipation of Jews as can be found in the history of the presidency.[47]

Washington closed his message to the Touro Synagogue with language from his favorite verse in the Hebrew Bible. He assured Newport's Jews that in this new nation, "everyone shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig-tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid."[48] The "vine and fig-tree" reference, from Micah 4:4, appears no fewer than thirty-seven times in Washington's writings.[49] Invoking a line from the Hebrew Bible doubtlessly helped the Christian president identify common ground with his Jewish correspondents. The Newport letter reached a broad readership, appearing in newspapers in Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Maryland, Virginia, South Carolina, and, of course, Rhode Island.[50]

In some respects, Washington's authorship of what is arguably the most important document in American Jewish history may seem surprising. He had not been especially engaged with Judaism or Jewry. Unlike other founders, Washington drew no parallels between Americans and ancient Jews, offered little comment on Jewish suffering, and had sparse contact with Jewish people.[51] But if discussion of Jews or their faith is strikingly absent from Washington's writings, then so too is any hint of the religious prejudice that mars the records of so many other founders. At the close of the Revolution, he had voiced his aspiration that America would serve as "an asylum for the poor and oppressed of all nations and religions."[52] And Washington showed fidelity to that sentiment in his private life. In one of his only references to "Jews" in his correspondence, he asked an aide to seek out the services of a pair of tradesmen and was explicit that neither national origin nor religious identity should raise any bar to hiring someone with talent. "If they are good workmen, they may be of Asia, Africa, or Europe," Washington stipulated. "They may be Mahometans, Jews, or Christian[s] of any sect—or they may be Atheists."[53] The Newport letter embodied that same characteristic broad-mindedness.

Historians speculate about who in Washington's circle most likely influenced his views in the Newport letter.[54] While scholars have not previously considered Hamilton, he is a compelling candidate for several reasons. No one else in the president's orbit could claim closer ties to the people and faith of Judaism. Hamilton also had a preexisting relationship with the Seixas family, having served alongside Moses's brother, Gershom, on the Columbia board.[55]

What's more, the crucial point in the Newport letter that bare tolerance of minority faiths falls short of genuine religious freedom was a distinction to which Hamilton himself was sensitive. In a government report from 1791, he praised "a perfect equality of religious privileges" as "far more precious than mere religious toleration." Hamilton predicted that people would "flock from Europe to the United States" in part to enjoy the kind of true religious liberty unknown in the Old World.[56] Indeed, he personally knew a number of Jewish immigrants to America who fit that very description.

The Newport letter also spoke directly to the notion of Jewry no longer living in fear—"there shall be none to make him afraid"—which would have been particularly meaningful to Jews given their long history of persecution. It was a history familiar to Hamilton. He marveled at Jewry's improbable continuity through the millennia, observing in an essay that the "progress of the Jews … from their earliest history to the present time has been and is entirely out of the ordinary course of human affairs. Is it not then a fair conclusion that the cause also is an *extraordinary one*—in other words, that it is the effect of some great providential plan?"[57] To Hamilton, the Jews' unlikely survival was a sure sign of God's favor.

In the months following the Newport letter, the synagogues of New York, Richmond, Charleston, and Philadelphia persevered in their efforts to formulate a joint address to Washington. Finally, they produced one. With the president in the new capital of Philadelphia, a local Jew named Manuel Josephson found occasion to read aloud this collective letter to Washington on December 13, 1790. The missive reflected the esteem with which Jews held both the president and the Constitution he had helped shepherd into existence. As the "Leader of the American Armies," Washington had "opened the way to the reign of freedom, but never was it perfectly secure, till your hand gave birth to the federal Constitution, and you renounced the joys of retirement to seal by your administration in peace, what you had achieved in war."[58] The following day, Josephson sent word to Shearith Israel that Washington took no umbrage at New York Jewry on account of their delay in addressing him. "I made it a point to inform the President verbally, the reasons of your Congregation's seeming remissness in not having paid their respects before," relayed Josephson, "and he appeared perfectly satisfied."[59]

In Washington's written reply—given to Mikveh Israel but addressed to all the congregations that signed the joint letter—he imputed to the American people his own embrace of pluralism: "The liberality of sentiment toward each other, which marks every political and religious denomination of men in this country, stands unparalleled in the history of nations." Given the enduring bigotry against Jews and other dissenters, the president's statement was perhaps more hopeful than literal. Washington closed his response by conveying his wish to the Jews that "eternal blessings" would "rest upon your congregations."[60] Newspapers in multiple states published the president's reply.[61] With this letter, in tandem with the earlier missives to Savannah and Newport, Washington had addressed every synagogue in the United States. His embrace of a religiously diverse America—one that he expressly extended to the country's Jews—created a model for inclusivity in the critical early years of the republic when the power of precedent was at its zenith.

Notwithstanding these synagogues' initial bickering over a joint letter and a culture of decentralized religious authority, it is revealing that several congregations spread out across the country chose to speak with a single voice. The Jews of New York, Philadelphia, Richmond, and Charleston consciously presented themselves as a national religious community to the national government. Massachusetts was founded by and for Puritans, Pennsylvania by and for Quakers, Maryland by and for Catholics—but the Jews had no colony of their own. With the Revolution, colonies turned into states, many of which continued the colonial tradition of protecting the rights of their majorities while excluding minorities like Jews from the full prerogatives of citizenship. It is only natural, then, that Jewish loyalties would principally lie with the federal government that bestowed the very equality so often denied by the states. At a time when many citizens felt an allegiance to their individual state first and the country second, the Jews generally maintained a nationalistic orientation consistent with that of Hamilton, who fervently believed that domestic needs had to supersede local ones for the American experiment to succeed.[62]

The Newport letter stands as Washington's most vivid expression of religious pluralism, and his accepting attitude toward Jews was certainly of a piece with Hamilton's own. In the abstract, it might seem that those who showed the most sympathy for minority faiths would have favored the separation of church and state.[63] Yet Washington and Hamilton upend that assumption. Fully committed to religious liberty for all, they *also* believed that faith could be a boon to the civic health of the republic. It was in Washington's canonical Farewell Address of 1796—which Hamilton ghostwrote—that we find their most explicit articulation of that view.[64]

Washington originally considered stepping down after one term as president, having grown weary of partisan squabbles and feeling the effects of ill health. In 1792, he tapped James Madison to write an address for him commemorating his departure from office. But several presidential aides, Hamilton included, persuaded Washington that only his continued service as head of state could stave off the rupture of a still fragile republic. And so Washington agreed to stay on for a second and final term; Madison's manuscript was shelved for the time being.[65]

Four years later, in February 1796, the president first indicated to Hamilton—by then a private citizen practicing law—that his help was needed in preparing what would become known as the Farewell Address.[66] Washington's decision to solicit Hamilton is unsurprising, not only because the president had recently fallen out with Madison but also because Washington had long leaned on Hamilton to draft written communications.[67] In the course of the Revolutionary War, Hamilton was an invaluable ghostwriter for Washington. Hamilton continued to pen documents for him during his administration, including diplomatic letters, speeches to Congress, and official proclamations.[68] Both as aide-de-camp in the 1770s and as presidential advisor in the 1790s, Hamilton enjoyed substantial leeway in shaping the content and tenor of Washington's language. Washington had the humility to recognize Hamilton's intellectual talent and to see that talent as an asset rather than a threat.

After Washington made a few alterations to the Madison draft from 1792, he sent that updated version to Hamilton to use as a starting point. Hamilton, naturally, wanted to discard Madison's words and compose his own. But he was diplomatic enough to produce two versions of an address for Washington's consideration—the first, entirely his own creation; the second, a revised draft of the Madison text.[69] Eliza Hamilton would later pridefully recall of her husband, "The whole or nearly all the 'Address,' was read to me by him as he wrote it and a greater part if not all was written by him in my presence."[70]

Hamilton first submitted his wholly original address to Washington and waited several weeks before forwarding his Madison rewrite. This was probably an intentional tactic to ensure that Washington would have time to fully assimilate Hamilton's own draft into his thinking; the president would thus be more likely to dismiss the Madisonian alternative when it finally reached his desk. Indeed, Washington ultimately did conclude that the Hamilton draft was "more dignified." As was typical when Washington received a ghostwritten document from an aide, he removed some wording, added new thoughts, and refined the diction. Over the next several weeks, the president and his former treasury secretary continued to exchange drafts. The Farewell Address is a consummate example of the collaborative dynamic between the two men.[71]

Notably, Madison's draft from 1792 made no mention of religion. In 1796, by contrast, Hamilton crafted language exhibiting a clear conviction that faith was crucial to the civic vitality of the country: "To all those dispositions which promote political happiness, religion and morality are essential props." His draft asked rhetorically, "Can we in prudence suppose that national morality can be maintained in exclusion of religious principles? Does it not require the aid of a generally received and divinely authoritative religion?"[72]

The foregoing passage was one of many where Washington tweaked Hamilton's phrasing. In its final form, the Farewell Address—printed in newspapers rather than read aloud—differed slightly from its original version: "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports." The rhetorical questions became declarative statements. "Let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion," the Farewell Address warned. "Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."[73]

Hamilton's introduction of this passage on religion was not an anomalous contribution from someone otherwise unconcerned with matters of faith. Elsewhere, he decried the French Revolution as a "volcano of atheism."[74] Hamilton also lauded Americans for their "just reverence for religion."[75] To be sure, he was not especially invested in the practice of Christianity—despite the piety of his wife, Hamilton never joined a church[76]—but his lack of interest in the Christian faith should not be mistaken for ambivalence toward religion generally.[77]

Hamilton's language in the Farewell Address touted the role of religion in advancing civic goals but did not go so far as to endorse the reverse: government support for faith. Washington, however, had already taken that step. More than a decade earlier, he demonstrated how religious pluralism might coincide with state funding of religious institutions.[78] In 1785, the Virginia General Assembly debated a bill that would have used public dollars to bankroll Christian education. Washington proved amenable to this kind of legislation—but only if Jews, Muslims, and other dissenters were exempt from taxation that would subsidize Christian teachers. In his words, “I am not amongst the number of those who are so much alarmed at the thoughts of making people pay towards the support of that which they profess, if of the denominations of Christians, or declare themselves Jews, Mahomitans or otherwise, and thereby obtain proper relief.”[79] The bill, ultimately, did not pass into law.[80] We should be wary of projecting Washington’s views in their totality onto Hamilton. Both men were pluralists, and both saw religion as key to civic well-being, but Washington alone expressed comfort with public monies subsidizing Christian institutions.

The Hamiltonian and Washingtonian models of church-state relations were similar, then, if not quite identical. Neither approach was necessarily at odds with the Establishment Clause in the federal Bill of Rights. The First Amendment begins, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion …” Americans in the founding era agreed that this language plainly prohibits the federal government from recognizing any particular denomination as an official state faith. Consistent with that common understanding, neither Washington nor Hamilton ever endorsed the idea of a state-sanctioned religion. There was no uniform opinion in their day on any additional meaning that might be wrung from the Establishment Clause. While a number of commentators in the early republic maintained that the text wholly divorces church and state, that interpretation would not become dominant until the twentieth century.[81] Another reading of the Establishment Clause, one in conformity with the Farewell Address, holds that religion can indeed bolster civic life so long as the federal government does not establish a church.

Some Republicans sought to exploit antisemitic sentiment in their bid to oppose Hamilton and the Federalist Party on the issue of church-state relations. They argued, erroneously, that Federalists favored a total unity of church and state; these Republicans further claimed that such an approach was a nefarious revival of the ancient Israelite government, wherein the same officials had been invested with power over religious and civil matters alike. A Republican pamphleteer, Abraham Bishop, traced a supposed lineage beginning with ancient Jews, continuing with the Catholic Church, and culminating with leading Federalists of his own day. “Federalism passed by another name among the Jews and Catholics” but “has always been found in a union of church and state,” he insisted. Bishop maintained that this Federalist agenda was used to justify one of Hamilton’s signature policies—the national assumption of states’ debts—by falsely lending it the imprimatur of religion: “Church and state has taught the blessedness of a national debt.” According to Bishop, Federalists also conferred upon Hamilton himself an aura of religious credibility by gushing over the “resemblance between General Hamilton and his army and Michael and his angels,” an allusion to Hamilton’s stint as a general during the Adams administration.[82]

The Baptist clergyman Nehemiah Dodge resorted to similarly anti-Jewish polemics. In an address about the alleged Israelite origins of Federalist policy, he referred to Federalists as “those Federal gentleman, who are fond of blending church and state in this nation because they were *one* in the Jewish nation.” Dodge suggested that proponents of such church-state blending were “most likely to promote rulers, and laws, favorable to their Jewish plan.”[83]

Both Bishop and Dodge were distorting the Federalist position. Whatever ideological diversity existed within Federalist circles, no faction of the party supported a theocratic government.[84] And Hamilton, for his part, never endorsed a “union” or “blending” of church and state. Rather, he took the much more moderate stance that religious rectitude was important to the nation’s welfare. It is a testament to the lingering antisemitism of the early republic that Hamilton’s opponents believed they could score political points by conflating him and his party with ancient Jews.[85]

Hamilton did once allude to the Hebrew Bible to make a constitutional argument, but it was in defense of the separation of powers, not church-state unity. In an 1802 piece in the *New-York Evening Post*, a paper that Hamilton founded, he affirmed as a “fundamental maxim of free government” that “the three departments of power, ought to be separate and distinct.” Drawing on biblical imagery, he continued, “In a representative republic, the legislative department is the ‘Aaron’s Rod’ most likely to swallow up the rest.” His symbolism here was drawn from Exodus 7:10: “Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent.”[86] As the most widely disseminated text of the era, the Bible offered a singularly useful reference point for readers.[87]

The Hamiltonian and Washingtonian models were not the only approaches to church-state relations in the early republic, nor would they win out in the course of American constitutional history.[88] Jefferson and Madison adopted a different philosophy that sought to keep government and religion mutually exclusive. And just as Hamilton and Washington illustrate that sympathizers with minority faiths could see a role for religion in civic affairs, Jefferson and Madison reveal how advocates of the separation of church and state could be tainted by antisemitic bias.

For Jefferson, religious freedom could only flourish in the absence of government involvement in faith.[89] “Religion is a matter which lies solely between Man and his God,” he insisted. “He owes account to none other for his faith or his worship.” Fearing that state engagement with faith would inevitably lead to the coercion of religious belief, Jefferson declared, “The legitimate powers of government reach actions only, and not opinions.”[90] The Hamiltonian notion of a harmony between the religious and the civic had no place in the Jeffersonian worldview.

As politicians are apt to do, Jefferson saw in the Constitution a vindication of his preferred ideology. He penned a letter to a Baptist association—more than a decade after the First Amendment was ratified—in which he maintained that the Establishment Clause had constructed “a wall of separation between Church and State.” Jefferson thereby coined the phrase that only much later would become synonymous with the actual text appearing in the First Amendment. To be sure, Jefferson’s interpretation of the Establishment Clause resonated with some people in his age, Madison among them, but it did not garner universal acceptance.[91]

Although Jefferson is celebrated today as a champion of religious liberty, his attitudes about Judaism and Jewry were more complicated than popular memory of him might suggest. Much of his private correspondence with non-Jews exhibits a measure of hostility toward the Jewish faith and its people. Jefferson told a Christian protégé of his that the Jewish priesthood in antiquity comprised a “bloodthirsty race” that was “cruel and remorseless.” These priests peddled “superstition” under the false guise of divine revelation. “The whole religion of the Jews” was based on “the fumes of the most disordered imaginations” masquerading as “special communications of the Deity.” These myths, as Jefferson saw them, not only corrupted biblical Judaism but had “preserved their credit with the Jews of all subsequent times.”[92] Jefferson similarly remarked to the former secretary of the Continental Congress that ancient Jews had “vicious ethics.”[93] And in a letter to Benjamin Rush, Jefferson derided the Jewish understanding of God in the Bible as “degrading and injurious.”[94] His lack of respect for Judaism was of a piece with his concerns about organized religion generally.[95]

Jefferson also analogized his political nemeses to Jews. Writing to a fellow Republican about the Federalists, he commented, “They are marked, like the Jews, with such a peculiarity of character.”[96] And in a letter to the French hero of the American Revolution, Marquis de Lafayette, Jefferson claimed that Quakers and Jews alike had failed to embrace an American identity; instead, the Quakers were “dispersed, as the Jews” and “they still form, as those [Jews] do, one nation, foreign to the land they live in.”[97]

To be fair, during Jefferson’s tenure as president, he appointed a Jew to serve as the U.S. marshal in Maryland, a significant federal law enforcement post.[98] And whatever skepticism Jefferson expressed about Judaism and Jewry in private correspondence with Christians did not resurface in his personal interactions with Jews. Indeed, Jefferson’s letters to Jews indicated an awareness of the persecution that their people had long endured. After the Jewish leader Mordecai Noah sent Jefferson a speech he had given, Jefferson thanked him for sharing “valuable facts in Jewish history” and acknowledged of the Jewish people, “Your sect, by its sufferings, has furnished a remarkable proof of the universal spirit of religious intolerance, inherent in every sect, disclaimed by all while feeble, and practiced by all when in power.”[99] And upon receiving a similar missive from a Jewish doctor in Georgia, Jefferson replied that he was “happy in the restoration of the Jews particularly to their social rights.” He further expressed his “hopes they will be seen taking their seats on the benches of science, as preparatory to their doing the same at the board of government.”[100] This latter sentiment, while intended as a compliment, implied that Jews were not yet sufficiently cultivated for political leadership.[101]

Despite some misgivings about the religion and people of Judaism, Jefferson believed that everyone—Jews included—deserved to practice their faith freely. In a bid to attract immigration to Virginia in 1776, he sponsored an unsuccessful bill that would have extended citizenship in the state to foreigners, including members of minority faiths.[102] Jefferson scribbled "Jews advantageous" on the back of a copy of the bill.[103] He considered among his greatest achievements his authorship of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, which protected the free exercise of faith and made the state government blind to religion. In the words of the statute, "All men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities." While free exercise was commonplace across the United States, the language about protecting "civil capacities" differentiated Virginia from a number of other states where Jews could practice their faith but, for doing so, faced disqualification from the ballot box, state legislature, and legal profession. Jefferson later affirmed in his autobiography that the statute was "meant to comprehend, within the mantle of its protection, the Jew and the Gentile, the Christian and Mahometan, the Hindu, and infidel of every denomination."[104] If Jefferson was an important defender of Jews' right to religious freedom, it was a role he played despite his dim view of Judaism and mixed take on its practitioners.

James Madison, too, flatly rejected the Hamiltonian position that religion is an essential element of civic prosperity. Madison was aware of those who felt that without an integration of "religious and civil polity, neither could be supported," and he condemned such a conceit as an "error so long rooted in the unenlightened minds of well meaning Christians, as well as in the corrupt hearts of persecuting usurpers."[105] That Madison and Washington sharply diverged on the politics of faith may help explain why Madison, who looms so large in the history of church-state relations, offered no comment whatsoever on religion in the ultimately discarded 1792 Farewell Address.

As with Jefferson, Madison's commitment to the separation of church and state did not mean that he was free of antisemitism. A glaring episode from Madison's presidential history marks the limit of his religious tolerance. The central player in this saga was the aforementioned Mordecai Noah, a Jewish journalist and playwright in Charleston who aspired to a diplomatic post. During the Madison administration, he petitioned the Department of State for an appointment to an American consulate in any of the Barbary states, which consisted of Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli.

Noah well understood that his identity as a Jew could be a strategic advantage in North Africa. Jews were considered impartial intermediaries between Christian and Muslim states; both Britain and the Netherlands had made use of Jewish envoys to that region. And the Barbary was home to powerful Jewish communities whose local clout could be leveraged by a Jewish-American consul to the benefit of his home country. Noah explained to the State Department that “it would be a favorable circumstance in sending a member of the Hebrew nation to the Barbary Powers … supported as I would be with the wealth and influence of forty thousand [Jewish] residents.” He anticipated still other advantages if Madison elevated him to such a position. Wealthy Jews in any number of nations would see the appointment as a reflection of America’s devotion to religious freedom and thereby entice them to immigrate to the United States. It would also send a strong message to other countries about American values. “I wish to prove to foreign powers,” Noah wrote, “that our government is not regulated in the appointment of their officers by religious distinction.” Madison would prove just the opposite in the end.[106]

Noah was appointed the consul to Tunis in 1813. As he prepared to leave for the Barbary, the administration gave him a secret mission to execute on his voyage. Algiers had abducted the American crew of a merchant ship. Secretary of State James Monroe instructed Noah to pay a ransom of up to $3,000 ($50,000 today) for each of the twelve captives. Noah was to engage in these negotiations under the false premise that he acted on behalf of the crew’s friends rather than the U.S. government.[107] Monroe surely feared that any indication the administration was paying for the captives would only incentivize further abductions.

An unexpectedly serpentine path across the Atlantic and through Europe found Noah in Cádiz, Spain, where he came across the American expatriate Richard Keene. The two discussed the clandestine negotiations that Noah intended to initiate in Algiers. Keene told Noah that he could, for a finder’s fee, travel there on Noah’s behalf and settle the matter. After the American consul to Cádiz fulsomely vouched for Keene, Noah enlisted him for the cause. Noah had little idea that Keene was a notorious figure, with a scandal-ridden past, whom Madison profoundly distrusted.[108]

Once in Algiers, Keene managed to secure the release of only two of the twelve seamen in question, and, in a twist, he paid ransom for another four hostages who were supposedly from Louisiana and whose captivity was unbeknown to the U.S. government. Noah billed the State Department for the ransom, Keene’s fee, the cost of returning the captives stateside, and Noah’s own expenses, plus interest—a total of $25,910 ($436,000 today). With this, Noah continued onward to Tunis to assume his duties as consul.[109]

News of the affair and Noah’s sizable bill were both met with frustration back in Washington. The State Department was displeased with Noah for several reasons. Not only did he hire an agent to complete a covert assignment that he had been expected to undertake himself, but he tapped none other than the disreputable Keene for the job. Moreover, the rescue of the Louisianans was beyond Noah’s remit. And he proved loose-lipped, divulging to Keene and others that he operated at the behest of the Madison administration. Although Noah had indeed been indiscreet, not all of these charges were fair. Monroe never expressly forbade Noah from using a proxy, and Noah acted on the advice of America's own consul in Spain in selecting Keene. Nevertheless, the mission was largely a failure, and Noah was to take the blame.[110]

That Madison would fire Noah from his diplomatic post was inevitable; the question remained what the stated rationale would be. It was at this point that Noah's status as a Jew became injected into a diplomatic imbroglio that otherwise bore no connection to his religious identity. In discussing Noah's imminent recall, Monroe relayed to Madison the opinion of an American naval captain who "says that the Turks and other people on the Barbary coast believe that every Jew who dies turns into a jackass, and that the Christians mount and ride them instantly, and directly, to the Devil. If this is the impression, the reason for removing him [i.e., Noah] is the stronger."[111] By Monroe's lights, purported antisemitism in the Barbary states made the case for discharging Noah all the more compelling.

Madison proceeded to predicate Noah's ouster squarely on his Jewish background, with no mention of the Algiers fiasco. "In recalling Noah," the president instructed Monroe, "it may be well to rest the measure pretty much on the ascertained prejudices of the Turks against his religion."[112] Monroe, in turn, penned a letter of dismissal and entrusted it to an American squadron bound for the Barbary to deliver to Noah. The letter notified Noah that his Jewish faith posed an insurmountable hurdle to his continued public service, explaining, "At the time of your appointment, as Consul at Tunis, it was not known that the religion which you profess would form any obstacle to the exercise of your consular functions. Recent information, however, on which entire reliance may be placed, proves that it would produce a very unfavorable effect."[113]

Perhaps Madison was genuine in ridding the consulate of Noah because he was a Jew. Or maybe the president exploited ostensible bigotry against Jews as a convenient pretext for the dismissal, thereby avoiding commentary on a furtive operation to which the U.S. government was supposed to be officially unconnected. Either way, antisemitism played a part. Madison had thus changed the terms of the affair from concern about Noah's mismanagement of the mission to a far weightier question about the role of religious discrimination in American statecraft. Noah was eager to defend himself and his faith. He produced a pamphlet about the Algiers affair that criticized the Madison administration and extolled the patriotism of Jews in the United States. Although Noah did not formally publish the pamphlet, it circulated widely enough that Jewish-American leaders, along with Gentiles at home and abroad, sent letters to the State Department in his support.[114]

He pressed the issue further with Madison shortly after the latter's tenure as president had come to an end. The ex-consul wanted to impress upon Madison that his Jewish faith had not at all undermined his capacity to fulfill his diplomatic duties. "No injury arose in Barbary to the public service from my religion as relating to myself," Noah assured Madison. "On the contrary, my influence and standing abroad was highly creditable." He went on to share his worry that Madison had established a dangerous norm at the State Department by making religious identity a valid cause for dismissal. Noah requested that the letter recalling him from the consulate—one that “refers solely to my religion” as the grounds for removal—either “be erased from the books of the Department of State” or at least have some “explanations” attached to his file so as to “prevent any evils arising from the precedent.”[115]

Madison’s response flatly denied that Judaism played any factor in Noah’s expulsion from Tunis and, in so doing, simply ignored that the letter of dismissal had unequivocally stated otherwise. He told Noah, “Your religious profession was well known at the time you received your commission; and that in itself it could not be a motive for your recall.” To address Noah’s unease about the State Department records, Madison suggested that James Monroe, who had succeeded him in the White House, would surely permit an addendum. This concession, however, was somewhat backhanded. Whereas Noah had asked for “explanations” to be appended to the annals for the sake of safeguarding future Jewish diplomats, Madison intimated that Noah’s real concern was his own reputation. As Madison put it, “An official preservation will be readily allowed to explanations necessary to protect your character.”[116] Madison was likely irked at the accusation that his administration had set a precedent for prejudice. After all, at the twilight of his presidency, he had appointed a Jewish consul to Scotland, a move that was perhaps sufficient in Madison’s eyes to rectify any earlier damage wrought to Jews.[117]

Noah was apparently underwhelmed by Madison’s letter because the following year he published a travelogue about his experiences abroad that included a devastating critique of Madison’s role in the Algiers affair. He chastised the ex-president for forgetting “that the religion of a citizen is not a legitimate object of official notice from the government.” According to Noah, Madison’s reference to antisemitism in the Barbary as the justification for his removal did not square with reality; North African Jews were respected figures who served in important diplomatic and domestic positions for their countries. Noah revealed that Madison had been confronted with allegations “that my religion would produce injurious effects, and the President, instead of closing the door on such interdicted subjects, had listened and concurred.” And even if—Noah reasoned hypothetically—the Barbary did suffer from endemic animus toward Jews, the United States should never abandon its principles to accommodate the hatred of others. “Are we prepared to yield up the admirable and just institutions of our country at the shrine of foreign bigotry and superstition?” he asked. “Are we prepared to disenfranchise one of our citizens to gratify the intolerant views of the Bey of Tunis?” Noah deplored how Madison had effectively signaled to foreign powers that they were entitled to determine the faith of American diplomats. He also voiced anxiety about the fate of the Jewish people, for if Jews who “fought and bled for American Independence” could not have their rights secured by the U.S. government, then “what nation may not oppress them?”[118] Noah’s travelogue was so popular that it sold out.[119]

To be sure, Madison had other experiences with Jews that cast him in a more favorable light. While he lacked sustained exposure to Jewish individuals, Madison did borrow money from Haym Salomon, the adroit bill broker who helped the superintendent of finance remedy America's financial woes in the 1780s. An entry in Madison's ledger shows a £100 loan from Salomon in 1782 when Madison was serving as a congressional delegate in Philadelphia.[120] Madison then solicited funds from a fellow Virginian, Edmund Randolph, to avoid staying in hock to Salomon: "I cannot in any way make you more sensible of the importance of your kind attention to pecuniary remittances for me than by informing you that I have for some time past been a pensioner on the favor of H. S. Haym Solomon, a Jew Broker."[121]

Madison's aversion to remaining in Salomon's debt had nothing to do with the broker's Jewish identity; rather, Madison was discomfited by the excessive generosity of Salomon, who refused to charge interest. In a subsequent letter to Randolph, Madison referred to Salomon as "our little friend in Front Street" who provided a "fund which will preserve me from extremities, but I never resort to it without great mortification, as he obstinately rejects all recompense." Madison added that Salomon's benevolence stemmed from the latter's distaste for all-too-common "usurious" creditors. Salomon undoubtedly saw his interest-free loans as opportunities to subvert stereotypes about Jewish moneylenders.[122] At the twilight of Madison's life, he received a letter from Salomon's son looking for details about his long-deceased father. Madison replied that a number of congressmen had borrowed money from Salomon, and assured the son that "we regarded him as upright, intelligent, and friendly in his transactions with us."[123] Tropes about predatory Jewish financiers, so common in the writings of Franklin and Adams, were conspicuously absent from Madison's pen.

While Madison was not focused on religious liberty for Jews specifically, he was instrumental in the passage of laws that protected minority faith groups generally. Notably, Madison shepherded the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom through the state legislature. He also endorsed the U.S. Constitution's ban on religious tests. And the federal Bill of Rights, which included the Free Exercise Clause, was Madison's handiwork.

After a Jewish leader in Savannah sent Madison a copy of a speech he had delivered on Jewish-American history in 1820, Madison responded that the "good citizenship" of domestic Jews was a vindication of the nation's noble experiment in religious liberty that had begun in its early years. The Jewish community provided a "happy illustration of the safety and success of this experiment of a just and benignant policy." Although Jews were "distrusted and oppressed elsewhere" around the world, in the United States they enjoyed with all others "the perfect equality of rights." Madison's missive was not quite accurate—civil disabilities on Jews persisted in a number of states—but nevertheless it reflected his own fidelity to religious freedom. His letter also expressed gratitude for the speech on the Jewish past, observing that "the history of the Jews must forever be interesting" and "every ray of light on the subject has its value."[124] Madison's words were not just empty flattery. When Jefferson asked him which books he would suggest for the library at the University of Virginia, Madison included on his list the works of Flavius Josephus, a first-century Jewish scholar who recorded Jewish history.[125]

The Madisonian-Jewish relationship, then, presents a complex picture. Madison helped institute legal regimes in Virginia and nationally that extended religious protections to all people, Jews included. And his limited interactions with individual Jews were largely respectful. Still, Madison’s dismissal of an American diplomat on the basis of his Jewish identity is a significant blemish.

Hamilton, Washington, Jefferson, and Madison taken together illustrate a counterintuitive reality. Among the foregoing founders, the two who did not advocate the separation of church and state were unmarred by antisemitism, while the two who did were tainted by incidents of bias against Jews and Judaism. It is with deliberate intent that the preceding pages have avoided recommending or rejecting the Hamiltonian approach to church-state relations. His model—which endorsed both religious pluralism and religious support for civic life—should not necessarily guide us today. Current proponents of the separation of church and state argue that their position is the most beneficial for religious minorities. They fear that in the absence of separation, the majority will exploit its power to favor its faith at the expense of other denominations. A consideration of such concerns is beyond the scope of this chapter. The aim here is, instead, to sound a cautionary note against projecting the logic of our modern politics backward onto the past.

8

Law and Politics

AS TREASURY SECRETARY, Alexander Hamilton helped create the economic foundations on which the American republic could endure. But his focus on the country's finances led him to neglect his own. A cabinet member's salary was simply too modest to provide for his five children and pay off personal debts that he had accrued. By reviving his legal practice, Hamilton could triple or even quadruple his earnings. And so, in February 1795, not even halfway through George Washington's second term, he resigned his government post, returning to Manhattan and the New York bar.[1] It was a professional move that immersed Hamilton in the Jewish merchant class to an even greater degree than his first stint in law had prior to his service in the Washington administration.

Hamilton was a polarizing figure to the country at large, but New Yorkers saw him as their champion. The Chamber of Commerce celebrated his homecoming by holding a dinner in his honor. Among the luminaries on the 200-person guest list were the president of Columbia, the speaker of the New York State Assembly, and many of the city's businessmen. At the meal, Hamilton paid homage to "the merchants of New York, may they never cease to have honor for their commander, skill for their pilot, and success for their port," a toast that elicited nine cheers from the crowd.[2]

The 1790s were years of expanding trade for America in general and New York in particular. Thanks to the Constitution that Hamilton helped write and ratify, the federal government was empowered to stimulate economic growth with unprecedented efficacy. The United States also benefited from an ongoing war between Britain and France, which increased the importance of neutral American shippers in the global marketplace. New York fared especially well, outpacing both Boston and Philadelphia in exports by 1797. The economic boom in New York went hand-in-hand with a population boom; the city nearly doubled its census count from about 33,000 to 60,000 over the last decade of the eighteenth century.[3]

Business in New York was often transacted in taverns or coffeehouses. The Tontine coffeehouse on Wall Street was famous for its lively mix of traders, brokers, and financiers. At the base of the Tontine steps, auctioneers would stand atop barrels of rum or bales of cotton, taking bids shouted down from a balcony. “Everything was in motion; all was life, bustle, and activity,” one British visitor recorded.[4]

The kinds of disputes that inevitably resulted from commercial enterprise demanded the talents of lawyers such as Hamilton. His sweeping knowledge of law, relentless work ethic, and flair for courtroom oratory made him arguably the city’s preeminent litigator. He threw himself into his cases with his typical fervor. As a French diplomat in New York remarked of Hamilton, “I have seen a man who made the fortune of a nation laboring all night to support his family.”[5]

Jews were important players in Hamilton’s legal career as both witnesses and clients. Indeed, the witness stand was a critical site in the Jewish battle for equality. The integrity of Jews under oath had long been questioned in Europe and America. During medieval times, Jews who dared to give testimony in court were regularly subjected to degrading rituals. Jewish witnesses in Byzantium, for instance, had to wear a loincloth made of thorns. Meanwhile, Jews testifying in southern France were lacerated with thorns while forced to invoke upon themselves curses from the Hebrew Bible. And a law in Silesia (in modern-day Poland) mandated that any Jewish litigant balance himself on a stool during his testimony; he was subjected to a fine the first three times he fell off and automatically lost his case in the fourth instance.[6]

Antisemites had long justified such perverse treatment of Jewish witnesses by erroneously alleging that Judaism actually encouraged its adherents to lie in court. This invidious stereotype about Jews was rooted in a severe misrepresentation of the *Kol Nidre* prayer, which opens religious services on *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement. *Kol Nidre* means “all vows,” and the prayer includes this language: “All vows, obligations, oaths … or whereby we may be bound, from this Day of Atonement until the next (whose happy coming we await), we do repent. May they be deemed absolved, forgiven, annulled, and void, and made of no effect; they shall not bind us nor have power over us.” Rabbis consistently interpreted this prayer to apply only to vows that a Jew made to himself or to God, and not to oaths taken in court. Nevertheless, those seeking to discredit Jewish witnesses ignored these rabbinic explanations and invoked *Kol Nidre* as evidence of Jews’ dishonesty.[7]

Doubts about Jewish integrity on the witness stand sometimes resurfaced in the New World. Even New York—the most religiously tolerant of Britain’s thirteen American colonies—was not wholly immune to this particular prejudice. Amid legal proceedings that pertained to a contested election in 1737, the General Assembly in New York categorically excluded testimony from Jews, declaring that “it was the opinion of the House that none of the Jewish profession could be admitted in evidence, in the controversy now depending.”[8] Unease about Jewish witnesses persisted long past the era of colonial rule. Not until 1846 would New York adopt a new state constitution that definitively settled the question of religious tests for giving sworn testimony: “No person shall be rendered incompetent to be a witness on account of his opinions on matters of religious belief." As late as 1871, a court in Georgia was still considering whether a Jew could testify.[9]

It was a case concerning the trustworthiness of Jewish testimony that provided Hamilton a platform for the most fervent rebuke of antisemitism to be found in the annals of the American founders. His client, Louis Le Guen, was a Gentile merchant accused of fraud. Le Guen also hailed from a French nation that was then embroiled in a quasi-war against the United States on the high seas.[10] This suit promised to be particularly challenging for Hamilton. Although the allegations against Le Guen were without merit, a foreign merchant purportedly engaged in swindling—and from a hostile power no less—was not the most sympathetic of litigants whom Hamilton could have represented. What's more, Hamilton's cocounsel was a man for whom he had little regard: Aaron Burr.[11] Compounding these difficulties, the opposing party comprised two of New York's most highly reputed businessmen, Isaac Gouverneur and Peter Kemble. And, perhaps most vexing of all for Hamilton, his principal witnesses were Jews.

The controversy began in 1794, when Le Guen arrived in New York as "a perfect stranger," in his words. He carried with him a cargo of indigo and cotton from a French island in the Indian Ocean, and entered into a financial arrangement with Gouverneur and Kemble to serve as agents for the sale of his inventory. Despite numerous advertisements in a local paper, buyers failed to appear. Le Guen, Gouverneur, and Kemble began to strategize about overseas markets.[12]

They resolved to partner with three traders who would arrange for the distribution of Le Guen's goods in Europe. Under the care of one of these traders, Isaac Gomez, the freight was loaded onto a vessel called the *White Fox* in May 1795 and headed east. Five weeks later, Gomez sent word from the northern coast of France that demand there was no better than it had been in New York. "The cotton and indigo has come to a most miserable market," he reported. From Hamburg, Gomez conveyed similarly disappointing news the following month: "Markets being in a most miserable situation in France, induced me to bring the cotton and indigo here, which proves as bad, as it will not yield the amount of invoice and expenses thereon attending, by a loss of sixty percent." Reaching England in the fall, Gomez relinquished the cargo to London-based agents for Gouverneur and Kemble, who then sold it for a considerable shortfall.[13]

Le Guen was miffed. He insisted that the clearance of his inventory in London violated the terms of his partnership with Gouverneur and Kemble; their contract had specified a higher sale price. When Le Guen looked to the courts to recover damages, Gouverneur and Kemble in turn accused Le Guen of bamboozling them with inferior goods. Le Guen had the facts on his side—after all, Gomez's letters plainly indicated that the failure to realize a profit stemmed from market conditions rather than the quality of the cotton and indigo. But Gouverneur and Kemble were intractable. Two of the key witnesses for Le Guen were Sephardic Jews: a trader who helped facilitate the transport of the freight, and a merchant who examined Le Guen's inventory and vouched for its caliber.[14]

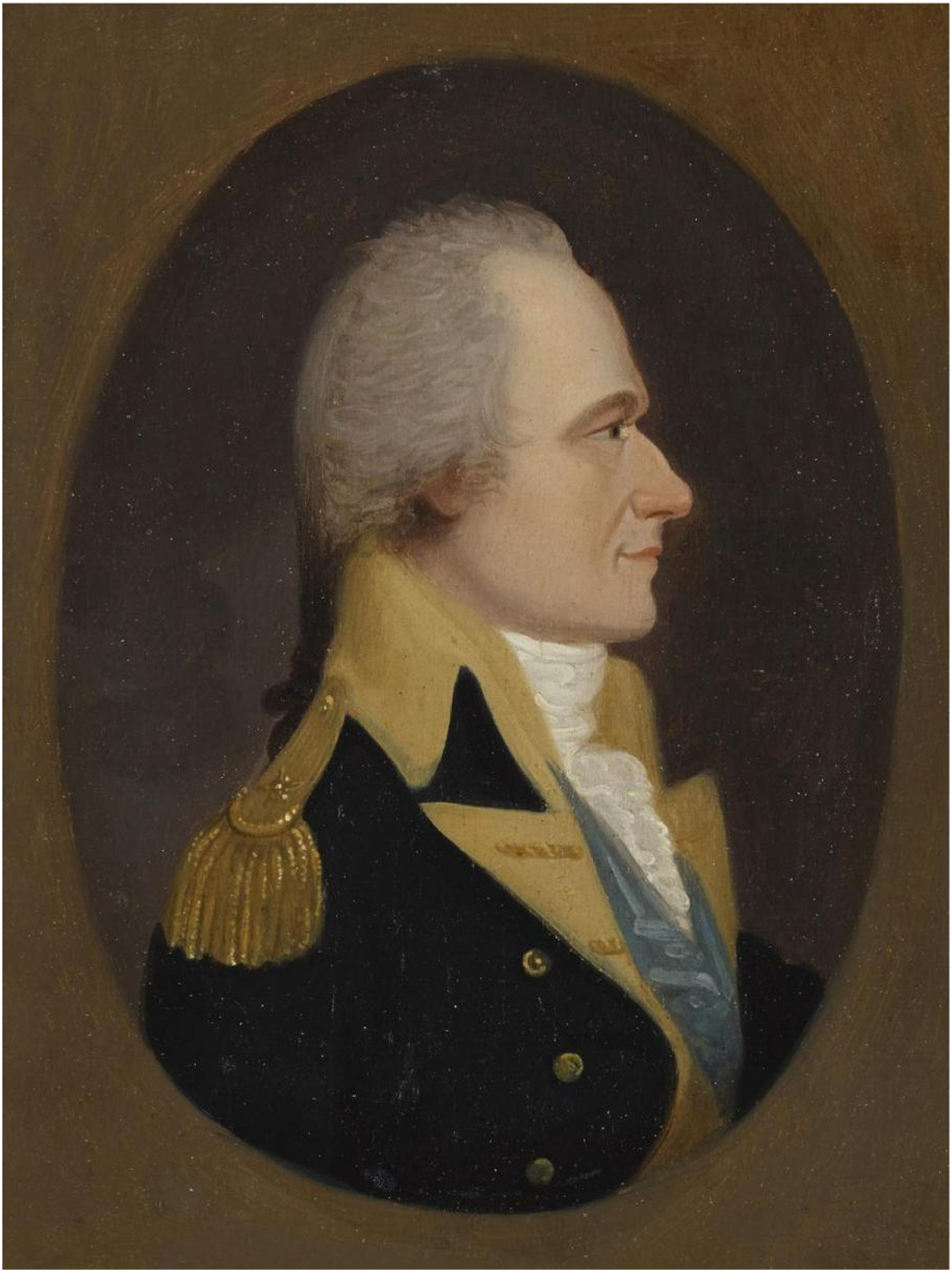
The litigation, which would stretch on for years, became noteworthy less for the obscure legal questions it raised than for the eminent lawyers involved in the case, their spirited performances in court, and the sheer hostility that the suit fomented between the two sides. Hamilton's general tendency to polarize those around him was on full display in this case; the intense devotion to Le Guen's cause that inspired admiration from Hamilton's supporters also led his detractors to malign him as an extremist who would too readily sacrifice civility for victory.

After winning only nominal damages in an initial trial for Le Guen in the spring of 1797, Hamilton successfully moved for a new trial that was scheduled for the following fall.[15] Gouverneur and Kemble were frustrated that the proceedings would drag out but exceedingly confident in their case. As Gouverneur wrote in a letter that summer, "Nothing have we yet been able to finish with that troublesome Mssr Le Guen who has got himself involved in a ridiculous lawsuit, which will take of a handsome slice of his property."[16] In another missive, Gouverneur expressed the same combination of resentment and optimism. He complained of being mired "in the same unpleasant situation with Le Guen, who prefers to be wandering in law than to settle his affairs" but predicted that "the lawyers will get more than he shall and may cost him yet a few years in the pursuit."[17] Le Guen was no less sanguine than his opponents, assuring Hamilton, "Your talents, your zeal, and the integrity of those who must be my judges … will make me get a favorable judgment."[18]

Then in October, with the trial just days away, Le Guen took the unusual step of printing a public letter in a New York newspaper deploring how the accusations of fraud had incited "prejudice against me" in the community at large. "These cruel surmises tend no less to obstruct the impartial course of justice than to injure my reputation," he lamented, adding that they were utterly "unfounded." Le Guen further noted that Gomez's letters exonerated him from wrongdoing—they "manifest great distress at the expectation of a loss, to the extent of 60 percent, but ascribe it solely to the declension and badness of the market, without the least allusion to any defect or mistake of quality" of the cargo.[19]

In the same newspaper appeared an anonymous editorial that summarized the reaction of Gouverneur and Kemble to Le Guen's letter. The author informed readers that Gouverneur and Kemble were outraged by "the recent unwarrantable attempt of Mr. Le Guen to prejudice the public mind, and that of the jury" on "the eve of a trial." Although piqued at what they considered a bid to pervert the due process of law, Gouverneur and Kemble reportedly took solace that "there is too much good sense in this community, to be imposed upon by so shallow an artifice." Le Guen then issued a swift rebuttal, maintaining that the allegation of fraud was bogus and thus extraneous to the real matter: the contractual agreement stipulating an acceptable sale price for the goods. Thus, his initial letter in the newspaper had not indulged in the "impropriety" of "bringing into discussion, before the public, the merits of a controversy, which is depending before the tribunal of justice." If anything, Le Guen had sought "studiously to avoid" litigating the matter in the press, and merely wanted "to obviate suggestions *collateral* and *foreign* to the merits" of the case.[20]

The trial commenced on October 24, and three days later, the jury awarded Le Guen the staggering sum of $119,302.47 (more than $2.6 million today). Given the cocksure attitude on the part of Gouverneur and Kemble, the verdict came as an abrupt shock. Brockholst Livingston, a lawyer for Gouverneur (and future U.S. Supreme Court justice), confessed to his client his own bewilderment that Hamilton managed to rob them of certain victory. "No event in the course of my professional career," Livingston exclaimed, "has ever given me more concern or excited so much astonishment as the influence of Mr. Hamilton with the Court."[21]



This portrait of Alexander Hamilton was originally owned by his childhood friend from St. Croix, Edward Stevens. *Source*: William J. Weaver, *Alexander Hamilton*. Indianapolis Museum of Art [ca. 1806].

The court still had to decide whether to approve the jury's verdict, with the judgment from a five-man bench to come down in late January.[22] Meanwhile, Gouverneur turned to the press to air his grievances against Hamilton. In the *Commercial Advertiser,* Gouverneur addressed Hamilton directly, imploring him to "act with more caution in committing yourself with a mistaken opinion" and advising that "it would also be more becoming in the practice, to be less abusive." Gouverneur felt "extremely hurt" by Hamilton's courtroom performance that had challenged Gouverneur's integrity. Apparently, at trial Hamilton had tried to turn an antisemitic trope on its head by referring to the Jewish villain, Shylock, who inhumanely demands a pound of flesh for an unpaid debt in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. It seems that Hamilton insisted it was not Le Guen—whose central witnesses were Jews—but rather Gouverneur whose behavior approximated Shakespeare's loathsome caricature of a Jewish moneylender. Hamilton's mention of Shylock is known through Gouverneur's retelling, and no extant trial transcript exists with the original wording, so it is difficult to discern with certainty the context or meaning of Hamilton's remark.[23] Although the invocation of "Shylock" usually would have indicated antipathy toward Jews by the speaker, in this instance it was the speaker whose case relied upon Jewish testimony.

On the very day that Gouverneur published his broadside against Hamilton, an anonymous letter—likely from Hamilton himself—appeared in the *New-York Gazette and General Advertiser*. Signed under the pen name "Fair Play," the author showed little inclination to rein in the heated rhetoric that had thus far prevailed: "If intrigue and artifice can ensure success in a suit at law, Mr. Gouverneur, in his controversy with Mr. Le Guen, will not fail to have it."[24]

Notwithstanding their lawyer's consternation, Gouverneur and Kemble were still convinced that the jury's verdict against them was an anomaly and that they would ultimately be vindicated by the court. In a letter to an associate, they wrote of Le Guen, "You may take our word for it, he is wasting both time and property."[25] Once again, their assumptions proved faulty. The judges upheld the jury's verdict in a three-to-two vote.[26]

Gouverneur and Kemble pressed on with further appeals for another two years until the Court of Errors—the highest tribunal in the state of New York—agreed to hear the case in Albany. The Court of Errors was a unique legal body that combined all three branches of state government, comprising the lieutenant governor, the members of the senate, the justices of the supreme court, and New York's highest ranking judicial officer, the chancellor.[27] With the trial set for February 1800, a lawyer for Gouverneur and Kemble named Robert Troup wrote to a friend on January 25 that he anticipated high drama. "The cause of Gouverneur and Kemble with Le Guen is beginning to excite attention," Troup observed. He predicted "that some of the counsel will have their passions much excited" and knew firsthand that Hamilton in particular was prone to fervor. Invoking Hamilton's military title, Troup offered by way of metaphor, "With my moderation of temper, I hope to escape the General's pistols as well as his sword." Troup did not detect any insecurities on Hamilton's part, inferring, "General Hamilton is very confident of success."[28]

Although Troup was intimately acquainted with Hamilton—they had been roommates at King's College[29]—his estimation of Hamilton's optimism was mistaken in this instance. "Today the hearing of Le Guen's cause began," Hamilton wrote to his wife, Eliza, from Albany. "I fear prepossessions are strongly against us. But we must try to overcome them."[30] He seemed to brace for the worst, adding, "If I should *lose* my cause I must console myself with finding my friends. With the utmost eagerness I will fly to them."[31]

Troup may have misjudged Hamilton's faith in his case, but the prediction of Hamilton's ardor in court was wholly on the mark. "Hamilton has pushed this cause to the utmost extremity, and in my opinion with the utmost animosity and cruelty against Gouverneur and Kemble," Troup wrote to a New York merchant after opening arguments. "He has attacked the whole body of witnesses on the part of Gouverneur and Kemble." Troup expected that "the manner of his treating the witnesses and persecuting poor Gouverneur" would not play well with the court. Despite Hamilton's earlier triumphs in the case, still, reported Troup, "Mr. Gouverneur himself is very confident of success and is in good spirits," a laudable feat for Gouverneur "considering the treatment Hamilton has given him." Troup concluded, "You can scarcely conceive the public attention which the cause of Gouverneur and Kemble has excited!"[32]

Already a spectacle, the trial's sensationalism was further heightened by the arrival of a political giant of the era, Gouverneur Morris, who joined Isaac Gouverneur and Peter Kemble's legal team. Morris had served in the Continental Congress during the war, drafted the Constitution's famous preamble in 1787, and been named the American ambassador to France under Washington. The Le Guen suit marked Morris's return to law after a hiatus of twelve years.[33] Hamilton and Morris were themselves friends, but whatever affinity they had for one another did not mitigate each man's vigorous commitment to his duty in court.[34]

That Hamilton's legal expertise and rigor surpassed Morris's was indisputable. But when it came to oratorical ability, Morris stood among the very few who could rival Hamilton. James Kent, a New York Supreme Court justice, observed, "If the one [Hamilton] was the superior in logic and law learning, the other [Morris] was presumed to be his equal in eloquence, imagination, and wit." Morris cut a "commanding" figure, Kent recalled. "His noble head, his majestic mien, the dignity of his deportment were all impressive."[35]

After Hamilton delivered a forceful closing argument spanning six hours, Morris knew he could not compete with Hamilton on legal grounds. Instead, Morris told the court that he had no intention of referencing law books and alternatively would "appeal to the principles written on the heart of man."[36] Morris's flowery address soon degenerated into a base attack on Hamilton's two witnesses of the Jewish faith.[37]

Alluding to them as “these Jew witnesses,” Morris sought to impugn their credibility on the basis of their religion.[38] “Jews are not to be believed upon oath,” he insisted bluntly.[39]

Hamilton had already given his closing remarks, but he could not leave such slander unanswered. He rose to his feet and asked the court if it would allow him a rebuttal; the court acceded to his request and announced that time would be allotted the following day. Upon leaving to prepare his rejoinder, Hamilton spoke to a law clerk about Morris’s address:

“This speech has made a great impression, has it not?”

“It had,” the clerk conceded.

“How then do you think it should be met?”

“In the same manner.”[40]

A large crowd gathered in court the next day to see how Hamilton, ever the relentless fighter, would respond. This case had become about something more than a mere legal dispute between merchants. At issue was the momentous question of whether American justice would be blind to religion. The Revolution had rested on a radical promise of equality. That a figure as esteemed as Morris believed antisemitism would be an effective tactic with the court suggested that the egalitarian rationale for the war had perhaps yielded to entrenched prejudice. Hamilton understood the stakes for both Jewry and the country, and he resolved to defend the former to realize his vision for the latter.

Referencing Morris’s attack on the Jews, Hamilton asked the court, “Has he forgotten, what this race once were, when, under the immediate government of God himself, they were selected as the witnesses of his miracles, and charged with the spirit of prophecy?” Hamilton moved from a discussion of the Jews as the Chosen People to the sordid history of their suffering. He decried how, as “remnants of scattered tribes,” adherents of Judaism were “the degraded, persecuted, reviled subjects of Rome,” an empire that oppressed Jews “in all her resistless power, and pride, and pagan pomp.” Roman rule had left Jewry “an isolated, tributary, friendless people.” Hamilton’s message was clear—Morris was perpetuating a dark history of antisemitism that had plagued Jews since antiquity.

For Hamilton, Le Guen’s Jewish witnesses were righteous heirs to a divinely ordained religion. “Were not the witnesses of that pure and holy, happy and Heaven-approved faith?” he inquired rhetorically. Hamilton proclaimed that Lady Justice would judge no people because of the manner in which they worshipped: “Be the injured party … Jew, or Gentile, or Christian, or Pagan, Foreign or Native, she clothes him with her mantle, in whose presence all differences of faiths or births, of passions or of prejudices—all are called to acknowledge and revere her supremacy.”[41] Jews had suffered oppression for nearly two millennia at the hands of European powers; now an icon of American civic life was declaring that Jew and Gentile must stand equal before the law. In a young republic caught between Old World hierarchies and New World hopes, Hamilton's defense of equality for Jews was a powerful vindication of revolutionary ideals.

Although rarely lacking in confidence, Hamilton had been circumspect about Le Guen's chances for success. Yet Le Guen emerged victorious in the Court of Errors by a 28-to-6 vote.[42] Burr, for his part, had skillfully argued portions of the case; even Morris conceded in his diary, "Burr is very able and has, I see, made [a] considerable impression."[43] It was, however, Hamilton's eloquent appeal for equal justice that moved the members of the court. Justice Kent was unequivocal in identifying the determining factor in Le Guen's unlikely win: "the overbearing weight and influence of General Hamilton's talents."[44] Le Guen, by his own account, was "deeply moved" and "full of gratitude" to Hamilton and Burr alike, offering both lawyers substantial sums for their efforts. To Le Guen's disappointment, Hamilton refused a penny above $1,500 ($32,000 today); Burr accepted nearly three times that amount.[45]

Hamilton was generally renowned for the verve of his legal performances, but he demonstrated an emotional investment in Le Guen's case that exceeded even his usual standards. Justice Kent later recollected that among the countless trials Hamilton litigated with "energy and fervor," there was at most one other—involving freedom of the press—in which his zeal was so "strikingly displayed."[46] Opposing counsel Troup drew similar conclusions. In a letter to the American ambassador to Great Britain, Troup relayed the details of the Le Guen trial and observed, "Our friend Hamilton never appeared to have his passions so warmly engaged in any cause."[47] It was readily apparent that the case touched Hamilton personally. No other American founder ever denounced antisemitism with such conviction.

Hamilton not only relied on Jewish witnesses for his Gentile clients, but he also served as a prominent advocate in court for the interests of Jewish parties.[48] One of the most notable cases featured Aaron Burr, though as a litigant rather than lawyer; Solomon Myers Cohen, a well-known Jew; and the meaning of the Fourth of July. In 1795, the retired general Roger Enos issued a promissory note to the politician Francis Lewis for $3,500 ($75,000 today), redeemable on July 1. Aaron Burr also endorsed the note, rendering Burr liable for that sum in the event that General Enos failed to make payment. Enos was out of town at the beginning of July, and so Lewis turned to his Jewish agent, Cohen, to retrieve the $3,500 from Burr.[49] Cohen wrote to Burr in the hopes of an uncontentious transaction: "As General Enos is not in town and his note with your endorsement for 3500 dollars is payable … the holder desired me to give you this notice, that he looks to you for payment of the same.… I hope my conduct in this business will meet with your approbation."[50]

Normally, the endorser of a promissory note had a three-day grace period to fulfill the obligation, but Cohen made his request on July 3, only two days into the grace period. Burr accordingly refused to produce the $3,500. Cohen had opted not to wait until the customary third day because that third day happened to fall on the Fourth of July, the anniversary of America’s secession from the British Empire. In a nation too new to have many public holidays, the Fourth of July was a revered day indeed. The outcome of the case would hinge on whether the special status of July 4 meant that Burr was liable to Lewis for the promissory note on July 3.[51] That Francis Lewis had been a signer of the Declaration of Independence made the case almost poetic in its symbolism.

Hamilton, representing Lewis, began collecting evidence to prove that financial institutions regularly executed transactions due on July 4 one day prior to the holiday. He obtained letters from bank cashiers who confirmed that “our practice is to demand payment of notes which fall due on the 4th [of] July, the day before, as in [the] case of Sundays and Christmas days.”[52] In court documents, Hamilton’s language suggested that he saw in Burr’s behavior not an honest error but a lack of character. Burr “faithfully promised” to cover the $3,500, but “Aaron Burr in no way regard[ed] his said promises and undertakings.” Instead, Burr sought “craftily and subtly to deceive and defraud the said Francis Lewis.” Hamilton derided Burr as “contriving.”[53] The jury favored Hamilton’s side, finding that “the anniversary day of the Declaration of Independence of these United States of America” is “generally observed by the citizens of this state of New York as a public festival.” Accordingly, the promissory note was payable on July 3.[54]

In the New York Supreme Court, Hamilton emerged victorious again as the justices upheld the jurors’ verdict. The court noted that the custom of honoring the Fourth of July by requiring that debts be paid the preceding day was a “generally known” convention and “all contracts” were to “be interpreted and governed by it.” Therefore, the bench concluded “that the note in question is to be adjudged as having fallen due on the 3d day of July, the *second* day of grace, and, consequently, that the plaintiff is entitled to recover.”[55] This judgment against Burr surely stoked his growing resentment toward Hamilton. Four years earlier, Hamilton had been instrumental in quashing Burr’s bid for the governorship of New York. Now he bested Burr in court. And Hamilton’s most intolerable acts of sabotage, as Burr would perceive them, still lay ahead.

The same year as the foregoing case, Hamilton’s services were solicited for a dispute involving Jews on all sides. His client in this suit was Isaac Gomez, a Sephardic Jew who sat on the board of Shearith Israel (the very same Isaac Gomez who struggled to find European buyers for Le Guen’s cargo). In 1794, Gomez and another Sephardi named Moses Lopez established a commercial partnership whose terms specified that for seven years neither of them could unilaterally transact business outside the partnership to the detriment of their shared enterprise. In the words of their legal agreement, “Neither of the said parties should, during the said term … carry on any private trade for and on his account to the prejudice of the said joint business.” Before the seven years expired, Gomez and Lopez created a three-man partnership with yet another Sephardic trader, Abraham Rods Rivera. This arrangement proceeded on terms whose exact meaning became a source of controversy: “No contract, dealing, purchase, or other business shall be entered into on account of the said copartnership by either of the said parties without the previous consent and approbation of them.” This wording left two matters ambiguous. For one, the tripartite contract did not clarify whether it existed in tandem with or superseded the earlier bilateral agreement between Gomez and Lopez. Moreover, it failed to stipulate whether any two or all three partners had to agree to a given business deal.[56]

With Hamilton as his legal counsel, Gomez sued Lopez for £3,000 on the basis that Lopez had engaged in private business outside the terms of their first agreement. Lopez, in turn, maintained that this business had been transacted with Rivera’s consent and thus was consistent with the language of their second agreement. Hamilton persuaded the court that there was a legitimate cause of action against Lopez, and the defendant accordingly was sent to jail while awaiting trial. The parties were able to settle out of court before the trial date.[57]

Little is known about the merchant Isaac Roget other than that he was Jewish and a Hamilton client.[58] In a complex case involving 220 barrels of flour, Roget tapped Hamilton to represent him before the New York Supreme Court. Roget had agreed in early 1800 to purchase the flour in exchange for a note endorsed by one Joseph Lyon for $2,250 ($48,000 today). When the suppliers of the flour discovered that Lyon was insolvent and the note thereby worthless, they refused to turn over the flour. Roget then filed suit against the suppliers.[59]

The case hinged on two legal intricacies. First, the agreement had been signed by only one of the parties, not both. Whereas counsel for the suppliers insisted that the contract was accordingly void, Hamilton contended, “If one sign and deliver [the contract] over, it is enough” to make that contract enforceable. The second point of controversy centered on who shouldered responsibility for the note. Hamilton here proffered some clever logic: once the parties had agreed in writing to exchange the note for flour, the suppliers assumed the risk that the note might be unredeemable, just as Roget took the risk that the flour he had bought could be mediocre. In Hamilton’s reasoning, “a note was to be given for the flour, not money to be paid; therefore, the loss from the note’s proving bad [was] to be borne by the defendants.” The suppliers’ legal team vigorously challenged Hamilton’s arguments as unsupported by the law and the facts of the case.[60]

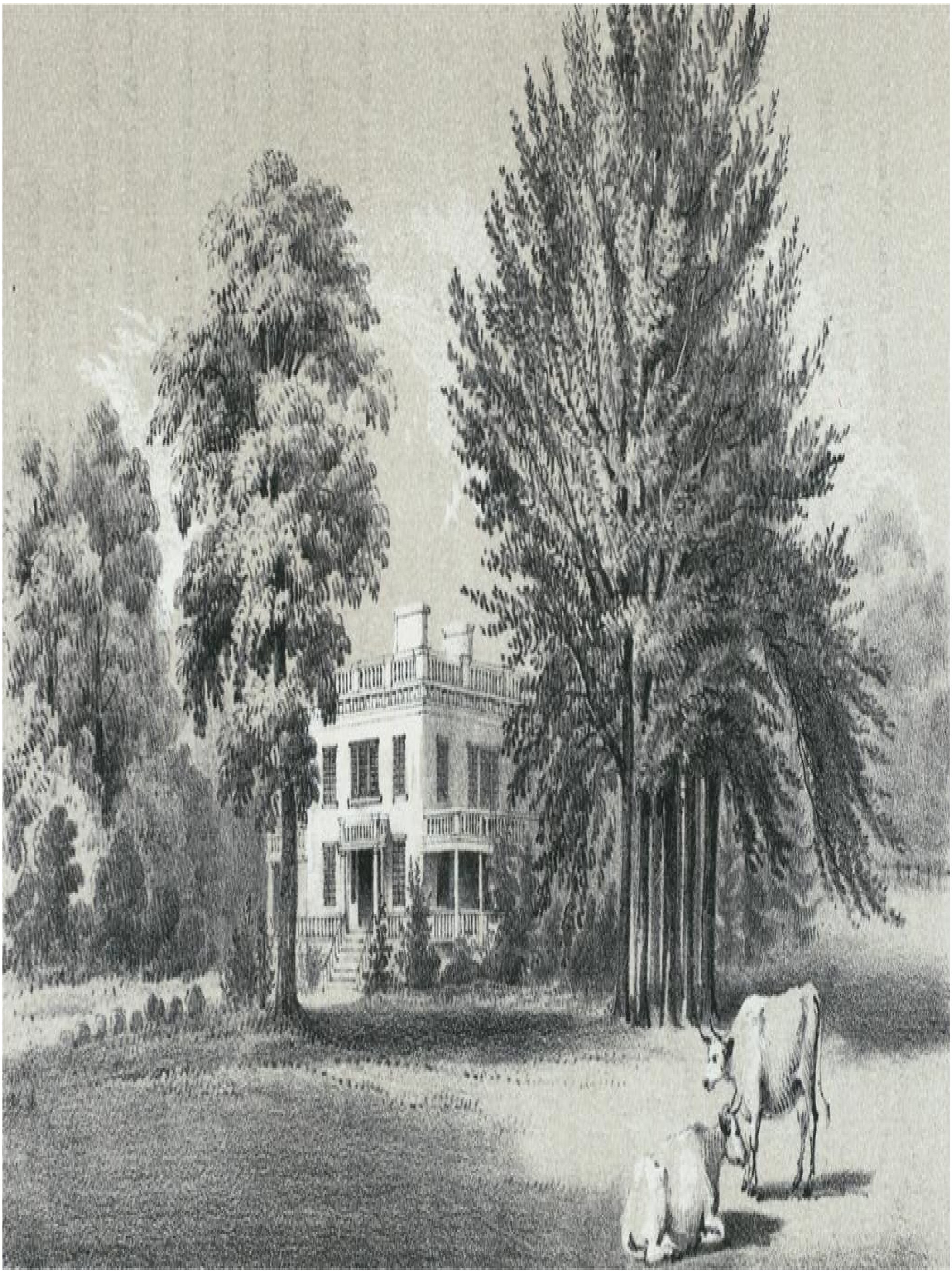
When the state supreme court issued its decision, the justices found that Hamilton had been persuasive on the first matter—a contract signed by merely one party was not necessarily void. “If there are acts to be done by both parties,” wrote the court, “and the one who is to perform a principal part (as here the delivery of the flour) sign, and it is accepted by the other party, there can exist no doubt … that such contract would be mutually obligatory.” However, on the question of whether the suppliers bore the risk for the note, Hamilton's logic was too clever by half. The court concluded, "The offer by the plaintiff to pay in the note of a bankrupt was not an offer of payment," and ruled in favor of the suppliers.[61]

Among the most notable Jewish additions to Hamilton's client roster was Alexander Zuntz. A native of Germany, Zuntz arrived in New York during the Revolution as a sutler selling goods to Hessian mercenaries who worked for the British. Zuntz joined the handful of Loyalist Jews in New York who kept Shearith Israel functioning through wartime. He became the de facto head of the synagogue in those years and helped convince the British not to repurpose their house of worship as a hospital.[62] Gershom Seixas, though allied with the Patriots, stole into the city in 1779 to officiate Zuntz's wedding.[63]

After the war, Zuntz decided to stay in New York and opened a factory for starch and hair powder. He advertised that his "starch is equal to any from Europe but can be prepared of inferior quality if required." Although that enterprise foundered, Zuntz later met with success by opening a broker's office on Little Dock Street near the synagogue. His leadership in Jewish life continued into the 1790s. He served three terms as president of Shearith Israel, donated funds to the synagogue, and held the special honor of leading the morning service on *Yom Kippur* every year.[64] Hamilton's ledger suggests that he did not litigate on Zuntz's behalf but rather offered him legal advice.[65]

The income from Hamilton's law practice allowed him to fulfill a long-standing dream—he could finally afford a plot of land on which to build a country residence for his family.[66] The site that Hamilton chose was in upper Manhattan, then comprised of unspoiled woods and river views. It was common for New Yorkers with sufficient means to seek relief from the congestion and disease of lower Manhattan by retreating to uptown country estates. Although Hamilton enlisted New York's most celebrated architect to design the house, he was not content to defer entirely to the discretion of the expert. Hamilton poured himself into the architectural plans with characteristic intensity.[67]

The result was a graceful and dignified home of yellow paneling with white trim. Visitors stepping through the front doors would encounter, tellingly before anything else, Hamilton's study. Even at this stage of his life, in which he was more dedicated to family than ever before, Hamilton's legal work remained a priority. There were bedrooms aplenty for his children, who now numbered seven. Various touches in the home betokened Hamilton's cosmopolitan tastes: the parlor featured French furniture, and the fireplaces were crafted from Italian marble. But there could be no question that this worldly immigrant was foremost an American—a giant portrait of George Washington hung in the foyer. In a quiet allusion to his Caribbean past, Hamilton called the property, “The Grange,” the name of the plantation on St. Croix where his mother was buried.[68] Here, then, is another reminder that although Hamilton did not speak of his childhood, neither did he forget.



The Grange, where Hamilton resided with his family in his later years. *Source*: *The Grange, Kingsbridge Road, the Residence of Alexander Hamilton*. Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Picture Collection, New York Public Library.

As Hamilton defended the credibility of Jewish testimony, represented Jewish citizens in the courts, and continued his tenure alongside Gershom Seixas on the Columbia board, some of his fellow Federalists forsook the party's earlier commitment to Jewish rights. Recall that it had been Anti-Federalists who sought to exploit religious bigotry during the ratification debates; similar tactics were then employed by some in the anti-Hamilton contingent that opposed the sweeping legislative reforms passed by the first Congress under the new Constitution. But as the French Revolution echoed across the Atlantic, it altered the role of antisemitism in the American political landscape.

Initially, the revolution in France, which began in 1789, elicited widespread enthusiasm in the United States. French revolutionaries were seen as heirs to the same values that had animated America's War of Independence. Jewish-Americans had additional cause to champion the French Revolution once France granted political equality to its Jews in 1791. By the following year, however, the French Revolution was less uniformly embraced throughout the United States. Reports of massacres and anarchy in France disturbed many Federalists, who began renouncing the French Revolution. Political factions in the United States were then becoming organized political parties, and a significant portion of American Jewry shifted to the Republican camp because of Republicans' continued endorsement of the French revolutionaries.[69]

Several Federalists, in turn, started peddling the kind of antisemitism that formerly had been the preserve of their opponents. In 1795, for instance, a Federalist printer took aim at a Republican group in New York that had named a Jew as its vice president (none other than Hamilton's former legal client, Solomon Simson). The printer sought to taint the entire organization as a cabal of Jews with stereotypically Jewish features, physical and otherwise: "This itinerant gang will easily be known by their physiognomy; they all seem to be, like their Vice-President, of the tribe of Shylock: they have that leering underlook, and malicious grin, that seem to say to the honest man—*approach me not*."[70] This sneer managed to compress multiple antisemitic clichés into a single sentence: Jews were rootless in geography, unsettling in appearance, and immoral in character.

Similar prejudice surfaced in Pennsylvania two years later when a state senate race resulted in a narrow win for a Republican politician who, though born and raised Christian, had a Jewish father. A Federalist newspaper in Philadelphia considered the politician a Jew all the same, warning, "Since the *Jews* obtained such a complete triumph over the *Gentiles*, it is said they have conceived the idea of imposing on us a *general circumcision*."[71] The myth that Jews secretly plotted to circumcise Gentiles was an anti-Jewish trope dating back centuries.[72]

Still, it would go too far to suggest that Federalists and Republicans entirely reversed in their respective attitudes toward Jewry. There were Republicans who continued to malign Jews into the early nineteenth century. A Republican piece from 1803 appearing in a Hartford newspaper unfavorably associated Federalists with ancient Judaism, which the writer considered a debased religion. He argued that the Federalists in Connecticut spuriously professed to govern the state in the name of freedom, just as Jews in antiquity had falsely claimed to serve the Almighty. In his words, "The system of policy here was as distant from the principles of liberty as the Jewish washings and oblations were from the law of God."[73] Evidently, casual antisemitism still had traction in Republican circles.

Some Federalists were quick to condemn Republican animus against Jews. An 1802 column in the *New-England Palladium*, a Federalist organ, derided Thomas Jefferson and his "adherents" for their "bitter, vindictive spirit" toward those who had bought government securities under Hamilton's economic scheme. The author deplored how such purchasers "have been denounced as speculators, usurers, and Jews, and held up as objects so odious, that to cheat them would almost be deemed a virtue."[74] Yet again, Republicans were contemptuously linking the Hamiltonian agenda to Jewry.

A number of Federalists disavowed anti-Jewish bigotry within their own ranks as well. In 1802, for instance, a Federalist paper in rural Pennsylvania leveled an antisemitic attack on a Republican editor who had one Jewish grandparent; Federalists in nearby Pittsburgh organized a gathering to disaffiliate themselves from that kind of religious intolerance.[75] They further announced in the *Pittsburgh Gazette* their "abhorrence of the vile calumnies, falsehood, and slander which have so frequently appeared in certain newspapers disgracing the name of liberty."[76] Hamilton, too, was willing to criticize a fellow Federalist for antisemitism—his adversary in the Le Guen case, Gouverneur Morris, was a prominent member of the Federalist Party.

Hamilton was hardly a devout Christian, but there were isolated instances when he sought to instrumentalize Christianity for political ends. As French-American relations deteriorated in 1797 and anxieties about a possible war increased, he wrote a message to a congressman that touted the prospect of a "national appeal to Heaven for protection." Hamilton made plain that his rationale was rooted in utility, not theology: "The politician will consider this as an important means of influencing opinion."[77] A year later, Hamilton attempted to use religion to sway public sentiment, publishing an essay in a New York paper that vilified "the disgusting spectacle of the French revolution" for exhibiting "animosity to the Christian system."[78] He was not wrong on the facts—revolutionaries in France had confiscated church property and even executed nuns.[79]

The election of 1800 then saw the Federalists lose control of both the presidency and Congress, prompting Hamilton to propose as a political tonic a Christian Constitutional Society. This was a passing thought that he mentioned once in a letter to an ally in Congress. Hamilton never broached the topic again, much less brought it to fruition. Moreover, the tenor of the letter makes clear that he was motivated by partisan strategy rather than religious conviction. In Hamilton's view, the Republicans understood the advantage of appealing to the heart over the head. The Federalists, on the other hand, were overly reliant on the "reason of men" and insufficiently attuned to the "impulse of passion." To win back "popular favor," the Federalist Party ought to appeal to Christian voters in religious terms, he explained.[80]

Hamilton did not discuss Christianity in his personal correspondence, with one exception—letters to his pious wife, Eliza. Yet even those allusions to Christianity were sporadic, occasioned only by the illness or death of someone in Eliza's family. At those trying times, Hamilton would urge his wife to find resolve in either "Christian fortitude" or "Christian resignation."[81] He also rented a pew for her in Trinity Church in Manhattan, where their children were baptized,[82] and he expected his eldest son, Philip, to attend church.[83] Hamilton and his law partner, Richard Harison, even provided Trinity Church with pro bono legal counsel, although that likely owed much to the fact that Harison was a vestryman at Trinity.[84] Hamilton was not himself a member of the church.[85] Trinity's surviving communion book from that time period shows Eliza's name, while her husband's is conspicuously absent.[86] Indeed, Hamilton did not belong to any church, meaning that in the eyes of some denominations, he simply was not a Christian at all.[87]

In the few instances when Hamilton discussed God, he described God as an engaged participant in world events. Hamilton credited "the blessing of providence" with having staved off "national bankruptcy" under the feeble Articles of Confederation.[88] During John Adams's presidency, Hamilton grew frustrated with the administration's foreign policy and told Washington, "My trust in Providence, which has so often interposed in our favor, is my only consolation."[89] And in an 1803 essay in the *New-York Evening Post*, Hamilton attributed "the kind interpositions of an over-ruling Providence" for both America's victory in the Revolution and its purchase of the Louisiana Territory from France.[90] Because of Hamilton's distance from Christian practice, historians have at times described him as a deist,[91] but his belief in an activist God was directly at odds with deism's conception of divinity as noninterventionist.

The developments leading up to the coda of Hamilton's life—his notorious duel—offer some additional insight into his complicated relationship with religion. Although he was a private citizen in the early 1800s, Hamilton still managed to exploit his residual clout to foil Aaron Burr's political ambitions. Hamilton believed that Burr answered to nothing beyond his own ego. "His public principles have no other spring or aim than his own aggrandizement," Hamilton once scoffed.[92] He helped derail Burr's designs on both the presidency in 1800 and the New York governorship four years later.[93]

Tensions between them reached dangerous proportions after Hamilton openly maligned Burr at a dinner in Albany around the time of the 1804 gubernatorial election. One of the supper companions recounted Hamilton's disparaging remarks in a letter that was reprinted in a newspaper.[94] Diminished by Hamilton in the courtroom, the political arena, and now the press, Burr would suffer his antagonist no longer. He asked Hamilton to either disavow the alleged insults or own them outright.[95] Hamilton well understood that taking the former path meant a truce and the latter a duel. But he could not bring himself to offer concessions to a man for whom he had so little respect.[96]

As he prepared for his encounter with Burr, Hamilton penned a statement to be made public afterward in which he explained the balance of factors that informed his tortured decision to step onto the dueling grounds. Hamilton acknowledged a number of reasons not to partake in a potentially fatal duel. For one, there was Eliza and their brood to think of: "My wife and children are extremely dear to me." Hamilton also recognized that dueling was an illicit practice that undermined the very rule of law to which he dedicated his career. He worried, too, about his creditors. The man who had consolidated the nation's debt was steeped in his own; his death would leave his creditors partially repaid at best. And, notably, Hamilton entertained religious objections. "My religious and moral principles are strongly opposed to the practice of dueling," he stressed.[97] Hamilton was not alone in having reservations about duels. Numerous ministers, newspapers, and scholars across the country deprecated dueling as a barbaric relic.[98]

Yet dueling still enjoyed a certain prestige in American culture, especially among soldiers and politicians—and Hamilton fell into both categories.[99] He typified many contemporary duelists who, despite misgivings, were nonetheless in thrall to the honor code.[100] They fashioned themselves gentlemen whose stature and self-worth were predicated on their willingness to hazard their lives in defense of their honor.[101] As Hamilton's statement put it, "All the considerations which constitute what men of the world denominate honor, impressed on me (as I thought) a peculiar necessity not to decline the call."[102]

Hamilton went on to explain that only if he stood his ground against Burr could he maintain, in the eyes of his fellow citizens, the credibility needed to help the nation navigate future "crises of our public affairs." Plainly, Hamilton had not abandoned hope that he might one day reclaim the reins of state power. Yet he was also mindful that dueling was not uniformly embraced by Americans. And so Hamilton added that he was determined, if "it pleases God to give me the opportunity, to reserve and throw away my first fire"—that is, he would aim his pistol away from Burr.[103] While Hamilton's participation in the duel was a gesture to those who commended the practice, his pledge to "throw away" his bullet was a nod to those who condemned it. This was a deft exercise in political optics that promised to preserve his standing with the greatest number of people whether he lived or died.

By his own admission, Hamilton was driven to duel by outward concerns about his public reputation, but his motives were likely rooted as well in a lifelong inward struggle to grapple with his harrowing past. The honor code would have appealed to Hamilton not just as a former soldier and statesman but as a Caribbean orphan forever plagued by anxiety about his status in the world.[104] Despite Hamilton's heroics in battle and achievements in government, he remained overly sensitive to slights. One of his allies observed of Hamilton, “No man, not the Roman Cato himself, was more inflexible on every point that touched … integrity and honor.”[105] Perhaps only glory in death would provide him what the feats of a lifetime could not.

Hamilton’s insistence that he owed a duty to God to direct his gun away from Burr appears to be not solely opportunistic but also heartfelt. The night before the duel, a confidant urged Hamilton to fire at Burr and thereby increase his chances for survival. Hamilton, however, was immovable. “My friend, it is the effect of a religious scruple, and does not admit of reasoning,” he explained. “It is useless to say more on the subject, as my purpose is definitely fixed.”[106]

Both in the statement that he prepared for public consumption and in his foregoing remark to his friend, Hamilton spoke of faith in broad terms with no specific references to Christianity. But he also authored a secret letter to Eliza, to be delivered to her only in the event of his death, which framed the occasion in Christian terms that would have been meaningful to her. Hamilton assured her that he would not discharge his weapon at Burr owing to the “scruples of a Christian” and offered these final instructions: “I charge you to remember that you are a Christian.”[107] Eliza was unaware of the imminent duel as her husband steeled himself for this final mission, one whose tragic aftermath raises questions anew about the authenticity of his Christian bona fides.

Epilogue

AT DAWN ON JULY 11, 1804, on a stony ledge above the Hudson River, Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton broke the morning calm with the sounds of gunfire. A bullet tore into Hamilton's spine, and he sprang up on his toes for a moment before collapsing to the ground.[1] He knew straight away that the wound would be fatal. "I am a dead man," Hamilton declared.[2] The surgeon on the scene was equally certain of his mortal fate, later recalling, "His countenance of death I shall never forget."[3] Burr stood unharmed. Hamilton's bullet had hit a tree branch more than twelve feet from Burr; either Hamilton shot first and did so, as promised, without an intent to kill, or he pulled his trigger merely as a reflexive muscle spasm when his body absorbed Burr's bullet.[4]

Hamilton was quickly rowed from the dueling grounds in Weehawken, New Jersey, to lower Manhattan for urgent medical care and conveyed to a bedroom in the house of the director of the Bank of New York. As word spread through the streets that Hamilton was on his deathbed, the usual bustle of the city gave way to a stunned stillness.[5] Crowds gathered outside the home where Hamilton rested.[6] Though paralyzed, he was still lucid in mind and intelligible in speech. Hamilton asked first that his wife be sent for, and then that a bishop give him communion.[7]

Maybe a man who had exhibited relative indifference toward Christianity for decades suddenly accepted Jesus. But there is another explanation more consistent with the rest of Hamilton's life. Eliza took Christian rites seriously, and she would soon be at her husband's deathbed. Hamilton no doubt understood that if he were to finally take communion, it could provide Eliza with a measure of solace amid the grief about to envelop her life.

Bishop Benjamin Moore came to Hamilton's side but refused to administer communion. For one, Moore condemned dueling as a "barbarous custom." And it seems that the bishop also entertained doubts about the sincerity of someone who neither belonged to a church nor previously had taken communion, for Hamilton felt compelled to plead that his request for an eleventh-hour communion did not spring from a sudden impulse but was actually a long-standing desire. He tried to reassure Moore: "It has for some time past been the wish of my heart, and it was my intention to take an early opportunity of uniting myself to the church by the reception of that holy ordinance." The bishop eventually acceded to his wishes.[8] When Eliza arrived, Hamilton invoked her faith: "Remember, my Eliza, you are a Christian."[9]

With steady doses of opiate, Hamilton persisted through the night under the watchful gaze of his wife and friends. Bearing witness to the slow and painful death of the man they all loved was almost insufferable. The next day, as Hamilton grew weaker, his seven children were brought to his bed so that he could gaze upon them a final time. His rivals—Jefferson, Madison, Adams—would live into their golden years. But on the afternoon of July 12, 1804, Alexander Hamilton, no older than fifty, took his last breath.[10]

Contemporary commentary on Hamilton's deathbed communion is revealing of his apathy toward Christianity prior to the duel. The *Daily Advertiser* newspaper wrote of Hamilton that by "receiving in attestation of his faith the sacrament of the Lord's Supper" in "his last hours," he "has not left the world to doubt of his faith." The article thus intimated that without such a display of religiosity at the end, his Christianity would otherwise have been in doubt. Similarly, a pastor in Albany insisted of Hamilton's communion, "This last act, more than any other, sheds glory on his character. Everything else death effaces. Religion alone abides with him on his deathbed. He dies a Christian."[11] To stress how Hamilton died a Christian was to concede that he did not live as one. Had Hamilton practiced Christianity before the duel, there would be little impetus for the pastor to proclaim that death effaced all else in his life.

Hamilton's enemies also took note of his last-minute Christian awakening but were unmoved. A remorseless Burr (who would spend years in exile avoiding criminal charges for the duel) complained to a friend that Hamilton's "last hours … appear to have been devoted to malevolence and hypocrisy."[12] John Adams, who had been publicly besmirched by Hamilton,[13] wrote in his autobiography that he would not "suffer my character to lie under infamous calumnies, because the author of them, with a pistol bullet through his spinal marrow, died a penitent."[14] And so Hamilton's admirers and adversaries alike considered his communion an anomalous departure from his usual lack of Christian piety. These accounts from the time of Hamilton's passing—as well as Hamilton's own deathbed acknowledgment that he wished to, but had not yet, united himself to the church—serve to cast doubt on a claim made by his son fully sixty years later that Alexander had espoused Eliza's faith well before the duel.[15]

As tolling bells announced Hamilton's death, a dark cloud of bereavement engulfed New York.[16] One of the best surviving descriptions of the scene comes from Rebecca Gratz, a twenty-three-year-old Jew from Pennsylvania renowned for her philanthropic work and striking beauty.[17] "The whole city of New York is in a state of consternation.

You can have no idea of the general mourning here," she shared with her sister.[18] For Gratz, the grief was personal. Her family members had long been political devotees of Hamilton, and she herself had grown up as a friend to Hamilton's children when he lived in Philadelphia as treasury secretary.[19] That Hamilton allowed the sons and daughters of Jews to play with his own stands as further testament to his personal comfort with Jewish people.

A founding father, still in his prime, gunned down on the field of honor was a tragedy of devastating proportions, and the grandeur of Hamilton's funeral befitted the gravity of the loss. Shopkeepers closed their businesses, flags were lowered to half-staff, and throngs packed the route of his funeral procession. Only the death of George Washington had occasioned public grief of this magnitude. Hamilton's corpse wound through the streets of lower Manhattan to the sounds of chiming bells and firing cannons. Spectators mounted rooftops and scaled trees to see above the heads of the tear-drenched crowds below. The slow-moving cortege took two hours to reach Eliza's church, where Hamilton was eulogized before his burial there.[20] The following day Rebecca Gratz recorded, "Yesterday was a day of sorrow and lamentation. I never witnessed so distressing a scene. The procession was conducted with the utmost solemnity and [in] every countenance might be traced the heart's affliction."[21] Alexander Hamilton had come to New York an anonymous immigrant. He died there its greatest citizen.

Among the founders, Hamilton has always cut a unique figure—his Caribbean origins, financial ingenuity, and dramatic death all distinguish him from the other icons of his era. Hamilton's ties to the people and faith of Judaism make him that much more singular. In all probability he had a Jewish identity in childhood, and in all certainty he attended a Jewish school. Though not a Jew in his American years, the adult Hamilton expressed deep reverence for Judaism and demonstrated sensitivity to the age-old oppression of its adherents. He also cultivated numerous connections to the Jewish community in the United States. As a famed lawyer, Hamilton advocated for Jewish citizens in the courts. As an influential alumnus, he proved critical in making Jews eligible for the Columbia presidency and placing the first Jew on the college's board. As a far-sighted treasury secretary, he willed into existence a financial system that created opportunities for Jews who were excluded from other professions. Hamilton's efforts to build a society where Jew and Gentile would partake as equals underscore the democratic possibilities of the young nation, even as the persistence of antisemitism meant that the radical promise of the Declaration of Independence would remain only partially realized for the Jews of the early republic.

Indeed, Hamilton was distinct from other founders in part because his relationship to Jewry was unsullied by antisemitic bias. If Jefferson and Hamilton both defended civic equality for Jews, Jefferson alone described them as heirs to a corrupt religion. If Jay and Hamilton both claimed credit for Jewish-friendly reforms at Columbia, Jay alone advocated the mass conversion of Jews to Christianity. If Madison and Hamilton both acknowledged the long history of Jewish persecution, Madison alone relied on antisemitism as a rationale for firing a government official. If Adams and Hamilton both conveyed great respect for Judaism, Adams alone invoked the word "Jew" as a slur. To be sure, Washington matched Hamilton in the absence of prejudice toward Jews, and the Newport letter marked a seminal moment in Jewish history; still, Washington's exposure to Jews was minimal compared to Hamilton's.

What's more, no founder aside from Hamilton saw antisemitic sentiment mobilized against his goals with such regularity. He tirelessly promoted the Constitution, whose ratification was resisted by a number of Anti-Federalists because it opened federal office to Jews. At trial, opposing counsel slandered Hamilton's witnesses as liars whose testimony ought to be discounted purely on the basis of their Jewish faith. Hamilton's economic policy in particular unleashed a torrent of anti-Jewish vitriol. According to his detractors, the treasury secretary was forming an unholy alliance with rapacious Jews. It was alleged that he would sell out his countrymen to Jewish creditors. Hamilton and his Jewish accomplices, critics claimed, did not produce wealth through honest work on farms; they reaped their profits from the dark arts of finance. Common soldiers and soil tillers were supposedly the innocent victims of Hamilton's collusion with Jews. Unlike the other founding fathers, he had not been born in the original thirteen colonies, and so Hamilton was conveniently smeared as an outsider whose loyalty was as suspect as the border-crossing Jews with whom he purportedly conspired.

Hamilton's antagonists were peddling a pernicious breed of bigotry. And yet, in many respects, the embattled Hamilton and his Jewish compatriots *were* outsiders. In a world that was largely rural, they flocked to city life. At a time when agriculture predominated, they engaged in trade and banking. Amid a society where many feared centralized power, Hamilton and his Jewish supporters embraced the new federal Constitution with its strong national government. Their very status as outsiders turned them into consummate modernizers.[22]

It is little coincidence, then, that the forces arrayed against Hamilton were often the very same that sought to relegate Jews to the margins of American life. Fear of Hamilton's agenda and fear of Jews were commonly conflated because they were both, ultimately, fears about modernization. The cosmopolitan marketplace that provided fresh opportunity to talented strivers was to many others a symbol of an ominous fate that threatened their way of life. Hamilton envisioned a future that belonged not to the sons of plantation aristocrats but to the itinerant, the enterprising, the urban—in other words, to people like him and his Jewish allies. While Jews were not fully accepted in the America of Hamilton's day, they surely could be in the America of Hamilton's dream.

ABBREVIATIONS

Archives

AHP	Alexander Hamilton Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.
AJA	Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati.
AJHS	American Jewish Historical Society, New York and Boston.
GKP	Gouverneur and Kemble Papers, New York Public Library.
GWP	George Washington Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.
NHCS	Nevis Historical and Conservation Society, Charlestown, Nevis.
NYSA	New York State Archives, Albany, NY.
RBML	Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University in the City of New York.
RIGS	Rigsarkivet (Danish National Archives, Copenhagen), Vestindisk-guineiske kompagni, Bogholderen på St. Croix, Mandtalslister og matrikler (scanned version).
YIVO	YIVO Institute for Jewish Research Archives, New York.

Collected and Published Works

DHRC	*The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution Digital Edition.* Edited by John P. Kaminski, Gaspare J. Saladino, Richard Leffler, Charles H. Schoenleber, and Margaret A. Hogan. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009.
LPAH	*The Law Practice of Alexander Hamilton: Documents and Commentary.* Edited by Julius Goebel et al. 5 vols. New York: Columbia University Press, 1969–1981.
PAH	*The Papers of Alexander Hamilton Digital Edition*. Edited by Harold C. Syrett. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2011.
PAJHS	*Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*.
PBF	*The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*. Edited by Leonard W. Labaree et al. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959–.
PGWC	*The Papers of George Washington Digital Edition—Confederation Series.*

INTRODUCTION

"I wish I had a little Jew in me," Theodore Roosevelt once mused to a friend. Mere wishing would indeed mark the limits of Roosevelt's claim to Jewish ancestry—not a drop of Jewish blood coursed through his veins. If anything, he was the ultimate insider of the Protestant elite that had long dominated American life. His father descended from a wealthy family whose eminence in Manhattan dated back generations. His mother was a Southern belle from Georgia whose lineage included a delegate to the Continental Congress. Theodore lived a life consistent with his patrician pedigree, enrolling at Harvard, serving as a military officer, and seizing the grandest prize of all: the Oval Office.[1]

This silver-spooned statesman who had grown up in the fashionable neighborhood of Gramercy Park in New York had little in common with the Yiddish-speaking immigrants moistening their brows in the sweatshops of the Lower East Side just a short walk away. Roosevelt's privileged path was even further removed from the dreadful subsistence of Jews struggling to survive in Eastern Europe. And yet, for all the differences between Roosevelt and embattled Jews on both sides of the Atlantic, their causes became pivotal to his presidency. He would help shape their lives—and they, in turn, his legacy.

When an assassin's bullet felled William McKinley and catapulted Vice President Roosevelt to the White House in 1901, few could have imagined the central role that Jewish issues would play in TR's administration. But those issues would make front-page headlines, feature in State of the Union messages, and become rallying cries in political campaigns. It is striking, then, how little ink historians have spilled on the Jewish dimensions of his presidential tenure. Many excellent volumes do comprehensively cover other aspects of Roosevelt's statecraft. Yet his Jewish affairs—diplomatic and domestic—have never before received book-length treatment. This study offers the first, surfacing numerous historical sources that were previously unexplored in the vast canon of Roosevelt scholarship.

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Notwithstanding Roosevelt's blue-blooded background, arguably no predecessor of his would have arrived at the White House better prepared to address antisemitism abroad and its ripple effects at home. He served as New York's enterprising police commissioner in the mid-1890s, becoming a conspicuous presence on the Lower East Side. Nowhere else in America did Eastern European Jewish immigrants concentrate in such immense numbers. To New Yorkers, it was simply "the East Side." Jewish crowds crammed into local venues to hear Commissioner Roosevelt espouse his egalitarian ethos. He also sought to undermine antisemitic tropes about Jewish frailty by encouraging the neighborhood's brawny Jews to join his police force. And at East Side nuptials, Roosevelt even escorted Jewish brides to their wedding receptions.[2]

Soon TR was famously leading the Rough Riders into battle, where Jewish volunteers joined their mustachioed colonel in facing down Spanish snipers amid the Cuban hills. He took great pride in those Jewish soldiers, especially one nicknamed "Pork Chop." Roosevelt quickly translated his military renown into a successful gubernatorial race in New York. From the governor's mansion, he descended into the bowels of the East Side tenements to see for himself the Jewish garment workers slaving over sewing machines in hazardous conditions for paltry wages. TR consequently rallied the state legislature to implement major reforms.[3]

Roosevelt's deep history with the Jewish community would lend him insight and credibility when he seized the reins of presidential power at the record age of forty-two and confronted a vexing series of Jewish issues. Yet his past experiences with Jewry only took him so far in forging a better future for Jews. With each challenge, he found himself navigating dueling demands. The opposing forces acting on Roosevelt at any given moment were often impossible to reconcile. This book argues that the combustion of those forces resulted in two Theodore Roosevelts. One inspired his Jewish constituents; the other disappointed them. One spoke up for persecuted Jews overseas; the other kept a studied silence. One roundly repudiated Jew-hatred; the other indulged in antisemitic tropes. One warmly embraced Jewish immigrants; the other sought to limit their admission. One called on Jewish newcomers to honor their heritage; the other expected their homogenized assimilation. One advanced Jewish causes selflessly for humane principles; the other did so self-servingly for electoral politics. In short, Roosevelt personified the contradictions and complexities of the nation that elected him.

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The thorniest dilemma involved crafting an American response to Russia's barbarous breed of Jew-baiting. From the czar's throne in the capital of St. Petersburg, Nicholas II ruled over half the world's Jews. They endured debilitating restrictions: schools instituted quotas on Jewish students, professional guilds curbed Jewish membership, and huge swaths of Russian territory excluded Jewish residents. As severe as these strictures were, no one yet knew when the twentieth century dawned that Russian Jewry was on the eve of its greatest crisis yet.[4]

Roosevelt's tenure in office happened to coincide with an appalling wave of mob attacks against Russia's Jews known as pogroms—a Russian term meaning "devastation." For three horrifying years, marauding gangs of ordinary Russians routinely slaughtered their Jewish neighbors. Sometimes Russian authorities passively watched the butchery; other times they actively encouraged it. Never before in the dark history of that empire had Jewish blood flowed so freely. Most Russian Jews lacked the means to flee the corpse-strewn rubble of their communities, where they lived under the omnipresent threat of the next massacre. These catastrophic circumstances prompted Roosevelt to engage in an ongoing calculus about how to stanch the Jewish bloodbath.[5]

Certainly, Russia wasn't the only country whose antisemitism begged Roosevelt's attention. So did Romania and Morocco. Roosevelt felt relatively emboldened in confronting those weaker states over their anti-Jewish bigotry. But Russia had far more power than these other nations. It also had far more Jews. Nowhere else were the risks—and the stakes—of Roosevelt's Jewish diplomacy so high. America was just then emerging as a major player in the global arena, and Jews the world over anxiously waited to see whether Roosevelt would use his nation's newfound stature to advance a humanitarian vision in the czar's dominions.[6]

As Roosevelt contemplated his options, several variables weighed in favor of a diplomatic intervention on behalf of Russian Jewry. TR harbored a longstanding affinity for the Jewish people and genuinely abhorred the atrocities visited upon them. He was also drawn to the idea of America as a moral lodestar in the world. Many of his constituents felt the same way. They were aghast at the gruesome details of Russian-Jewish life—men savagely beaten, women serially violated, children tragically orphaned. Across the United States, mass protests of Jews and Gentiles pleaded for their president to intercede. They imagined that if Roosevelt forcefully spoke out, his words would affirm America's high-minded ideals and shame Russia into reversing its repression.[7]

But countervailing considerations advised against a rebuke of Russia. European officials were unnerved that Roosevelt would potentially flout a strong diplomatic norm that forbade one country from meddling in another's domestic affairs. Roosevelt's own State Department was similarly alarmed at that prospect. Rumors flew—with more validity than the president realized—that his secretary of state might resign over TR's possible intervention.[8] And any American remonstrance of Russia would carry substantial risks. It could alienate the czarist regime, which would resist the perception that St. Petersburg took orders from Washington. The Russians could retaliate by closing prized ports to U.S. trade or, even worse, severing diplomatic ties entirely. Roosevelt also fretted that issuing public denunciations of pogroms might actually exacerbate problems for Russia's

Jews. Although he didn't specify what problems he foresaw, undoubtedly his fear was that Russian Gentiles who resented America's bid to shame them might reassert their pride by further lashing out at their Jewish neighbors. Complicating matters was America's own scourge of mob violence directed at a marginalized minority—if Roosevelt admonished Russia over its Jewish carnage, he risked provoking an embarrassing censure from St. Petersburg about the ruthless lynching of Blacks in the United States. Perhaps most significantly, no other head of state in the world had dared to confront Russia over the pogroms. Roosevelt would be going it alone.[9] These fraught factors underscore an exasperating truth about international affairs: evil in the world may be unambiguous, but determining the optimal diplomatic response is rarely straightforward. Amid profound uncertainties and competing exigencies, Roosevelt pursued an ever-changing foreign policy with Russia.

At times, Roosevelt defied both the czar and international custom by emphatically championing the cause of Russia's Jews. He insisted the United States had a "manifest duty" to condemn the brutality that pogromists inflicted on Jewish victims. Grateful Jews in America celebrated him for his rhetorical defense of their coreligionists abroad. Roosevelt's approach at such moments should suggest a reappraisal of his famous maxim, "Speak softly and carry a big stick," by which he meant backstopping diplomacy with armed force. That aphorism did fairly describe Roosevelt's imperial disposition toward Latin America. But in his willingness to challenge Russia absent any military threat, we see a striking illustration of the reverse: Roosevelt spoke loudly with no stick at all.[10]

In other instances, however, he opted for public silence. Conditions periodically required him to promote Russian-Jewish interests covertly and thereby forgo popular credit. Sometimes he deemed it prudent to abstain from even private entreaties to St. Petersburg, especially when Russian society at large began to spiral into a violent abyss. Despite his compassion for oppressed Jews, Roosevelt harbored significant doubts about America's ability to police the world. His calculated reserve at such times frustrated his Jewish supporters at home. But it should also serve to complicate accusations of "cowboy diplomacy" that his critics leveled against him in his day and thereafter. Roosevelt has often been derided for applying a Wild West approach to global affairs and violently thrashing about the world stage.[11] To be sure, he oversaw an aggressive expansion of American influence in the Western Hemisphere. But declassified records from Roosevelt's Jewish diplomacy reveal his keen sensitivity to shifting context. We find in that version of Roosevelt not so much cowboy bravado as careful calibration.[12]

Another noteworthy feature of Roosevelt's foreign relations was his tendency to relocate decision-making on Jewish matters away from the State Department and toward an inner circle of Jewish allies. Only one of his Jewish confidants even worked for his administration. Roosevelt was perfectly content to resolve key questions of Jewish diplomacy through, say, a freewheeling conversation over lunch at his summer house with a handful of informal Jewish advisors. The State Department often found itself reduced to executing orders instead of driving policy. And Roosevelt's Jewish associates didn't merely guide his thinking on Jewish issues. They also pursued their own shadow diplomacy, directly beseeching foreign officials to alleviate Jewish suffering. In Roosevelt, these Jewish leaders found a partner willing to discreetly augment their efforts through his own channels.[13]

The composition of Roosevelt's Jewish brain trust reflects a schism in Jewish life in that era. His Jewish foreign policy concerned the great mass of Eastern European Jews who subsisted on meager earnings and Orthodox pieties. Yet Roosevelt didn't consult immigrants who had freshly fled that benighted world. Instead, he relied on the counsel of elite American Jews whose profiles were very different from their persecuted coreligionists overseas—his advisors were Central European in their origin, rich in their resources, and Reform in their Judaism. They lived in Upper East Side townhomes, not Lower East Side tenements. For all Roosevelt's handshaking and speechifying in Jewish slums, behind closed doors he depended on the kind of assimilated Jew he might have once met amid the verdant quads of Harvard Yard or at a posh party in an uptown brownstone.[14]

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Antisemitism posed problems not just beyond America's borders but also within them. Roosevelt well knew that Jew-hatred had significant purchase on his own country. After all, many of his best friends were antisemites. The elites who populated his social stratum were often aghast at the specter of their summer resorts and prep schools becoming overrun with affluent Jews. Nor did these genteel Anglo-Saxons thrill to the immiserated Jewish immigrants flooding their city streets.[15]

Roosevelt may have hobnobbed with bigots, but that didn't mean he let their prejudice stand unanswered. Shortly after his college graduation, Roosevelt castigated fellow members of a Republican club who wanted to reject a Jewish applicant on religious grounds.[16] Likewise, a Roosevelt companion once claimed in print that no Jew should become a military officer, prompting TR to press him, "Don't you think this criticism was unjust?"[17] And after hosting a novelist for an afternoon at the Harvard Club, Roosevelt noticed that the writer's newest short story featured a Jewish antagonist but exclusively Gentile protagonists. "There ought also to be a Jew among them!" urged Roosevelt.[18] The best indicator of TR's goodwill toward Jews wasn't his vocal defense of Jews in public, where he stood to score points with Jewish constituencies. It was, rather, his willingness in private moments to risk alienating friends over their intolerance of Jews when he had nothing to gain.

American antisemitism was hardly limited to Anglo-Saxon aristocrats who knocked back champagne flutes at Newport parties while scoffing about Jewish bankers. Heartland farmers and urban slum-dwellers also engaged in their share of Judeophobia. All manner of stereotypes gained traction across these varied segments of society: Jews were puppet masters manipulating Gentiles; Jews were perverted seducers of Christian girls; Jews were rapacious capitalists bamboozling the common people. But America wasn't uniformly prejudiced toward Jewry. The nation had a philosemitic streak that cherished the Jewish community. Many Gentiles extended a helpful hand to Jewish immigrants and denounced Jew-hatred in its many forms.[19]

Roosevelt embodied that very contradiction. He repeatedly repudiated antisemitism, and yet Roosevelt himself periodically peddled the kind of prejudice he condemned from others. TR once derided a Jewish journalist as a “circumcised skunk.” And in a letter to a friend, Roosevelt employed the antisemitic epithet “sheeny” to describe a Jewish politician. The word “sheeny” was sufficiently offensive by the standards of TR’s own era that his friend doctored Roosevelt’s letter before it appeared in a published collection of their correspondence. Roosevelt also occasionally suffered from delusions that furtive Jewish machinations lay behind troubling global developments.[20]

His antisemitism and philosemitism didn’t always sit in tension; they sometimes fused together in unexpected ways. As police commissioner, he wanted to gather Jewish officers for an important opportunity, but Roosevelt engaged in stereotyping by instructing a subordinate to identify Jewish policemen based solely on their facial features: “the stronger their ancestral marking, the better,” Roosevelt insisted. During his presidency, he made a historic appointment of a Jew to a major office; however, TR indelicately suggested that younger Jews should look up to that appointee as the “ideal of the successful man rather than some crooked Jew money-maker.” And after his administration, Roosevelt praised Jewish children for outpacing their Gentile counterparts in school, yet by asserting that “the Jewish children are very much brighter than the American,” he implied that Jewish students were somehow not quite American.[21]

In paradoxically melding philosemitic and antisemitic sentiments, Roosevelt was actually typical of innumerable American Gentiles. One historian of Jew-hatred has perceptively observed, “A stereotype may express ambivalent emotions. It may blend affection and contempt.… Many Americans were both pro- and anti-Jewish at the same time.”[22] Roosevelt’s own mixture of benevolence and bias toward Jews does not appear to have damaged his standing with his Jewish constituents—perhaps because Jews themselves sometimes advanced Jewish interests by relying on antisemitic stereotypes. For example, the czar’s regime genuinely believed that Jews manufactured public opinion in the United States, and Roosevelt’s Jewish-

American allies were more than happy to leverage that unfounded paranoia in their shadow diplomacy with Russian officials.[23]

* * *

Roosevelt’s views about Jewish immigration were similarly conflicted. From colonial times until McKinley’s death—a period stretching a quarter-millennium—America had amassed a Jewish population of one million. It took only the seven-and-a-half years of Roosevelt’s presidency to nearly double that figure, as Jewish survivors of persecution packed the docks at American ports. This unprecedented crush of Jewish refugees raised hard questions for the nation, both practical and moral. Indigent Jews overwhelmed city slums and saturated the labor market. Whether to receive these desperate souls in unlimited numbers was a difficult quandary. Certainly, Jews weren’t the only immigrant group whose inflow generated controversy. But American antisemitism made Jewish migration especially charged.[24] Rival imperatives over immigration led to two Theodore Roosevelts: one who earned the devotion of his Jewish constituents and another who elicited their distress.

The first Roosevelt spoke movingly of Jewish immigrant contributions to American life. His administration openly celebrated the idea of the United States as an asylum for the world’s downtrodden. Acutely aware that turning back Jewish arrivals often meant consigning them to a grim fate in their lands of origin, TR chastised the Ellis Island commissioner over his questionable deportation of Jews. Roosevelt even made a dramatic visit to that symbolic speck of land in New York harbor to announce a special committee—with Jewish representation—that would expose prejudicial practices. Most strikingly of all, Roosevelt entrusted the oversight of immigration law to a foreign-born Jew, an audacious move in an era when many “old stock” Americans were in thrall to xenophobia.[25]

But Roosevelt aggrieved his Jewish friends by backing a congressional bill that threatened to close the gates to the most marginal Jewish immigrants. The bill sought to make literacy in any language a prerequisite for admission into the country. Although neutral on its face, the bill would disproportionately reject Eastern European Jews, whose literacy rates were much lower than newcomers from the likes of England or Denmark. Roosevelt's intentions weren't sinister in endorsing the bill. He worried that immigrants who had already settled stateside would struggle to overcome poverty if their wages and living conditions were perpetually suppressed by an unrestricted deluge of foreign labor. A literacy test, Roosevelt maintained, could check industries that were taking unfair advantage of mass migration.[26]

Even so, Roosevelt's position alienated his Jewish allies. They rightly fretted that a literacy test would pose an existential threat for countless Jews seeking to escape habitual bouts of butchery overseas. And Roosevelt's support for the bill placed him on the same side as prominent xenophobes—or "nativists"—who wanted to attenuate Jewish immigration for fear it was corrupting the nation's racial purity. The bill ultimately failed to pass, but no thanks to the president.[27]

His odd confluence with nativists on the literacy test wasn't the only strange dynamic that immigration engendered in American political life. Recent Jewish arrivals, who favored an open door on immigration, found themselves aligned with the very industrial interests that exploited them. Meanwhile, some antisemitic nativists joined American Jewry in demanding pro-Jewish reforms in Russia. These nativists hoped that improved circumstances for the czar's Jewish subjects would stem the succession of steamships filled with Russian Jews clutching one-way tickets to Ellis Island.[28]

In perhaps the most counterintuitive development, Roosevelt's closest Jewish advisor—who usually embraced Jewish immigration—encouraged TR to officially lament the Jewish influx from Romania. The origins of this peculiar tactic resulted from the diplomatic protocol that discouraged a given country from criticizing another's internal affairs, even on humanitarian grounds. Roosevelt's Jewish aide prevailed upon him to adopt the following pretextual argument: because Romanian antisemitism prompted a Jewish exodus to American shores that purportedly burdened the United States, Romania's Jew-hatred was an *international* issue and thus susceptible to American reproach.[29]

In truth, Roosevelt had no qualms about admitting Romanian-Jewish refugees—they then numbered fewer than seven thousand annually—but he understood the merit of posturing as if he did. By citing America’s self-interest in reducing immigration, the Roosevelt administration was able to issue a rebuke of Romanian bigotry while paying heed to diplomatic norms. This episode runs counter to the commonplace judgment that America’s foreign policy has repeatedly used the language of altruism to camouflage a self-serving agenda. To be sure, that critique does fairly describe numerous incidents in the nation’s history. But the Roosevelt administration’s censure of Romania offers a stunning example of the opposite: America’s disingenuous invocation of its self-interest to justify what was actually a humanitarian endeavor.[30]

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It doesn’t follow, however, that Roosevelt’s intentions in his Jewish diplomacy were purely magnanimous. His international statecraft bore an intimate relationship to his pursuit of the Jewish vote at home. Roosevelt was a political animal whose ascent began in New York City, where the booming Jewish population enjoyed increasing clout with each new campaign season. Even as Roosevelt reached the national stage, he remained ever mindful of newly naturalized Jews who flocked to polling stations on election days. His Jewish diplomacy became his central pitch to these voters.

Roosevelt made sure that his resistance to antisemitism abroad featured in his party platform, his nomination acceptance, and surrogate speeches. So attuned was Roosevelt to the Jewish vote that he even let his electoral ambitions dictate certain foreign policy decisions. Amid the height of his reelection bid in 1904, for instance, Roosevelt empowered the chairman of the Republican National Committee to opportunistically declassify State Department records that would reveal a recent clandestine effort by TR on behalf of Jews. And during another election cycle, Roosevelt appeased Jewish voters by placing incessant pressure on his secretary of state to reverse an extradition ruling that would have returned a Russian émigré to the bear's claws. It would go too far to suggest that Roosevelt's Jewish diplomacy was exclusively a tool of his electioneering—after all, he sometimes secretly advanced Jewish causes overseas without any intent or attempt to later garner public credit. But it would be obtuse to ignore his willingness, whenever November grew near in even-numbered years, to make foreign policy the handmaiden of domestic politics.[31]

Given his vast remit as president, Roosevelt's granular attention to the Jewish vote is rather remarkable. One might think that a sitting head of state—responsible for a breathtaking array of challenges—wouldn't have time to peruse obscure Jewish periodicals. But when a Jewish college student published an article endorsing Roosevelt's reelection in a monthly magazine called *Menorah*, TR gushed about the piece to a friend. Nor did Roosevelt's presidential duties preclude him from keeping a close eye on municipal Jewish politics back in New York City. He was indignant when the local Republican Party put forward a slate of judicial nominees for the city bench that featured merely a secular Jew and not also an Orthodox candidate. Indeed, Roosevelt personally intervened to remedy the omission.[32]

Roosevelt's consistent focus on the Jewish electorate paid dividends at the ballot box. Naturally, he found favor with assimilated Jews who conventionally voted Republican; the genuinely striking feature of Roosevelt's electoral success is that he fared so well with Democratic-leaning Jewish immigrants. It is a testament to his popularity with the latter set of Jews that Roosevelt pulled off an extraordinary coup for a Republican presidential nominee: he actually won the Lower East Side. In another measure of his Jewish support, Roosevelt outran every last down-ballot Republican at East Side polling stations. TR's astounding performance with Jewish constituents demonstrates that their appreciation of his boldest actions in Jewish diplomacy far outweighed their frustration with his more cautious moments.

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Roosevelt's pitch to Jewish voters was, like nearly all else, riddled with contradiction. He often decried identity politics, insisting that he paid Jews in the United States the respect of treating them as simply Americans. Roosevelt esteemed the notion of civic life as a realm where common citizenship, not ethnic identity, mattered. But that was a pleasing fiction. Ethnic issues resonated with ethnic voters, Jews among them; politicians responded accordingly, Roosevelt among them. Whether touting his defiance of the czar or lining up Jewish surrogates to barnstorm the East Side, the reality is that Roosevelt routinely courted Jews *as* Jews.[33]

This tension between identity-neutral and identity-centric politics frequently surfaced when Roosevelt exercised his power of appointment. He regularly espoused the importance of religious diversity in his hiring. But Roosevelt was equally attracted to a competing conceit: the government workforce as an identity-agnostic sphere where talent alone counted. These dueling strains in his thought led to a fair degree of incoherence—in one breath he would remark on the need to deliberately include Jews in American governance, and in the next he would deny that religion played any factor in his selection of Jewish appointees. Roosevelt never was able to resolve the conflict between the identity-driven ideal of inclusivity and the identity-free ideal of meritocracy.[34]

Ambivalence about the pertinence of Jewish identity also characterized his checkered approach to Jewish assimilation. Sometimes Roosevelt emphasized a kind of uniform Americanism that called on Jewish immigrants to leave behind their Old Country ways. The version of Roosevelt who preferred homogenizing assimilation was most pronounced in his enthusiasm for the controversial play *The Melting Pot*. It tells the improbable love story of two young Russian immigrants in New York: a Jewish man whose family was slaughtered in a pogrom, and a Gentile woman whose father perpetrated that very pogrom. Across the United States, Jews panned *The Melting Pot* for effectively expecting them to abandon their heritage and intermarry their way into self-erasure. But Roosevelt saw in the play's storyline the promise of a unified America freed from Old World enmities. He considered *The Melting Pot* one of the greatest influences on his life.[35]

There was, however, a pluralistic Roosevelt who believed that Jews could integrate into the United States by honoring, not disowning, their culture. He praised Jewish Americans for remaining admirably “loyal to their faith and their race traditions.” And the Jewish tradition that Roosevelt most venerated was the heroism of the Maccabee warriors. He upheld those ancient Jewish rebels as a model for American men of Jewish faith. TR saw Maccabee lore as a useful antidote to the antisemitic trope that male Jews were feckless cowards. In Roosevelt’s estimation, Jewish men needn’t shed their heritage to shed that stereotype—to the contrary, they should embrace their own proud legacy of Maccabean valor.[36] When Roosevelt once said he wished he had a little Jewish blood in him, he surely meant this archetype of the American Maccabee.

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Writing presidential history is often a fraught exercise, Jewish history even more so. The nexus might well be combustible. Some caveats here will hopefully mitigate the risk of readers misinterpreting the book’s goals.

In recovering the underappreciated role of Jewish people and Jewish issues to Roosevelt’s life, this study doesn’t intend to imply that his days comprised an endless succession of Jewish matters. His attention was divided across many other concerns, which have received ample treatment from other scholars. In other words, I seek to enrich our already robust understanding of a multifaceted leader. Precisely because Roosevelt’s presidential portfolio was so extensive, he regularly entrusted Jewish allies with the daily management of his Jewish affairs, and he would weigh in at crucial moments—accordingly, some chapters that follow tell their story even more than his. This investigation, moreover, circumscribes its scope to Jewish causes, so it could give the misimpression that Roosevelt engaged those Jewish allies exclusively on Jewish topics; the reality is that he leaned on them for all manner of advice. Another important disclaimer: this volume does refer passingly to other ethnic groups for context, but as every work of scholarship must mark its limits somewhere, a comprehensive discussion of non-Jewish communities lies beyond my ambit here.

When a new book appears on an American president, it is a natural instinct for many readers to reassess that president’s reputation—for better or worse—in light of fresh findings. The ensuing chapters may burnish Roosevelt's reputation in some eyes and tarnish it in others. Whether readers close the covers of this book thinking better or worse of the twenty-sixth president is their prerogative. But neither outcome is the author's aim. The sole ambition of this study is to reckon with the historical record in its full complexity.

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The Jewish issues that preoccupied Roosevelt were significant—making front-page headlines, featuring in State of the Union messages, turning up in campaign speeches—because they weren't of consequence to Jews alone. Indeed, they implicated paramount questions of American life. Would the United States become an ascendant voice for moral clarity on the global stage? Would the country serve as a refuge for huddled masses from foreign lands? Would recent arrivals to American shores find that abandoning their heritage was the cost of acceptance? At stake in all these questions was nothing less than America's self-definition. That Roosevelt's answers were so conflicted reflected a nation struggling to know its own soul; that these questions remain contentious still today lends the story of Theodore Roosevelt and the Jews a timeless urgency.

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ASCENT

When the novelist Henry James visited the Lower East Side at the dawn of the twentieth century, he encountered "a Jewry that had burst all bounds."[1] A guidebook for tourists more flatteringly portrayed the neighborhood as home to a "wondrously preserved Semitic people."[2] In his famous exposé of New York's slums in the 1890s, *How the Other Half Lives*, the Danish-American reformer Jacob Riis described entering the Lower East Side from Bayard Street. "No need of asking here where we are," he reflected. Yiddish signs, Eastern European kaftans, and bearded men with yarmulkes all gave the unmistakable indication that Riis was now in "Jewtown."[3]

The sheer density of "the East Side" was arresting. "Nowhere in the world are so many people crowded together on a square mile as here," Riis reported.[4] The concentration of these people far exceeded the infrastructure, rendering filth and odor all but inevitable. One journalist recounted how residents venturing into the streets encountered "a thousand stenches of their own and others' making."[5] Amid the cramped blocks and side alleys was a chaotic mix of pushcarts, horses, and human beings. Traffic lights and stop signs were nowhere to be found—carriages and wagons moved in all directions at once.[6]

Six days of the week, commerce was the lifeblood of the Lower East Side. Along the sidewalks were storefronts of bakers, grocers, and clothiers.[7] And the streets were open-air markets where most of life's necessaries could be procured for pennies from peddlers. For centuries, European Jews had sold their wares from pushcarts—the time-trusted trade of the peddler was thus a natural default for many Jewish immigrants in the New World. Renting a pushcart on the East Side cost ten cents daily (almost four dollars today); some enterprising peddlers simply refashioned baby strollers.[8]

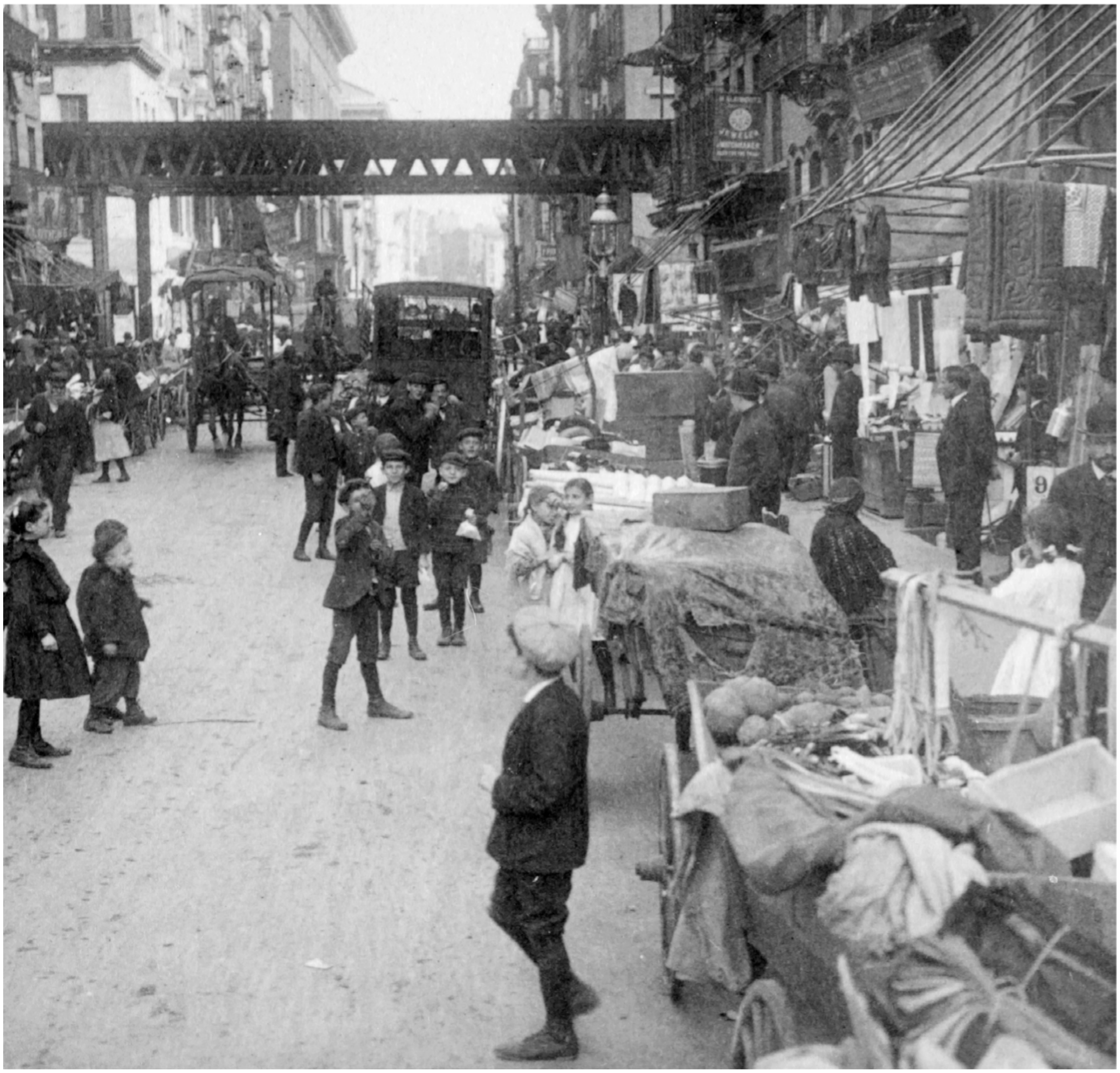

FIGURE 1.1. “How the other half lives” in a crowded Hebrew district, Lower East Side, New York City. *Source:* Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

The weekly heyday for peddlers took place on Fridays on Hester Street at the ironically named “Pig Market,” where everything *but* pork was for sale. “There is scarcely anything else that can be hawked from a wagon that is not to be found,” Jacob Riis noted, “and at ridiculously low prices.” Vendors and buyers haggled loudly over all imaginable goods—spectacles and suspenders, cups and candlesticks, pants and pickles. Fowl on offer for Shabbat dinner had, of course, been slaughtered according to kosher law. Five peaches cost a penny; broken eggs might be given away for a song. Even by the standards of the East Side, the Pig Market was congested. Riis marveled at “the crowds that jostle each other at the wagons and about the sidewalk shops.… Pushing, struggling, babbling, and shouting in foreign tongues, a veritable Babel of confusion.”[9]

Two short blocks from the heart of the Pig Market, Hester Street intersected with Allen Street, home to a notorious red-light district. Jewish prostitutes placed red lamps in their windows to signal their trade. One renowned prostitute always took leave from work on the High Holy Days, explaining to a journalist matter-of-factly, “I go to shul.”[10] On nearby Forsyth Street, Synagogue Beth Israel shared a wall with a brothel; praying congregants competed with paying customers for vocal supremacy.[11] It was hardly atypical to find sanctity and sin comingling in turn-of-the-century New York.

Forsyth Street ran parallel to Orchard Street with its many restaurants. Diners willing to part with thirteen cents (about five dollars today) could enjoy a veritable feast: stew, pie, bread, soup, pickles, and a beer.[12] Or they could turn right onto Houston Street and try the salami at a beloved deli—known today as Katz’s—that was a well-known haunt for performers in the Yiddish theaters.[13] Sometimes those theaters staged original content; other times they would adapt a Shakespearean classic with a Jewish twist. Lower East Side audiences were probably unaware that the original version of *Hamlet* did not involve a subplot where the titular character trains to become a rabbi.[14]

A six-minute stroll west on Houston Street landed you at the base of Second Avenue. That street featured so many cafés serving knishes—a hot doughy snack favored by Ashkenazi Jews—that it became known as “Knish

Alley.” These cafés formed the intellectual nexus of the Lower East Side, as patrons engaged in boisterous debates or otherwise channeled their competitive instincts into chess matches. Turning right from Second Avenue, East Siders took refuge from the neighborhood’s grime at the Tenth Street Baths (still open today). Here was one of dozens of Jewish bathhouses that offered a hot *shvitz*—or sweat bath—followed by a cold shower. Bathhouses were essential because in-home tubs were rare and washing before Shabbat was a sacred obligation. Reprieve from the street might also be sought in the barbershops, where locals forgot their workaday troubles amid conversation and card games. Candy stores, too, were popular gathering places. Many customers came for the “egg creams,” a flavored fizzy drink made with neither egg nor cream. Other candy store regulars discreetly gambled; illicit betting was curiously commonplace at the confectionaries dotting the neighborhood.[15]

Roaring above Allen Street was the elevated train. The pandemonium that prevailed in the train was every bit as frenetic as life below. Price Collier, a Midwesterner visiting New York in the 1890s, described the train cars as “gymnasiums on wheels.” Merely sitting down could be a Herculean feat. As an exasperated Collier explained, “People bending to sit down, as the car starts, place their posteriors anywhere but where they intended, and not infrequently in a space already occupied by another.” Standing passengers firmly gripped the leather straps suspended from the ceiling, a necessary precaution when the train rounded bends at a New York pace. Enduring the ride required not just physical dexterity but mental focus. “A second’s inattention, a moment’s respite from the dangling leather which hangs from the roof, and you are shot into somebody’s back, bosom, or belly,” warned Collier. He was impressed by New Yorkers’ equanimity amid the anarchy, for “no one seems disturbed or greatly put out by this involuntary riot which takes place every few seconds.”[16]

* * *

The elevated train afforded a grisly view into the dark heart of the Lower East Side: the tenements.[17] At all hours, passengers could glimpse into the open windows of these brick buildings—ordinarily five to eight stories tall—crammed with impoverished Jewish families.[18] “The architecture seemed to sweat humanity at every window and door,” a British writer remarked. “The thought of the hidden interiors was terrifying.”[19] This particular Englishman may not have summoned the nerve to venture inside these hellish buildings, but those who did would first brave narrow stairwells in the dark. From the kitchens wafted the scent of fish, cabbage, and onions. Yet neither smell nor taste was the dominant sensation of the tenements; it was sound. Because tenement units often doubled as living spaces and sweatshops, the buildings radiated with “the whir of a thousand sewing-machines,” Riis recounted, “worked at high pressure from earliest dawn, till mind and muscle give out together.”[20] More East Side Jews worked in the garment industry than in all other occupations combined.[21]

Today the term “sweatshop” generally denotes a factory—and indeed some East Siders did labor in garment factories—but most Jews in the “rag business” toiled in the cramped confines of the tenements. They took fabric cuts from manufacturers and turned them into whatever article of clothing they specialized in, perhaps trousers or coats.[22] The daily drudgery of work could stretch to eighteen hours in unfathomably tight quarters.[23] “It is not unusual to find a dozen persons—men, women, and children—at work in a single small room,” Riis detailed.[24] Close proximity and poor ventilation made the tenement stifling, especially amid the humidity of the summer.[25]

Overcrowding in the buildings meant that residents were forced to take turns sleeping. People commonly stole to the roofs for their evening slumber in the warmer months, hoping to escape the congestion, the heat, and the bedbugs in the apartments below. To offset living expenses, a family could further compress its limited space by taking in Jewish boarders. Some boarders were single, having made the trip to America solo, while others had wives and children back in the Old Country. Individual apartments lacked running water; at best, a building might have a communal faucet in the hallway. Tenement life was gloomy—literally. Most rooms were deprived of natural light, and the gas employed to illuminate them was used sparingly to reduce costs. Dim lighting made it all the easier for vermin to scurry undetected, especially if the rats took cover under the piles of fabric typically blanketing the sweatshop floors.[26]

The bleakest units in a given tenement were in the basement. Riis recalled meeting a trio of peddlers who shared a cellar apartment where “the feeblest ray of daylight never found its way.” Standing on their muddied floor, he held up his candlelight to find three “sallow faces look[ing] more like hideous ghosts than living men.”[27] For many tenement residents, the only hiatus from their crowded quarters was a half-hour’s leisure separating a long day from a short sleep. These buildings seemed to embody the muted despair of their inhabitants. In Riis’s elegiac words, “The thousands of lighted windows in the tenements glow like dull red eyes.”[28]

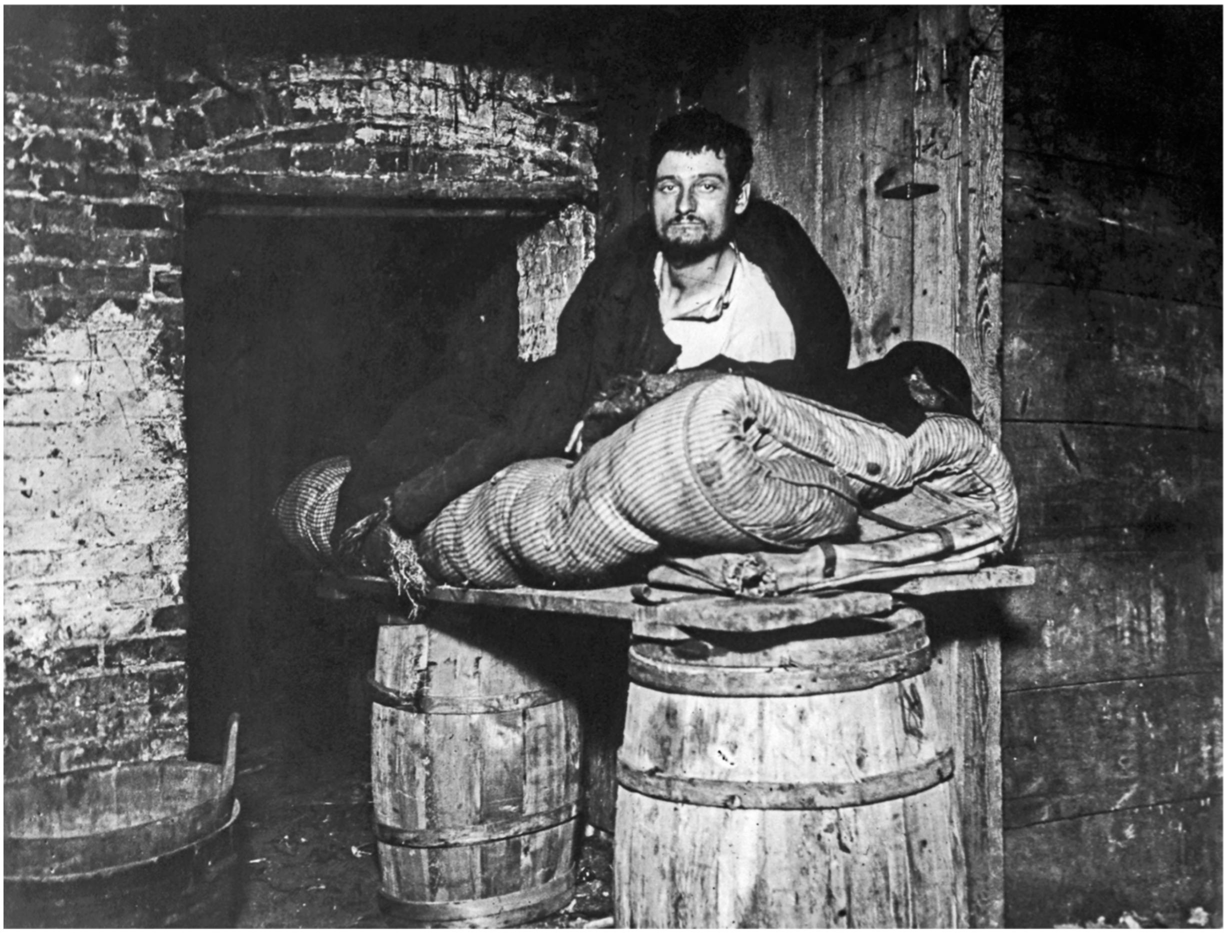

FIGURE 1.2. A peddler next to his bedroll in an East Side cellar on Ludlow Street. *Credit*: Jacob Riis. *Source*: Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Luisita L. and Franz H. Denghausen Endowment.

Befouled conditions on the Lower East Side facilitated the spread of disease. Epidemics were tragically common.[29] New York health officials gruesomely dubbed one subsection of the East Side the “suicide ward” owing to rampant deaths from typhus. Exacerbating matters, many sick Jews avoided the hospitals for fear they would be butchered there—surely a residual trauma from the Old World where Jewish lives counted for little.[30]

Although some Jewish immigrants managed to secure an education stateside and join the learned professions, the great majority remained laborers.[31] Many did not have time to learn English, much less become doctors or lawyers in their new Anglophone homeland.[32] Their hopes thus rested with their children’s future. Jewish youths typically attended local public schools during the day and then, before supper, received some supplemental Jewish instruction in tenement schools.[33] The public schools were nearly as Jewish in composition as the religious ones; for every twenty pupils in an East Side public school, nineteen were Jews. Public schools emphasized American civics, U.S. history, and above all the English language. The availability of free schooling and the Jewish premium on education proved a powerful combination. Jewish families enjoyed remarkable upward mobility, with the children of immigrants achieving a degree of success that their parents rarely imagined for themselves. “America is a land of gold,” one mother told her son. “There is no gold in the streets. The gold is in your head.” And yet many other desperate families opted to use their children in sweatshops rather than send them to school; child labor mitigated today’s burdens, even as it minimized tomorrow’s opportunities.[34]

School hours aside, children were a ubiquitous sight on the East Side. An observer remarked, “The sidewalks swarm with children, and the air rings with their clamor, as they fly back and forth at play.”[35] The most scholastic among them could be found at the Chatham Square Library, waiting to check out books in a long line that often wound its way down two stories and spilled onto the street. Other youths found less educational ways of passing time, like putting an infant sibling in a basket and letting her float along the grungy waters that lined the gutters. Still other children might pet horses in the street, sharing lollipop licks with the grateful animals.[36]

A Yiddish newspaper described the Lower East Side as a "city within a city." But even that description glossed over its multiplicity of Jewish subcultures.[37] Russian, Hungarian, Romanian, and Galician Jews all had their own enclaves within the neighborhood. And those enclaves were divided even further, with a given synagogue designated for immigrants hailing from the same town in the Old Country.[38] "Hometown societies" sprang up that helped organize life for newcomers, who could fraternize with and lean on fellow Jews from their specific place of origin.[39]

If a brief stroll through the Lower East Side was a tour of Eastern Europe, then a marginally longer stroll just beyond "Jewtown" was a tour of the world. A few blocks in any given direction might mean broaching the Irish neighborhood with its tough-minded gangs, or Chinatown where a penny would fetch a sugarcane stick, or Little Italy, which felt indistinguishable from Naples.[40] These ethnic districts served as reminders that Jews weren't the only ones enduring hardscrabble lives in urban slums.

* * *

Despite the challenges facing Jewish immigrants, the New World still marked a meaningful improvement over the perilous conditions they had fled in Eastern Europe. On the eve of the great Jewish migration to America, which began in the 1880s, about half the world's Jews lived in a region known as the "Pale of Settlement" within the Russian Empire. "Pale" refers to a stake in the ground that denotes the boundaries of a territory. The Pale of Settlement extended well beyond modern Russian borders, including parts of present-day Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia, and all of Moldova and Belarus.[41] (This book uses the term "Russian Jews" broadly as a referent to all Jews within the Russian Empire.) Russian law required that Jews, with few exceptions, reside in the Pale.

After the assassination of Czar Alexander II in 1881, conditions for Russia's Jews worsened. They became scapegoated by the masses and the state alike for the czar's murder even though all four assassins were Gentiles. Between 1881 and 1882, over two hundred Jewish communities were subjected to pogroms that claimed Jewish lives and destroyed Jewish property. Extralegal violence was compounded by official action. The so-called May Laws imposed harsh constraints on Jews. Their right to settle in various locales grew limited, even within the Pale, as was their ability to travel between communities. Jewish artisans who had been granted exceptions to live outside the Pale suddenly found themselves obligated to relocate within it. Jews faced quotas in high schools, at universities, and amid the professions.[42]

As antisemitism in its sundry cultural and legal forms made life ever more intolerable, many Jews began to cast their eyes westward toward America. They thrilled to the prospect of religious liberty and economic opportunity in the United States. A reprieve from prejudice and poverty seemed to await them just across the Atlantic. And thanks to steamships, an overseas journey that had once spanned three months now only took a week or two.[43]

The Pale wasn't the only place in Europe prompting a Jewish exodus to America in the latter years of the nineteenth century. Many Jews left their homes in Romania and Austria-Hungary, with a smaller stream coming from Western European nations. Sephardic Jews from Greece and Turkey also found their way to the United States.[44] The diversity of Jewish immigrants notwithstanding, it was Ashkenazi Jews from the Pale of Settlement who would increasingly predominate in American Jewish life.[45]

Even as unprecedented legions of Jews depleted their meager savings on one-way tickets to the New World, more stayed in the Pale than left during the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Their reasons for remaining were partly financial. Pricey bribes were required to secure the necessary paperwork to leave Russia. And the trip itself was expensive, costing more than the typical Jew's yearly income. Devout Jews often preferred to suffer the indignities of life in the Pale rather than expose their sacred faith to the irreligious materialism that was supposedly corrupting the United States.[46] Ultimately, circumstances for Jews of the Pale would worsen so severely that even the reluctant among them took their chances on America in growing numbers.

For those who decided to cast their lot on the Lower East Side—and in similar Jewish enclaves in Chicago, Baltimore, Boston, and Philadelphia—

they found that the anxieties of the pious souls back home weren't wholly unfounded. The religious strictures of the Eastern European shtetl, or Jewish village, gave way to that most quintessential of American values: choice. Some Jewish immigrants flocked to socialism and its skepticism of religion. Others fell in with the anarchists, who flouted Yom Kippur by hosting dances. Individual Jews were free to engage with their heritage on their own terms, if at all. For most East Side Jews, that meant choosing to sustain the faith of their ancestors. They kept kosher and maintained Shabbat as natural extensions of their observant upbringings in the Old Country. New York was home to hundreds of synagogues that formed the backbone of communal life.[47] The ancient sanctity that infused the East Side was perhaps most evident in a shiva house, where the recently buried were grieved. "A visit to a Jewish house of mourning is like bridging the gap of two thousand years," Jacob Riis memorably wrote. "The inexpressibly sad and sorrowful wail for the dead … comes back from the ages like a mournful echo."[48]

Here, then, was America's largest Jewish neighborhood. Old World traditions and New World temptations, grinding poverty and novel opportunity, collective belonging and individual freedom, Yiddish and English, piety and vice—all condensed into a couple square miles of teeming humanity. Slum life on the East Side may have been rife with hazard, but it was also rich with hope. No quota limited the number of Jews who could join a given profession. No edict precluded Jewish children from attending school. No pogrom ransacked Jewish businesses or shed Jewish blood. Rather than relegated to second-class citizenship, an impoverished Jew could cast a ballot that tallied just the same as the wealthiest Gentile's. But the Lower East Side wasn't only the starting point for so many Jews grasping at the American Dream. Amid its swarming streets, in the summer of 1895, a young police commissioner began chasing a dream of his own.

* * *

Theodore Roosevelt's ascension to the head of the New York Police Department was of great consequence—for him and for the city alike. He had spent the better part of a decade in a substantive but obscure role as leader of the Civil Service Commission in Washington.[49] During those years, his hometown would have offered limited opportunities for a Republican such as himself. New York City was dominated by Tammany Hall, a Democratic organization that had perfected the art of machine politics. The Tammany bosses knew how to manufacture votes from impoverished immigrants but did not fundamentally improve their lives. Little was done by the machine to meaningfully address the perilous conditions in ethnic slums—the long hours, the unhygienic apartments, the scant municipal services. However, Tammany did welcome foreigners bewildered by their adopted homeland, furnishing them with some basic necessities like food and clothing. Tammany district captains surfaced at important events on their assigned turf; in the Jewish neighborhoods, that could mean attending a constituent's bar mitzvah, gift in hand. Some immigrants who displayed their loyalty and value to the machine might even get rewarded with a low-level post in municipal government. Come election day, Tammany reaped the benefits of these efforts.[50]

If Tammany was effective at engineering ethnic votes, it was also corrupt. The police department under Tammany rule was particularly unscrupulous. From furtive kickbacks to gratuitous violence, many officers exacerbated rather than mitigated the rampant crime prevailing in the city. The shortcomings of crooked governance became particularly pronounced amid the alarming economic conditions of 1894. New York City suffered from the same high unemployment and labor strikes that were plaguing the country at large. Voters were finally ready to loosen Tammany's grip on power.[51]

A wave election that year ushered reform-minded Republicans into office nationwide, including the mayor's office in New York.[52] And the thirty-six-year-old Theodore Roosevelt was just the kind of zealot that the new mayor needed to clean up the police department—and, in turn, the city itself. Roosevelt became police commissioner in May of 1895, serving as president of the four-member Police Board.[53] He embodied the ethos of the inchoate progressive movement that would redefine American politics for the next twenty years and give this period its name: the Progressive Era.

Although progressivism was not a monolith, its adherents tended to coalesce around some broadly shared goals. For one, they sought to uproot the spoils system that doled out government jobs to unqualified lackeys. Progressives wanted power entrusted to highly trained professionals whose management of public affairs was apolitical and efficient. Roosevelt had already stood at the forefront of demanding greater accountability from municipal government—as a young state legislator in 1884, he had chaired an investigatory committee that exposed widespread graft under the Tammany regime.[54] He would later laud the 1894 election as a triumph not for Republicans per se but for integrity in civic life. “The victory had been won, not on party lines,” he insisted, “but as a fight for decent government, and for the non-partisan administration of municipal affairs.”[55] In his new role as police commissioner, he could personally remake the force to better reflect his own premium on professionalism and probity.[56]

Progressives like Roosevelt didn’t merely aim to address corruption in civic life—they wanted to remake a society in the throes of an ever-accelerating industrial revolution. To be sure, a modern economy had brought a host of benefits, from technological wonders to affordable goods. But it also led to overpopulated cities whose immigrant workers spent interminable days in dangerous factories for pitiful wages. Progressives did not wish to dismantle industrial capitalism so much as attenuate its excesses through labor reforms.[57] “We must protect the crushable elements at the base of our present industrial structure,” Roosevelt once declared in a speech.[58]

Alongside their economic agenda, many progressives nurtured a strong moralistic ethic. The movement’s leaders hoped to eradicate behavior they deemed sinful—prostitution, drinking, and gambling. Theirs was a vision rooted in the Social Gospel, a mode of Protestantism that created a religious justification for reformers to impose, in top-down fashion, their own middle-class values on others, including recent immigrants. Social Gospel enthusiasts felt a benevolent obligation to help these newcomers and a paternalistic obligation to mold them.[59]

Roosevelt emerged from this action-oriented strain of American Christianity. In his boyhood, the family’s pastor was a renowned Social

Gospel clergyman.[60] Then, as a teenager, Roosevelt told a minister that he wanted to be a "doer," to operationalize his faith through deeds.[61] As he brought his moralizing instincts into his police duties, his admirers saw Roosevelt as a principled change agent. Yet others, even in his own party, grew concerned that his righteousness was making him problematically inflexible. Roosevelt insisted, for instance, on stringently enforcing a previously moribund blue law that empowered him to shut down saloons on Sundays; some Republican leaders feared a backlash by a hard-drinking electorate.[62]

The progressive movement had a complicated relationship with the political party system. In New York City at this time, where Democrats had long practiced machine politics, progressives unsurprisingly leaned Republican. But nationally the major parties found within their ranks both proponents and critics of progressivism. The progressives on both sides of the aisle would gain in strength over the course of Roosevelt's lifetime.

* * *

As Roosevelt waged his two-front war—reforming the police on the one hand, policing the city on the other—he was hardly content to remain behind a desk at his headquarters. TR took to the streets. Block by block, he barnstormed the city, giving speeches about his meritocratic approach to municipal affairs. Roosevelt became a fixture in "Jewtown" that summer, as East Side audiences squeezed into various venues to hear from the new police commissioner. His barrel-chested build gestured toward his physicality, his thick spectacles toward his intellectuality, and his dapper attire toward his gentility.[63]

Roosevelt proudly told the East Side crowds that an immigrant Jew who was poorly connected but richly talented would confront no obstacle to gainful employment in the police department. In one speech, he recounted weighing two candidates for a health inspector post, which fell under the police department's purview. One applicant had a profile that would have all but ensured his appointment under Tammany reign: born in America, educated at Columbia University, and backed by an alderman. He was the type of person readily recognized as a “good fellow,” Roosevelt explained. The other contender for the job was a Russian-Jewish immigrant who “certainly hadn’t an influential friend.” But that Jewish candidate impressed Roosevelt by having “worked his way by the hardest kind of study” to earn a position on the Tenement House Commission, which the state legislature had formed the year before to investigate those buildings’ bleak conditions. “Under the old system, that Russian Jew wouldn’t have had a show,” Roosevelt declared. “Nobody would have attempted to have appointed him under the system of practical politics; the man with social standing, the man who was a good fellow, who had the alderman back of him … should have gotten it as a matter of course.” Then came the punch line: “We appointed the Russian Jew.”[64]

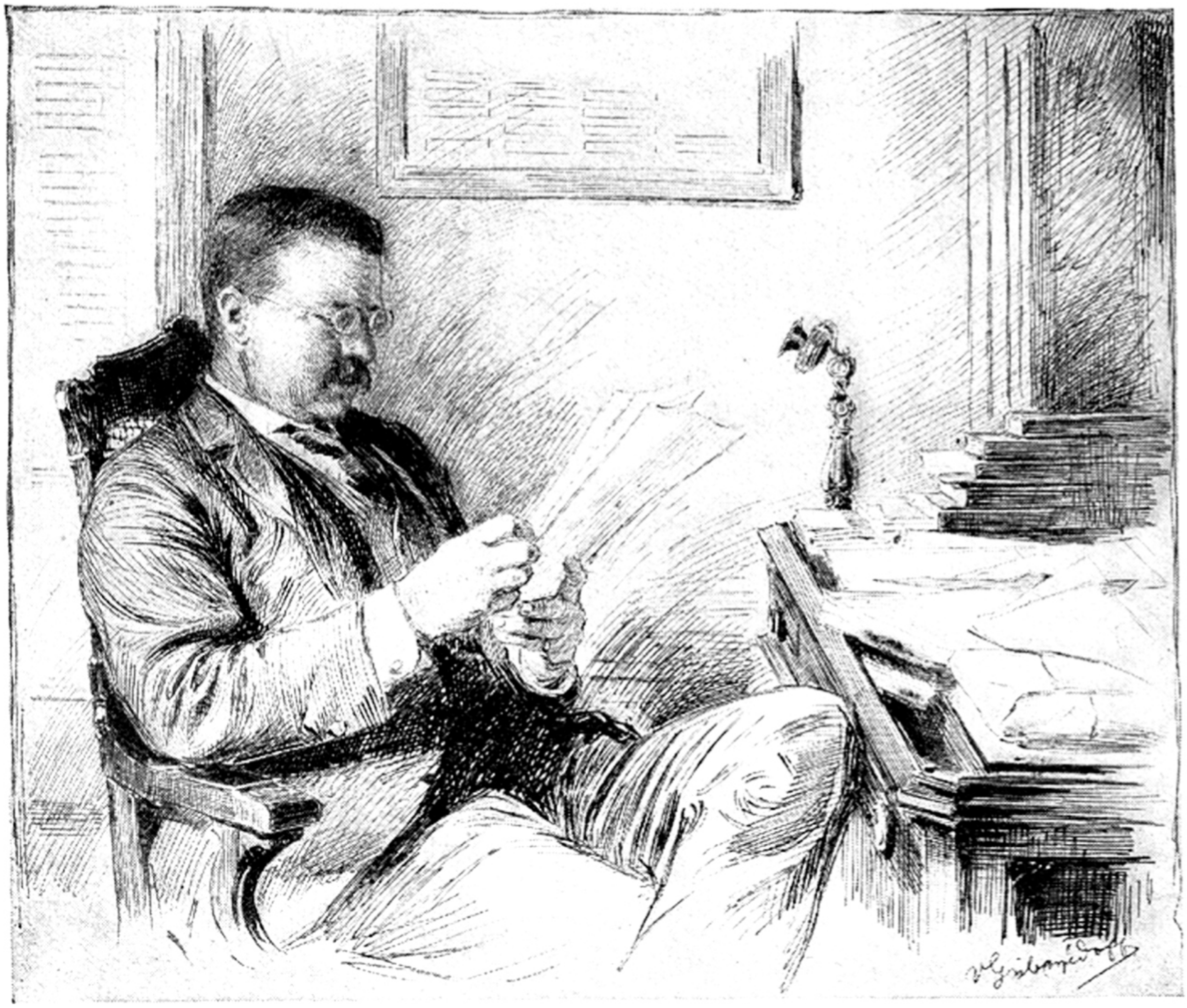

FIGURE 1.3. Theodore Roosevelt, circa 1895. *Source*: The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Print Collection, The New York Public Library.

TR relished the opportunity to carry his meritocratic message directly to these people. “The crowded East Side audiences of Second Avenue and Avenue ‘A’ greet me with an enthusiasm I never anticipated,” he marveled in a letter to his friend, U.S. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge. Roosevelt then hedged, “Of course there is much hostility shown too”—to be expected, given that this was conventionally Democratic terrain—“but the wonder is that I should have so strong a following among them.” The atmosphere at his speeches was boisterous. As Roosevelt elaborated, “I have spoken again and again in packed halls on the East Side during the summer with the temperature at [the] boiling point, both as regards the weather and the audience.” Sometimes a contrarian spectator would heckle Roosevelt, who would then invite the heckler to take the stage alongside him for a debate. At such moments, “I have never failed to carry the house with me at the end,” Roosevelt boasted to Lodge, observing, “It has been in some respects like a campaign.”[65]

In light of Democratic strength on the East Side, the police commissioner’s growing popularity there was striking indeed. Two Republican figures affiliated with the Excise Board—which granted and revoked liquor licenses—were overjoyed by Roosevelt’s inroads on the neighborhood: one was Joe Murray, the board’s Irish Catholic president; the other was Julius Mayer, the board’s Jewish lawyer.[66] As Roosevelt relayed to Lodge, “Joe Murray and the counsel of the Excise Board (a very honest little East Side Jew) are in ecstasies, and insist that my course is making a big gain for the Republican Party.”[67] TR may have felt compelled to stress the Jewish lawyer’s integrity given that Lodge had a dim view of Jewish immigrants and might have otherwise assumed the worst.[68] Roosevelt’s insistence on sober Sundays, which chafed many New Yorkers, wasn’t a liability with Jewish voters, as Jews tended to abstain from saloons.[69] “I cannot now recall ever having known a Jewish drunkard,” mused Jacob Riis.[70]

Elections for the New York state legislature were pending that November. Although Roosevelt was preaching nonpartisanship to these crowds, that very message was itself partisan—after all, Republicans had employed it to great effect against Tammany the prior fall. Roosevelt’s law-and-order commitment to shutting down saloons on Sundays also had a patina of neutrality that obscured a partisan bite: many saloons were de facto clubhouses for the Tammany faithful.[71] For the remainder of Roosevelt’s career in public life, lofty principles and electoral considerations would often bleed into one another.

TR was too shrewd a politician to be naïve about GOP prospects in New York City that November. After the prior year’s wave, in which Republicans vastly outperformed their typical showing, a regression to the city’s Democratic mean seemed all but inevitable. But Republicans still enjoyed an advantage among upstate voters, and Roosevelt held out hope that GOP victories there would ensure the statehouse stayed in Republican hands. “If we keep the legislature, even though Tammany gets the City, we shall have held our own,” he wrote Lodge.[72] On election day, the results accorded with Roosevelt’s clear-eyed expectations: Tammany candidates did well in New York City, but Republicans, thanks to upstate support, retained control of both legislative chambers in Albany.[73]

* * *

Roosevelt was proud of the Jewish representation on the New York Police Department. Writing in *Munsey Magazine*, he observed that “few people have any idea” of the “large number of Jewish policemen on the New York force.” Not all Jews, however, were fit for police work. Roosevelt thought that the majority of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe required more time in America to overcome the malnourishment of their Old World lives. As his *Munsey* article put it, “The great bulk of the Jewish population, especially the immigrants from Russia and Poland, are of weak physique and have not yet gotten far enough away from their centuries of oppression and degradation to make good policemen.” But there were still Jews aplenty whose physical prowess made them ideal candidates. “The outdoor Jew who has been a gripman, or the driver of an express-wagon, or a guard on the Elevated [train], or the indoor Jew of fine bodily powers who has taken to boxing, wrestling and the like, offers excellent material for the force,” Roosevelt assured readers.[74]

His article detailed that many Jews on the force were promoted for “conspicuous gallantry.” Roosevelt stressed that Jews who ascended the career ladder did so purely on the basis of merit. “I should positively refuse to ‘recognize’ any creed, or any nationality, or anything else except fitness,” he insisted. “If there were ten promotions, and the best ten candidates were Jews, they would secure all the prizes, but if they were not the best, then none of them would be promoted.”[75] That he articulated similar sentiments in private correspondence suggests the sincerity of his views here.[76] If Roosevelt championed merit in hiring and promotion, he also wanted diversity. Years later, in his autobiography, he celebrated that “the New

York police force is a body thoroughly representative of the great city itself."[77] Merit and diversity would uneasily coexist as competing ideals throughout Roosevelt's political career.[78]

For New York's Jewish newcomers, the sight of a fellow Jew sporting a police uniform was a stirring symbol of American possibility.[79] Policemen back in Russia enforced discriminatory laws against Jews, and during the outbreak of pogroms, they had passively watched as mobs mercilessly beat Jewish victims.[80] Given that grisly context, Jewish membership in the New York Police Department threw into high relief the differences between Old World hazards and New World hopes.

The archetype of the Jewish policeman challenged not only Jewish assumptions that police were crooked but also Gentile assumptions that Jews were anemic. An American health official writing in *Popular Science Monthly* reflected boilerplate attitudes about Jews in this respect. "In physique they rank below all other immigrants, and few seem capable of hard physical labor," he reported. "They seem to have no muscular development, and are prematurely old at an age when a German or a Scandinavian is still in his prime." Similarly, a retired Harvard professor sneered, "The Jew's weak point is always physical cowardice." In the face of such antisemitic stereotyping, many Jews sought to prove their manhood. Increasing numbers of Jewish men flocked to boxing gyms. And some became policemen on Roosevelt's force. In so doing, they proved that Jews were more than enfeebled survivors of the shtetl. They could become commanding figures, defenders of the people and the law.[81]

Roosevelt may have nursed a particular affinity for his Jewish officers because he had traveled a similar path from frailty to fortitude. In childhood, Roosevelt suffered from a litany of medical issues. His lungs labored under the strain of asthma, his stomach endured the discomforts of nausea, and his bowels were afflicted with nervous diarrhea. "I feel badly," the young Roosevelt once told his mother. "I have a toothache in my stomach." His father instilled in him a conviction that overcoming ailments was a matter of sheer grit, advising his ailing son, "Theodore, you have the mind but you have not the body.… You must make your body." Roosevelt developed an obsession with masculine physicality, exercising diligently in the home gym that his father had installed. In the fullness of time, Roosevelt came to master his maladies. He emerged as a decent boxer in his Harvard days, mirroring the Jewish proclivity for pugilism.[82] And in his twenties, Roosevelt roughed it as a rancher in Badlands of the Dakota Territory.[83] He carried this premium on rugged machismo into his role as police commissioner, valuing Jews and Gentiles on his force who shared his ethic of manly courage.

When Roosevelt proudly recalled the vitality of his Jewish policemen, he did so with notable reference to Jewish antiquity. Roosevelt wanted his "officers of Jewish extraction" to embody "the Maccabee type" who showed "nerve and hardihood."[84] Here, he was alluding to the ancient Jewish warriors known as the Maccabees, famous for revolting against Greek persecution and establishing Jewish control of Judea. His interest in Maccabee lore likely stemmed from personal experience. As an adolescent in 1873, Roosevelt sailed with his family to the Holy Land and alighted from their ship in Jaffa, an important site in the Maccabean rebellion. The Books of the Maccabees related how upwards of two hundred Jews were deliberately drowned in Jaffa, prompting the Maccabees to avenge those deaths by setting fire to Jaffa's harbor.[85] Roosevelt almost certainly learned something of this history during his visit.

His description of Jewish policemen as Maccabees also gestures toward a pluralistic strand in his thinking. Roosevelt rejected the commonplace notion that Jewishness and weakness were of a piece. Instead, Jews could live up to his masculine ideal by honoring, rather than effacing, their Jewish heritage. Reflecting on his time as police commissioner, he remarked in a private letter that the Jewish cultivation of Maccabean instincts would serve to blunt antisemitism by showcasing that Jews could be brawny and not just brainy. "I made up my mind it would be a particularly good thing for men of the Jewish race to develop that side of them which I might call the Maccabee or fighting Jewish type," Roosevelt shared. Gentiles would then see that Jews were not only "successful and thrifty businessmen and high-minded philanthropists, but also able to do their part in the rough manly work, which is no less necessary." In so doing, Jews could "put a stop to the unreasoning prejudice against them."[86] TR wasn't denigrating intellectual achievement but valorizing physical mettle as a complementary value. Roosevelt himself combined the cerebral and corporeal in his daily life—even as he did the gritty work of policing New York, he somehow managed to finish writing his multivolume historical study of the American West that he had begun years earlier.[87]

Of all the Maccabee types on the police force, one always stood out in Roosevelt's eyes: Otto Raphael. He was, in Roosevelt's words, a "genuine East Sider."[88] The Raphael family had emigrated from Russia and opened a struggling meat market on Allen Street, where Otto Raphael helped out. He was roused one evening in 1895 by the scent of smoke when a nearby tenement became engulfed in flames. Raphael knew firsthand how dangerous the tenements could be, even under the best of conditions; his mother had died a few years earlier when she tripped into a cellar apartment. On the fateful night of the fire, Raphael—in his mid-twenties and full of vigor—ran into the burning building multiple times to rescue people trapped inside.[89] His bravery was all the more noteworthy given that fires in overcrowded tenements could be extremely lethal. As Jacob Riis recounted in macabre terms, "A fire-panic at night in a tenement … is a horror that has few parallels in human experience."[90]

Later that year, Raphael attended a talk by Roosevelt at a YMCA downtown. The philanthropist who had invited Roosevelt to speak insisted that TR meet the local hero who had saved numerous lives from an inferno. Roosevelt sized up Raphael as "a powerful fellow, with [a] good-humored intelligent face." The new police commissioner encouraged Raphael to take the police exam and try to earn a spot on the force.[91] Raphael made the cut, reportedly ranking tenth out of 380 applicants for mental aptitude and first for physical ability.[92] Joining the police was a source of great pride for Raphael—and of great practicality. His salary enabled him to educate his younger siblings and to send for other family members who had been left behind in Russia.[93]

As it turned out, Raphael had a skill set of keen interest to Roosevelt. The Jewish policeman had some amateur boxing titles to his name and became Roosevelt's sparring partner. Their friendship, cultivated in the ring, would last a lifetime. Roosevelt came to know Raphael's entire family, and after TR’s rise to the presidency, Raphael would visit him at the White House.[94] Later, Roosevelt made a point of writing affectionately about Raphael in his autobiography. For all the differences between them, Roosevelt emphasized the similarities: “He and I were both ‘straight New York’ to use the vernacular of our native city.”[95]

* * *

Roosevelt brought to the police department a reformer’s ardor, and in so doing he found common cause with many of the progressive pioneers who were engaged in humanitarian work on the East Side. Some were Jews; others were Gentiles. Most notable among the latter was Jacob Riis himself. The Danish immigrant’s pathbreaking book *How the Other Half Lives* had stirred the national conscience with its searing depictions of life in “Jewtown” and other New York slums. Riis thereby helped catalyze an era of journalistic “muckraking” (a term that Roosevelt popularized). This mode of exposé reportage offered advocacy as much as description, and its practitioners were highly comfortable forging alliances with likeminded politicians.[96]

Just after the 1890 debut of *How the Other Half Lives*, Roosevelt was so struck on turning its pages that he headed over to Riis’s office at the *Evening Sun* newspaper to find the author. But Riis was absent, prompting Roosevelt to leave his calling card with a succinct message scribbled on the back: “I have read your book and I have come to help.”[97] Roosevelt would finally make good on that promise five years later when he took over the police department. Riis became the new commissioner’s personal tour guide of the city, giving Roosevelt a firsthand introduction to the onerous conditions plaguing New York’s immigrant enclaves—including the Lower East Side.[98]

That a native New Yorker like Roosevelt needed an outsider to show him his own city suggests much about the class divide in contemporary New York.[99] Roosevelt’s rarefied upbringing in the genteel neighborhood of Gramercy Park made him a stranger to the dismal poverty mere blocks away. “It is a fairy-land of contrasts,” one observer remarked of New York

City. “One moment you are tumbled through streets full of ruts and holes; the next … you dine off gold plates and drink out of crystal vessels.”[100] Roosevelt knew more of the gold than the ruts, but he was eager to learn from Riis about the indigent New Yorkers whose health and safety were now his responsibility.[101]

FIGURE 1.4. Jacob Riis. *Credit*: Frances Benjamin Johnston. *Source*: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

TR grew acquainted with leaders of the settlement house movement who were then training their energies on the Lower East Side. Settlement houses were iconic Progressive Era institutions, to be found in several American cities, which helped immigrants adapt to their new environment and ascend out of poverty. The term "settlement" derived from the practice of reformers personally settling in the neighborhoods they served. One such settlement on the East Side was the Educational Alliance—nicknamed the "Palace of Immigrants"—which offered classes thirteen hours a day. Instruction ranged from etiquette to English. For newcomers still limited to their mother tongue, Yiddish copies of the Declaration of Independence were made available. The Educational Alliance also sponsored performances and lectures. Literary luminaries from the novelist Mark Twain to the playwright Sholem Aleichem presented there.[102]

Among Roosevelt's closest collaborators in the settlement house movement was Lillian Wald, the twenty-eight-year-old founder of the Henry Street Settlement on the East Side. She was the daughter of an affluent German-Jewish family in Cincinnati who had opted out of her life of privilege to take up nursing in New York City.[103] At Wald's behest, Roosevelt became an honorary inductee to her settlement's American Hero Club, dedicated to the study of great figures from U.S. history. He must have been the only mustachioed member of the group; the other participants were local boys no older than twelve.[104] The club was precisely the kind of endeavor that appealed to Roosevelt, whose general approach toward immigrants was to extend a hand while also expecting them to become patriotic Americans.

Roosevelt's involvement with Wald and her settlement, which would become a lifelong connection for him, speaks to the complexity of his professional attitude toward women. On the one hand, he subscribed to a highly conventional view of gender roles. His ethic of roughhewn masculinity rested on a patriarchal worldview that would have women relegated to the domestic sphere.[105] "The greatest thing for any woman is to be a good wife and mother," he once told a female writer.[106] And yet

Roosevelt increasingly developed warm working relationships with women who were active outside the home—journalists, novelists, and reformers. As one historian has astutely observed, “It is ironic that the sort of woman most deplored by Roosevelt became his natural political ally.”[107] A number of these women, like Wald, were Jewish.[108]

Her settlement house was bankrolled by Jacob Schiff, a successful financier and philanthropist of Jewish faith. If the East Siders who relied on Wald’s services represented one segment of New York Jewry (“downtown Jews”), her benefactor personified the other (“uptown Jews”). Uptown Jews luxuriated in expensive townhouses on fashionable streets; downtown Jews crowded into East Side tenements. Uptown Jews originated from Central Europe, often Germany; downtown Jews came from Eastern Europe, typically Russia. Uptown Jews practiced Reform Judaism; downtown Jews gravitated toward Orthodoxy. Uptown Jews had migrated to America in the middle decades of the nineteenth century; downtown Jews were fresh arrivals. Uptown Jews were Americanized; downtown Jews were still learning the ways of their adopted homeland. Uptown Jews met with success in banking and law; downtown Jews subsisted in sweatshops and hawked goods from pushcarts. Of course, exceptions abounded to the neat divisions enumerated above.[109] But the general patterns distinguishing uptown and downtown Jews were real—and could be found in other American cities that likewise had a divide between established Jews and their not-yet-assimilated coreligionists.[110]

Uptown Jews wanted to help their downtown counterparts who had fled dire circumstances abroad and who were now enduring the indignities of tenement life. After all, many established Jews weren’t far removed from their own impecunious beginnings in America. They too had hustled on the Lower East Side before moving upward—in social standing and in street number. Their considerable philanthropy subsidized schools, hospitals, and settlement houses for recent Jewish immigrants. But these wealthier Jews had mixed motives for funneling their resources downtown. They feared their own stature in society might be imperiled if their coreligionists from Eastern Europe failed to better their station and quickly Americanize. As a German-born rabbi on the Upper East Side fretted, “Will the Russian or

Romanian Jew—now an object of pity owing to his defective education, his lack of culture, his pauperism, his utter helplessness—drag American Judaism down from the honorable position it has attained?" The townhouse Jew and the tenement Jew shared a common faith; they were destined to also share a common reputation in Gentile eyes.[111]

Prior to Roosevelt's tenure in the police department, his exposure to Jews had been of the uptown variety, as might be expected of a patrician Gentile. Among his college friends was a Jewish boy who hailed from a wealthy family and had studied at a prestigious academy on the Upper West Side before attending Harvard with TR.[112] When Roosevelt launched his political career as a state legislator in the early 1880s, he affiliated with elite Jews in New York City's Republican circles.[113] He even appeared at an uptown Purim party in 1883.[114] But now, as police commissioner, Roosevelt was gaining his first sustained exposure to Eastern European Jewry. His entrée into their world was sufficiently well received that he became a distinguished guest at Jewish weddings, often bestowed the honor of escorting the bride or her mother to the banquet following the ceremony.[115]

TR cultivated ties to Protestant reformers who were teaming with the likes of Lillian Wald to ameliorate the dire conditions of the Lower East Side. At a supper that Wald hosted at the Henry Street Settlement, for instance, Roosevelt dined with William Dean Howells, a literary giant of the age.[116] Howells soon thereafter published an essay about the neighborhood called "An East-Side Ramble," prompting an enthusiastic response from Roosevelt. "That was a very remarkable study of the life of the East Side Jew; I enjoyed it much," the police commissioner wrote, inviting Howells to a meal at his home.[117] Roosevelt also prevailed upon the Protestant matron of the illustrious Van Rensselaer family to provide funds for a girls' library on the Lower East Side.[118] TR came to know yet another Protestant reformer named James Bronson Reynolds, who ran an East Side settlement house.[119] Reynolds made the mistake of permitting Christian missionaries to try proselytizing the Jews who frequented his settlement. These conversion attempts ceased after the intervention of Jacob Schiff, who was helping underwrite not just Wald's operation but Reynolds's as well.[120]

Roosevelt also regularly showed up at a public school on Houston Street whose students—or "scholars" as TR called them—were largely Jewish. He was "immensely interested" in the school, which was a vital means of upward mobility for the children of Jewish immigrants.[121] Education was a battleground for church-state relations, and Roosevelt thought it vital to separate the two. For him, that meant keeping public schools nonsectarian and withholding state funds from religious schools. Roosevelt would later explain that although he was personally comfortable with Bible recitations in public schools, wherever "Jews may object to its being read" he would "openly stand against reading the Bible."[122] As Roosevelt saw firsthand on the East Side, public school classrooms full of Jews were often led by Christian teachers, and he was sensitive to the delicacy of that dynamic.

* * *

Many Gentiles may have joined Roosevelt in building bridges to the Jewish community, but others chafed at the idea. A significant faction of the patrician class—typically native-born Americans who were abundant in resources and Northern European in descent—found Jews unacceptable. In New York City and elsewhere, reactionary elites grew alarmed at the newfound prominence of uptown Jews. Old Money gentry were generally fearful of becoming displaced by the New Money crowd born of industrial capitalism. Uptown Jews, successfully riding the wave of a modern economy, seemed to exemplify this threat.[123] Anxieties about a Jewish takeover were, of course, wildly overblown; the silk-stocking Anglo-Saxons still enjoyed outsized control of American society.

Henry Adams epitomized elite paranoia about Jewish domination. He was a scion of the Adams presidential dynasty and perhaps the most virulent antisemite of the upper classes. "We are in the hands of the Jews," Adams lamented to a British politician. "They can do what they please with our values."[124] Despite Adams's immensely privileged life, he nevertheless insisted to a senator's wife, "In a society of Jews and brokers, a world made up of maniacs wild for gold, I have no place."[125] The likes of Adams helped ensure that well-heeled Jews were often blackballed from institutions—

private schools, social clubs, summer resorts—that were de rigueur for blue-blooded Gentiles.[126] Roosevelt befriended Adams and his ilk, but TR himself wasn't complicit in excluding Jews. In fact, as a twenty-something beginning his involvement in New York politics, Roosevelt threatened to terminate his membership in a Republican club after some participants sought to refuse a Jewish applicant. Roosevelt's defiant stand against antisemitism resulted in that applicant's admission.[127]

A prominent Reform rabbi in New York voiced exasperation that the Jew who did assimilate was regarded as menacing but the Jew who did not was derided as clannish: "How singular that, when the Jews attempts to … mix freely with his neighbors, he is repelled and unceremoniously shown back to his own tribe; and if he keeps there, he is accused of hereditary and ancestral pride."[128] Such was the illogic of Jew hatred.

The antisemites of "polite society" were distressed not only by the Jewish nouveau riche.[129] Highborn hate was also directed at the impoverished Jewish immigrants then flooding American ports. Henry Adams shuddered at the "Polish Jew fresh from Warsaw or Kraków … a furtive Yacoob or Ysaac still reeking of the Ghetto, snarling a weird Yiddish to the officers of the customs."[130] Arguably the most institutionalized expression of genteel antisemitism was the Immigration Restriction League, founded in the mid-1890s by three young Harvard grads of Anglo-Saxon descent. They hoped to suppress the influx of Jews as well as other "undesirables" from Southern and Eastern Europe. "Shall we permit these inferior races to dilute the thrifty, capable Yankee blood?" asked one of the league's founders in the *Boston Herald*.[131]

The gentry wasn't the only social class in America giving vent to Judeophobia. Farmers in the heartland could not grasp the complex interplay of global forces that were increasing their costs and reducing their profits. Instead, they gravitated toward the simplicity of a scapegoat: the Jew. Rural populists saw Jews as shifty financiers who didn't produce goods of value but merely served as middle men, transferring funds and taking an unjust cut.[132] Many hapless agrarians were sure their misery came at the hands of Jewish bankers in coastal cities.[133] Disaffected farmers banded together to form a third party, the Populist Party, in the 1890s.

During the party's national gathering in 1896, the Associated Press reported, "One of the striking things about the Populist convention … is the extraordinary hatred of the Jewish race. It is not possible to go into any hotel in the city without hearing the most bitter denunciation of the Jewish race as a class and of particular Jews who happen to have prospered in the world."[134] Although these bigoted soil tillers shared little in common with the moneyed patricians of the East Coast, both groups reacted to the disorientation of modernity by lashing out at Jews.[135]

Yet another demographic contributed to the age's antisemitism: urban immigrants. In several American cities, other ethnic enclaves—Irish, Italian, Polish—abutted Jewish neighborhoods. Close proximity amid dire living conditions didn't always make for warm relations between immigrant groups. Jewish peddlers were subjected to jeering, stone-throwing, and beard-pulling. At worst, street gangs beat up innocent Jews for sport. Police assistance was no guarantee in many municipalities, and so Jews took to forming their own protective associations.[136]

Even as American antisemitism was a reaction to recent developments—from industrial capitalism to global migration—it was also grounded in older prejudices. The trope of the dishonest Jewish swindler, which applied as readily to the pushcart peddler as to the Wall Street banker, had deep roots in world history. For centuries, diasporic Jews had been bereft of their own homeland. They resided in various societies as outsiders whose opportunities to earn a livelihood were often legally limited to trade and finance. Even as Jews were shunted into particular fields of commerce, they were resented for their prominence in those very fields. This paradox of prejudice endured into Roosevelt's era. The age of industrial capitalism placed a rising premium on the commercial expertise that Jews had long cultivated. In other words, Jews were well positioned to navigate a modern economy precisely because of their fraught history. Their success predictably gave fresh life to timeworn stereotypes about deceitful Hebrews.[137]

Christian teachings inflected American antisemitism as well. The Jews, after all, were culpable for Jesus's death—at least according to some interpretations of the New Testament. Many Christians were bound to feel hostility toward a people who were allegedly responsible for deicide.[138] The Christian basis for antisemitism was hardly lost on American Jews of Roosevelt's day. The *Jewish Messenger*, a New York–based paper, suggested that "the religious training of the Christian" was the principal factor in "the persistency of popular prejudice against the Jew." The paper elaborated, "As most Christians have capacity to understand only the material elements in the crucifixion, they take a grim religious pleasure—a sense of duty done—in crucifying the Jew."[139] For some Christians, the New Testament also seemed to provide a Biblical basis for stereotypes about Jewish avarice, as Jesus angrily confronted Jews who were desecrating the Temple by using it as a forum for money changing.[140]

It is unsurprising, then, that many of the era's most strident Jew-baiters were Christian clergymen. A reverend in Baltimore preached from the pulpit that the Jew is "merciless, tricky, vengeful—a veritable Shylock who loses every sentiment of humanity in his greed. Of all the creatures who have befouled the earth, the Jew is the slimiest."[141] Christianity, however, was not monolithic; mainstream clergy in America eschewed antisemitism.[142] Indeed, many of the nation's most outspoken critics of Jew-hatred were men of the cloth. But to the extent that Judeophobia did have purchase on American life, the blame lay with ancient prejudices as much as modern conditions.

* * *

Theodore Roosevelt had a conspicuous confrontation with antisemitism during Hanukkah in his first year as police commissioner. A vicious Jew-hater from Germany, Hermann Ahlwardt, was planning a trip to New York City to spread his invidious message. He was cartoonishly villainous. In the late 1880s, Ahlwardt was sacked as a school headmaster after the revelation that he had stolen funds designated for the children's Christmas party. The disgraced Ahlwardt sought public redemption through antisemitism, publishing bigoted screeds at a prolific rate. It then surfaced that he had forged documents to promote his anti-Jewish conspiracy theories, and Ahlwardt was consequently sentenced to prison. His four months behind bars did little to dampen his ardor for hate-mongering. Upon his release, Ahlwardt won a seat in the German parliament by persuading farmers in a rural district that Jews had secretly orchestrated the global downturn in crop prices. His election afforded him legal immunity from prosecution for peddling falsehoods.[143]

When Ahlwardt set his sights on an American speaking tour—including a planned lecture on the Lower East Side—anxious Jews approached Commissioner Roosevelt. They asked TR to bar Ahlwardt from speaking or at least to deny him police protection. But Roosevelt could not grant their request without violating the principle of free speech. And even absent that constitutional right, he believed that government censorship would only serve to turn Ahlwardt into a martyr. Roosevelt would later recall feeling that "the proper thing to do was to make him ridiculous." To that end, TR devised an exceedingly clever scheme: he would provide Ahlwardt a police detail comprised entirely of Jewish officers.[144]

Roosevelt summoned a subordinate on his force and instructed him, "I wish a list made of thirty good, trusty, intelligent men, all Jews." It was crucial to Roosevelt that these officers look unmistakably Jewish. As he told the subordinate, "Don't bother yourself to hunt up their religious antecedents; take those who have the most pronounced Hebrew physiognomy—the stronger their ancestral marking, the better." The Jewish policemen selected for duty were brought to the commissioner for inspection. With his blue eyes and golden glasses, Roosevelt surveyed the assemblage. One of his associates later marveled, "A more Hebraic group of Hebrews probably never were gathered in one small room."[145]

Roosevelt informed these officers of the unusual and vital duty ahead of them. "Now, I am going to assign you men to the most honorable service you have ever done—the protection of an enemy and the defense of religious liberty and free speech in the chief city of the United States," he announced. "You all know who and what Dr. Ahlwardt is. I am going to put you in charge of the hall where he lectures, and hold you responsible for perfect good order there throughout the evening." Roosevelt explained that their safeguarding Ahlwardt did not, of course, proceed from any affinity they had for his views. Rather, they would be defending the very constitutional liberties that American Jews held dear. In Roosevelt's words, "I have no more sympathy with Jew-baiting than you have. But this is a country where your people are free to think and speak and act as they choose in religious matters, as long as you do not interfere with the peace and comfort of your neighbors, and Dr. Ahlwardt is entitled to the same privilege." He added, "It should be your pride to see that he is protected.… That will be the finest way of showing your appreciation of the liberty you yourselves enjoy under the American flag."[146]

On the second night of Hanukkah, around 150 people gathered at Cooper Union—an iconic venue on the Lower East Side—to hear Ahlwardt's much-anticipated speech. The press estimated that fully a third of the spectators were policemen and detectives, another third were Jews who had come in protest, and the last third consisted of Gentiles of varying nationalities who were presumably amenable to the speaker's agenda. Ahlwardt took the stage at eight that evening, met by a mix of scattered applause and shouts of disapproval. His remarks inevitably veered into antisemitism, and the Jewish civilians in the crowd taunted him in turn with "a perfect Niagara of hisses and cries," the *New York Times* reported. Despite the heckling, the galling grin plastered on Ahlwardt's face remained unbroken. The night's greatest drama unfolded when Ahlwardt denounced the Jews for their "odious peculiarities," prompting an East Sider named Louis Silverman to cock his arm, egg in hand. "A nice white egg performed a graceful parabola through the air in the direction of Herr Ahlwardt's smiling face," the *Times* recounted. "He danced aside, with a degree of agility not indicated by his [portly] form, and the egg smashed and spluttered on the chair behind him." Two more eggs were launched before officers seized Silverman and dragged him to the nearby police station on Fifth Street.[147]

The episode would become part of Roosevelt's lore with the Jewish community. With great pride he routinely recalled how "Ahlwardt delivered his violent harangues against the men of Hebrew faith, owing his safety to the fact that he was scrupulously protected by men of the very race which he was denouncing."[148] Roosevelt understood that the sight of Jewish policemen selflessly guarding the German Jew-hater did far more to undermine Ahlwardt’s repugnant ideas than preemptive censorship ever could have. Reflecting on the incident years later in his autobiography, Roosevelt remarked, “It was an object-lesson to our people, whose greatest need it is to learn that there must be no division by class hatred, whether … of creed against creed, nationality against nationality, section against section.”[149] This was merely the first of Roosevelt’s confrontations with European antisemitism.

* * *

Notwithstanding TR’s adroit handling of the Ahlwardt affair, Roosevelt himself sometimes traded in antisemitic tropes during these years. One such instance transpired in the wake of the 1896 presidential election, which saw Republican William McKinley wrest the White House from Democratic hands. The victory was doubly sweet for Jews working in New York’s financial industry. For one, the incoming Republican president aligned with their preference for keeping the U.S. dollar on the gold standard. And the GOP win also marked a triumph over religious prejudice against Jews, given that the antisemitic Populist Party had opted to back the Democratic nominee.[150]

“The victorious Republican leaders have taken to feasting themselves,” Roosevelt told his older sister, Bamie. He explained that he had attended a number of these opulent celebrations. “One was a huge lunch by the Seligmans”—one of the nation’s most prominent Jewish families who enjoyed warm relations with Roosevelt—“where at least half the guests were Jew bankers.” Referring to Henry Adams’s brother Brooks (who shared Henry’s antisemitism), Roosevelt joked, “I felt as if I was personally realizing all of Brooks Adams’s gloomiest anticipations of our gold-ridden, capitalist-bestridden, usurer-mastered future.”[151] TR was partly mocking Brooks Adams’s paranoia but partly reinforcing tropes about the Jewish overlords of world finance.

That checkered statement aside, one of Roosevelt’s private remarks from his police days stands out for the unalloyed nature of its prejudice. After a prominent Jewish Republican—fearful that the police commissioner’s crusade against drinking would backfire at the polls—tried to marginalize Roosevelt politically, TR derided him as a "graceless sheeny" in a letter to Senator Lodge. "Sheeny" is an epithet for a Jew.[152] The slur was so offensive that when Lodge produced a published edition of their correspondence, the senator bowdlerized TR's letter so that it read "graceless person."[153]

* * *

The incoming McKinley regime meant new opportunities for Republicans on the make, Roosevelt among them. He was favored with a plum post: Assistant Secretary of the Navy. Roosevelt's interest in the Navy dated back to his Harvard days, when he first began writing a book entitled *The Naval War of 1812*.[154] It elicited favorable reviews upon publication in 1882; historians today still regard it as a classic in the field.[155] With this new appointment in the McKinley administration, Roosevelt would transition from chronicler of naval affairs to practitioner of them. And he took advantage of his naval office to help push America into a war in the Caribbean—one with important consequences for his relationship with Jewry.[156]

Cuban rebels were then engaged in a lethal struggle for independence against the island's European colonizer, Spain. The Spanish had subjected Cuba to autocratic rule and extracted wealth from the island for their own benefit for years. Like most Americans, Roosevelt's sympathies lay with the guerilla fighters. The United States, after all, had once been an emergent nation in the Western Hemisphere that freed itself from a European monarchy. The Cuban rebels also benefited from a successful propaganda campaign in America—they even opened a public relations office in New York—as stateside newspapers dutifully whipped up support for the Cuban independence movement. While Spain's human rights abuses against Cuban civilians during the conflict were very real, American journalists glibly exaggerated the depths of Cuban suffering.[157]

Roosevelt fervently wanted U.S. forces to help the rebels break their stalemate against the Spanish troops. He believed that military intervention in Cuba would allow the United States to project its own power in the hemisphere and thereby deter other European powers from entertaining designs on America's backyard.[158] But Roosevelt's eagerness for conflict with Spain wasn't just about his vision for an expanding sphere of American influence. He and other pro-war "jingoes" saw the battlefield as the ultimate arena for manly courage.[159] American men could find in the crucible of war an antidote to the crass consumerism that was seen as eroding national morality.[160] Roosevelt in particular had contempt for a certain kind of "effeminate" man who was "over-civilized, over-sensitive, [and] over-refined."[161] With war against Spain possibly on the horizon, he was desperate to personally serve on the front lines.

The Cuban rebels had first launched their military campaign in 1895, stirring hopes in the newly minted police commissioner that America would join the cause. Roosevelt told the New York governor that he would like to serve as a captain if the state raised a volunteer regiment. But no such regiment materialized as the United States remained on the sidelines.[162] Two years later, with Roosevelt now in the Navy and still hoping for American intervention, he conveyed to President McKinley that he would want to engage in combat in the event of war against Spain. Perhaps Roosevelt's lust for battle was rooted in a sense of shame about his father's decision to hire a substitute to fight in his place during the Civil War. Or maybe Roosevelt had a death wish, a romantic yearning to perish with honor on the field of battle.[163] By his own telling, Roosevelt felt that he would be guilty of hypocrisy should he fail to wield a weapon in wartime after spouting "jingo doctrines." He was referring here not just to his bellicose rhetoric about Spain specifically but his longstanding tendency to praise the virtues of military service generally.[164] From his perch at the Navy, Roosevelt tried to cajole McKinley into war, but the president was resistant.[165] McKinley knew too intimately the horrors of war—he had served as a private in the Union Army—and he did not wish to see "the dead piled up" once more.[166]

Roosevelt sent a strikingly candid letter to a Navy captain in the fall of 1897 accusing French-Jewish financiers of profiting off Spain's counterinsurgency against the Cuban rebels. "The Jew moneylenders in Paris, plus one or two big commercial companies in Spain, are trying to keep up the war," he alleged.[167] In reality, Roosevelt had it backwards. French investors—Jew and Gentile alike—actually wanted the conflict to end. Precisely because numerous French citizens and banks owned Spanish bonds, they didn't want to see Spain bankrupt itself in a costly struggle against the Cubans.[168] It is telling that Roosevelt felt compelled to identify the French investors as "Jew moneylenders" and to erroneously assume the worst of them; plainly, he was susceptible to defamatory tropes about Jews in finance, even as he himself cultivated warm relationships with Jewish bankers in America.

* * *

Events soon conspired to hasten the declaration of war that Roosevelt had long craved. First, in early February 1898, rebels intercepted and leaked to the press a private letter in which the Spanish ambassador in Washington ridiculed McKinley as feckless. Americans deemed the letter an outrage to national honor.[169] And then, just six days later, came a seismic development: the U.S.S. *Maine*, which had dropped anchor in Havana's harbor, suddenly exploded. The blast was so violent that it could be felt throughout the Cuban capital. While some on board the *Maine* died instantly in the blast, most either drowned or burned alive. Around 260 souls lost their lives in all.[170]

Naturally, an American public already primed for war presumed that Spain was culpable for the disaster.[171] The Spanish disclaimed any responsibility.[172] A few lone voices at the time suggested that the explosion was likely the result of an accidental fire, a view that would gain some traction among later generations of experts.[173] Whatever the truth, the American press seized on the *Maine* tragedy to rally the people behind military action in Cuba. "Remember the *Maine*, to Hell with Spain" became a ubiquitous slogan.[174] McKinley still wanted to find a peaceful path forward. It would take two months for the reluctant president to acquiesce to the war fervor sweeping the country—in April, he finally solicited and received congressional approval to dispatch troops.[175]

To be sure, America was home to prominent anti-imperialists who decried the imminent war. They cringed as the United States prepared to flex its muscle abroad. Even as they recognized that Spain maltreated the Cuban people, the anti-imperialists marshaled an array of arguments against intervention. For one, they feared that a new generation of American leaders—who had come of age after the Civil War and thus were untouched by its blood-tinged lessons—were recklessly plunging the country into a violent confrontation. The anti-imperialists also observed that repression in Cuba, while regrettable, wasn't unique globally and thus did not warrant exceptional involvement from the United States. They further counseled their fellow citizens to address humanitarian challenges at home—such as anti-Black lynching and rampant poverty—before seeking out crises abroad.[176] And although pro-war Americans viewed their impending incursion into Cuba as a natural extension of George Washington's fight against an Old World empire, the anti-imperialists offered a very different interpretation: an American nation founded in defiance of European colonialism was now ready to join the European scramble for control of foreign territories or at least outsized influence over them.[177]

A renowned Harvard professor, Charles Eliot Norton, pithily captured the anti-imperialist mood in an iconic speech in Cambridge. "A generation has grown up that has known nothing of war.… And now [all] of a sudden, without cool deliberation, without prudent preparation, the nation is hurried into war, and America—she who more than any other land was pledged to peace and goodwill on earth—unsheathes her sword," Norton lamented. "She has been forced to turn back from the way of civilization to the way of barbarism, to renounce for the time her own ideals."[178] Those who shared Norton's fears would become increasingly alarmed as America soon set its sights not just on Cuba but also Hawaii, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. From the anti-imperialist perspective, the United States seemed less of a liberator than a colonizer.[179]

TR had no such qualms at the prospect of an American empire stretching beyond its shores. He imagined the United States as a benevolent influence on other lands.[180] So did most of his fellow citizens, as the anti-imperialists found themselves decidedly in the minority.[181] Despite the profound differences between the interventionists and the anti-imperialists, each camp touted itself as standing up for humanity abroad.

* * *

Having long fantasized about martial glory, Roosevelt finally had his chance. He was named lieutenant colonel of the First Volunteer Cavalry, better known as the “Rough Riders” and led by Colonel Leonard Wood. TR’s first task was helping select from some twenty-three thousand applicants the one thousand men who would brave Spanish bullets alongside him.[182] Roosevelt took satisfaction in assembling a heterogenous group, from Princeton alums and rugged cowboys to polo players and Cherokee Indians. He would proudly reminisce, “All—Easterners and Westerners, Northerners and Southerners, officers and men, cowboys and college graduates, wherever they came from, and whatever their social position—possessed in common the traits of hardihood and a thirst for adventure.”[183] Given the life-and-death circumstances, the composition of the Rough Riders offers perhaps the best evidence that Roosevelt’s long insistence on the benefits of diversity wasn’t merely optical.

Among his recruits were Jews. Many Jews were ineligible, despite their physical prowess, because they lacked experience on horseback. When his old friend from the police force Otto Raphael offered his services, Roosevelt responded with disappointing news. “My dear Officer Raphael: I should like to take you with me, but I am very much afraid I won’t be able to,” Roosevelt informed him. “You see, we only want men who ride well, and I don’t think you have ever done any riding.”[184] Even though a champion boxer like Raphael did not fit the profile of a Rough Rider, about eight Jews did make the cut, many from the West.[185]

Their reasons for enlisting are not difficult to imagine. As with non-Jewish volunteers, they surely felt a sense of civic duty at a moment when patriotic zeal was galvanizing the nation. They were also undoubtedly aware that fellow Jews had counted among those servicemen lost in the U.S.S. *Maine* explosion.[186] And the opportunity to fight Spain would have held special appeal for Jews—the Spanish Inquisition was a relatively fresh memory, having officially ended only sixty years earlier. Rabbis around the country reminded their congregants that America's enemy was the self-same that had perpetrated a historic genocide of the Jewish people. At Sinai Temple in Chicago, a sermonizer juxtaposed Spain's tradition of persecution with America's commitment to freedom. "The civilization of the inquisition and the civilization of religious tolerance stand at opposite poles," he asserted.[187] Meanwhile, the Jewish press depicted the war in Biblical terms by analogizing the Spanish king to Pharaoh, the Caribbean Sea to the Red Sea, and the American troops to the Chosen People.[188]

As the Rough Riders began their training in San Antonio, the men gave each other ironic nicknames. An unworldly cowpuncher became "Metropolitan Bill," a soldier of tender heart and few words was called "Hell Roarer," and an especially strident recruit picked up the sobriquet "Prayerful James." Two of the nicknames had Jewish inflections. A decidedly non-Jewish Irishman was designated "Sheeny Solomon." And, as Roosevelt recalled, "A young Jew who developed into one of the best fighters in the regiment accepted, with entire equanimity, the name of 'Pork Chop.' "[189] Soon this hodgepodge of volunteers would follow Roosevelt into mortal danger.

When the Rough Riders landed on Cuban shores in late June, they were beset with hazards: scorching sun, torrential downpours, punishing marches, muddy terrain, and mosquito swarms. Some of those insects carried a deadly virus known as "the black vomit," which induced its human victims to puke up their own intestines. And Mother Nature's perils were compounded by the lethal threat of Spanish snipers hiding amid the thick jungle foliage.[190] Naturally, Roosevelt endured these fraught conditions in a custom uniform he had ordered for himself from Brooks Brothers.[191]

The ultimate goal was the capture of a key city, Santiago. But the Rough Riders, alongside other American regiments, would first have to fight their way through the San Juan Heights—a series of hills manned by Spanish infantry. Just before the Americans launched their offensive, Rough Rider commander Leonard Wood was suddenly reassigned to fill in for a general who had taken ill. Roosevelt accordingly was promoted to colonel and given full command of the Rough Riders. On the morning of July 1, they began their assault. TR was fearless in the face of the death. “He’s a perfect devil in action,” one of his men remarked. “He’s always ahead, waving on the men with his sword in one hand and a big revolver in the other, and yelling all the while like a garret full of cats let loose.”[192]

A Jewish Rough Rider named Sam Greenwald sent a letter from the front to his father. “We have been since the 1st fighting our way into Santiago and some of it was pretty hot fighting,” Greenwald recounted. Although he had none of Roosevelt’s romanticism about military conflict—“I tell you war is a terrible thing”—Greenwald showed courage under fire. As he pridefully relayed in his letter, “I have been made a lieutenant and, the beauty of it, I won it on the field.”[193] Roosevelt himself had personally promoted Greenwald for “gallantry” in battle.[194] Yet another Jew, Sam Goldberg, caught a bullet in the hip and still soldiered onward.[195] These efforts were not in vain—the Rough Riders together with other American regiments seized the hills, and within a matter of days, Santiago itself was theirs. A defeated Spain quickly signaled to Washington it was prepared to broker terms, and a peace conference was scheduled for Paris that fall.[196]

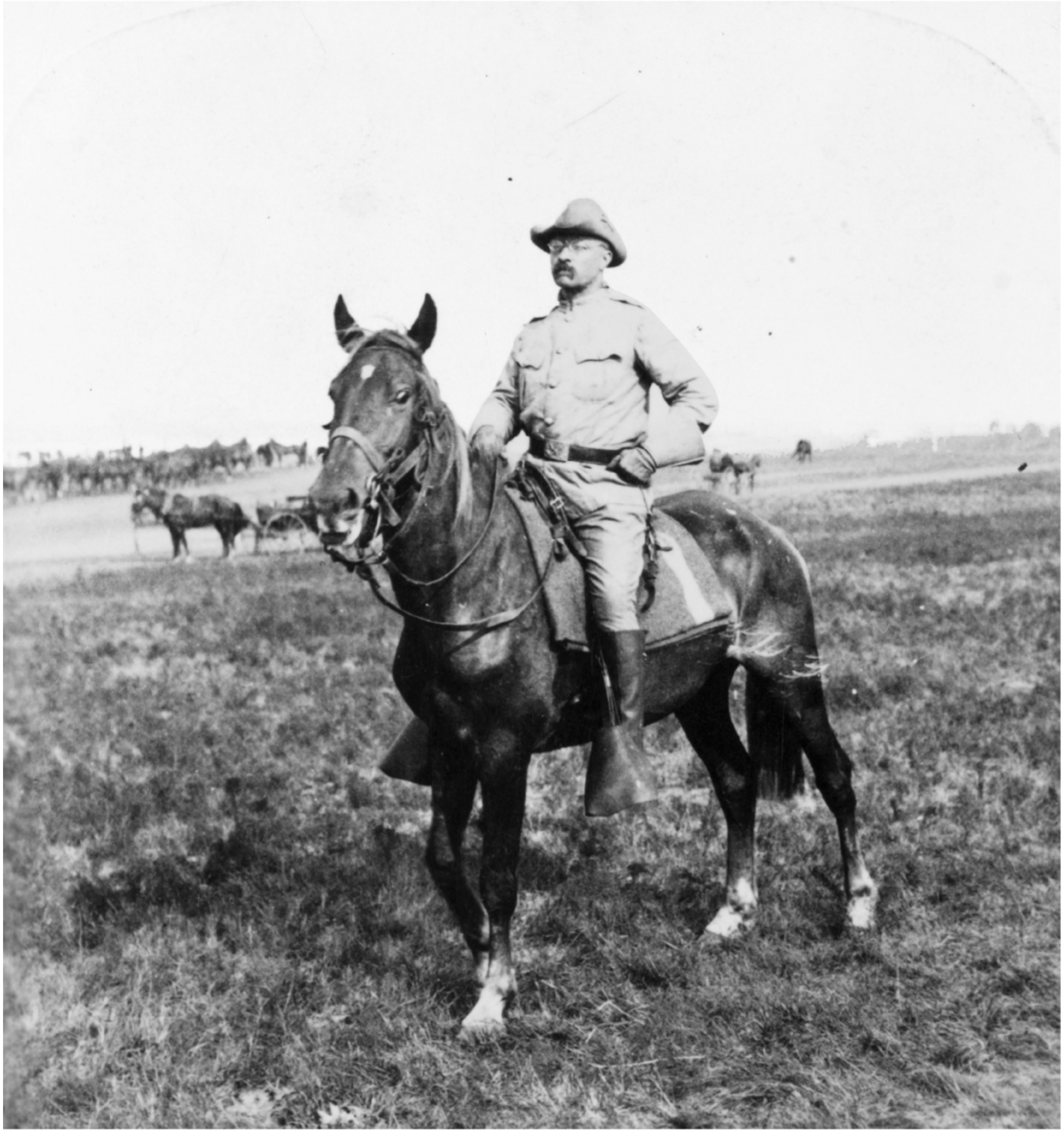

FIGURE 1.5. Colonel Roosevelt. *Source*: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

* * *

The Jewish press gloried all summer in stories about the heroism of Roosevelt’s Jewish troops. These tales of Jewish bravery challenged various stereotypes about Jewish men as weak in body, disloyal to the country, and more likely to profit off a war than to fight in one.[197] San Francisco’s Jewish newspaper *Emanu-El* declared, “The Jewish volunteers fight not as Jews, but as Americans who love and honor the flag that rouses the Maccabean blood in them.” This comment reflected a certain tension within American Jewry. On the one hand, *Emanu-El* wanted these Jewish soldiers to be seen as purely American, “not as Jews”—the paper liked to imagine the Rough Riders as a faith-neutral body whose Jews and Gentiles stood upon an equality precisely because religious identity was immaterial. On the other hand, the reference to “Maccabean blood” betokened a desire to emphasize a specifically Jewish heritage.[198]

As the victorious American troops in Santiago waited for the military to orchestrate their return home, they were visited by Joseph Krauskopf, a prominent rabbi from Philadelphia. He journeyed to Cuba in his capacity as a leader of the National Relief Commission, an interfaith charitable organization that tended to wounded and ill soldiers. When Krauskopf arrived in Santiago, the presiding officer sent orders to have Jewish soldiers from the various regiments summoned so that the rabbi could greet them. Never one to miss out on anything, Roosevelt insisted on joining his Jewish troops. He had met Krauskopf once before and now boasted to the rabbi about the exploits of his Jewish Rough Riders. Krauskopf reconstructed his conversation with Roosevelt in a report that was widely reprinted in the Jewish and mainstream press alike.[199]

In mid-August, the Rough Riders were transported to Montauk, Long Island, where they would spend the next month convalescing before mustering out. The troops were welcomed in Montauk with an enthusiastic reception from grateful citizens. Upon arrival, Roosevelt spoke to the press and touted his regiment’s religious diversity: “Of the last five promotions I recommended from the ranks to the grade of Second Lieutenant, one was a Jew, one a Catholic, and two Protestants.”[200]

The Rough Riders’ demography was less representative when it came to race. Military policy segregated Black servicemen into their own regiments. These so-called Buffalo Soldiers served valiantly in the Spanish-American War, fighting side-by-side with Roosevelt’s men in taking the San Juan Heights. The Buffalo Soldiers earned high praise for their valor. As a private under Roosevelt’s command remarked, “There is not a man in the

Rough Riders but takes off his hat to the negroes."[201] Roosevelt himself was less gracious. In both public statements and private letters, he minimized the contributions of the Buffalo Soldiers and thereby amplified the role his own regiment played.[202]

Indeed, Roosevelt's instinct for inclusivity would often extend to Jews far more than to Blacks throughout his career, especially in military matters. The "Brownsville affair" during his presidency stands out as an especially notorious moment in Roosevelt's attitude toward Blacks. In the Texas border town of Brownsville, mysterious men arbitrarily fired shots into houses and shops one evening. White townsfolk were quick to cast blame on a battalion of Black soldiers stationed at a nearby fort. But no evidence linked the shootings to anyone in the battalion. Instead of exonerating the Black troops accordingly, military investigators chose to assume that the battalion was engaged in a "conspiracy of silence" wherein innocent soldiers were supposedly covering up for whoever was guilty among them. Those investigators advised TR to summarily discharge the entire battalion "without honor," and Roosevelt obliged. One scholar notes, "This remains the only instance of mass punishment without trial in the history of the U.S. military." Generations later, the military would reopen its inquiry and posthumously absolve the discharged troops.[203]

To be sure, Roosevelt wasn't uniformly hostile toward Blacks. He famously took political heat, for instance, after hosting the Black leader Booker T. Washington at the White House.[204] But with respect to Brownsville, it is hard to imagine TR having a comparably unfair reaction had the episode involved accusations against Jewish servicemen.

* * *

Roosevelt's feats in Cuba earned him a cover story in *Harper's Weekly* and favorable headlines nationwide. He was, arguably, the most popular person in America. His overnight celebrity came at a particularly auspicious moment in state politics. New York's Republican governor was embroiled in scandal; the party would need a new candidate if it hoped to keep the governor's mansion in GOP hands.[205] Merely two weeks after disbanding the Rough Riders in mid-September, Roosevelt claimed the Republican nomination for the state's top office.[206]

He kept a keen eye on Jewish voters as election season kicked off. His premium on religious equality among the Rough Riders promised to redound to his benefit in Jewish enclaves. In Roosevelt's very first stump speech of the campaign, he highlighted the egalitarian culture of his regiment, wherein every soldier, "whether Protestant or Catholic, Jew or Gentile … was treated on his merits as a man." He saw fit in this opening address to mention by name one of the Jewish war heroes he had promoted, Sam Greenwald.[207] Some supporters at his events dressed as Rough Riders, not to be confused with actual Rough Riders who also showed up to support their colonel.[208]

Two days into his role as a gubernatorial candidate, TR wrote to Abraham Wolbarst—a young Jewish doctor and local Republican politico—to inquire about the Roosevelt campaign's prospects in the East Side's fourth district. Wolbarst was decidedly optimistic, provided that Roosevelt put in the effort. "With an honest, energetic, and aggressive campaign, the district will give you a handsome vote," replied Wolbarst. "This district is largely Jewish and can be depended upon to support you heartily. You have many friends among the downtown Jews, who have always admired an honest public official." The moment was ripe for Roosevelt to capitalize on the goodwill he had cultivated with Jewish immigrants during his tenure as police commissioner. Wolbarst advised, "As the campaign advances, it would be well to interest the East Side peddlers in a body on your behalf. They will never forget the noble treatment received at your hands while in the Police Department."[209] Given Tammany's conventional strength with immigrants, Wolbarst's remarks were overly rosy. Democrats were destined to prevail in New York City, including on the East Side. The crucial question was whether Roosevelt could narrow the Democratic margin of victory in the city and then make up the difference upstate.

An astute politician, Roosevelt took no votes for granted. He wrote to a New York City congressman, Lemuel Quigg, about the campaign's need to incorporate more grassroots figures of the Wolbarst variety. "It seems to me that there should be an immediate effort to arrange—especially in the

German, Jewish, and Scandinavian communities—meetings" with "men like Dr. Wolbarst, and the local leaders in each Assembly district," Roosevelt insisted. He was growing anxious about turnout, warning Quigg, "The registration does not look as well as it should, and no stone should be left unturned."[210]

Five days later, an apprehensive Roosevelt sent Quigg a follow-up letter about two Lower East Side districts. "I am told that in both the 4th and 8th Assembly districts, very little is being done," he relayed. TR urged action and recommended they turn to an old ally: "Jacob Riis of the *Sun* wants to give all the help he can" with "the East Side people." Roosevelt also sought to ensure that Republican leaders were properly supporting the Blaine Club, an organization for Jewish Republicans on the Lower East Side. "Some financial aid should be given to the Blaine Club," Roosevelt suggested, telling Quigg that the Blaine Club members "are, I think, sincerely for me; but they are very poor, and they have to have a little aid to enable them to hold meetings or get out banners." He floated some other names with credibility on the East Side who could be leaned upon to promote the Republican cause. "Can't Meyer Isaacs be asked to speak?" Roosevelt asked, alluding to a Jewish lawyer who was well connected in GOP circles. And in case Congressman Quigg missed the letter's earlier reference to Jacob Riis, Roosevelt anxiously signed off, "Can't you see Riis?" and then added in a postscript, "Do send for Riis."[211]

Soon the Republican State Committee was inundating the Lower East Side with Yiddish flyers, which depicted the American victory over Spain as righteous vengeance against a wicked nation that had shed Jewish blood during the Inquisition. "Spain now lies punished for all her sins," the flyer proclaimed, crediting Theodore Roosevelt and President McKinley. "Every vote for the Colonel of the Rough Riders is approval of McKinley and the War. Every vote for Roosevelt's opponent is a vote for Spain.… Vote to express your approval of Spain's defeat." The Republicans plainly believed—probably correctly—that the emotional symbolism of a historic victory over Spain loomed larger than local issues for a great many Jewish constituents.[212]

An enterprising candidate like Roosevelt wouldn't leave it entirely to deputies and flyers to do his bidding; he resolved to barnstorm the East Side himself. Roosevelt took a grand tour of the neighborhood in early November, stopping at various spots to give speeches. As a horse-drawn carriage carried him through the streets, a small army of cheering boys accompanied the candidate.[213] Adults surfaced too—some standing on tenement roofs, others peering through factory windows, still more congregating on street corners—to catch a glimpse of Roosevelt. The streets were festooned with streamers and bunting for the occasion, and portraits of TR hung from fire escapes. When exuberant crowds chanted his name, it sounded like these native Yiddish speakers were saying "Meester Rosenfeldt." One journalist reported that this Judaic pronunciation was "every bit as cordially received [by Roosevelt] as though the candidate really spelled his name in the East Side way."[214]

Notwithstanding these signs of approbation, some unsavory characters who opposed Roosevelt were prepared for mischief. "It might have been called an unmixed political triumph," the *New York Times* commented, "had not the enemies of the Republican candidate been awaiting his coming with sticks and stones and the kind of dead cat known to the boys of the East Side as 'sun birds.' "[215] The term "sun bird" was presumably an allusion to the fact that these deceased animals became aerial when hurled at a given target.

In a race that attracted national attention, Roosevelt emerged victorious on election day. His popularity with upstate voters sealed his win. And although Roosevelt expectedly lost the Democratic stronghold of New York City, he notably outran the rest of the GOP ticket there. The *Boston Evening Journal* attributed "his strength among the Hebrews" as a key factor in his relative success at the polls.[216]

* * *

The newly inaugurated governor harbored grave concerns about the unsanitary sweatshops so prevalent in the tenements. Roosevelt was not far removed from his days as police commissioner, when Jacob Riis had first introduced him to the perils of slum life during late-night strolls. There was a state law on the books promulgating numerous regulations for tenements to improve health and prevent overcrowding: strictly hygienic apartments, only one family per unit, no labor performed in bedrooms. But merely passing a law is different from actually implementing it. Roosevelt doubted that state inspectors were rigorously applying the statute, and he turned once more to Riis as an advisor. “I think that perhaps if I looked through the sweatshops myself with the inspectors, as well as looked over their work,” Roosevelt wrote Riis, “we might be in a condition to put things on a new basis, just as they were put on a new basis in the police department after you and I began our midnight tours.”[217]

The governor tapped Riis to personally orchestrate a visit to the sweatshops. Riis vividly recalled the outing, noting that the oppressive heat barely registered with the inexhaustible Roosevelt: “It was one of the hottest days of early summer, and it wore me completely out.… Him it only gave a better appetite for dinner.” They diligently examined twenty of the East Side’s most squalid tenements. Roosevelt was bitterly disappointed. He minced no words in dressing down the district’s inspector who had joined them. “I do not think you quite understand what I mean by enforcing a law,” the governor began. “I don’t want it made as easy as possible for the manufacturer. I want you to refuse to license anybody in a tenement that does not come up to the top notch of your own requirements.” Roosevelt admonished the inspector to put not just manufacturers but the building proprietors on notice: profiting off lax standards would no longer be tolerated.[218]

The problem, Roosevelt believed, wasn’t just enforcement but the inadequacy of the law itself. Accordingly, he called for legislation that would, in Riis’s words, fight back against “the mercenary hostility of the slum landlord.”[219] The governor pleaded with lawmakers in Albany to fund a special commission that would conduct a thoroughgoing investigation and recommend statutory reforms. When the statehouse failed to demonstrate a Rooseveltian sense of urgency on the matter, he sent legislators an emergency message stressing the unprecedented opportunity before them. Perhaps never before in state history—Roosevelt declared—had lawmakers contemplated “a measure of more real importance to the welfare of those who are least able to protect themselves and whom we should especially guard from … the rapacity of those who would prey upon them.” The legislature ultimately acceded to his request, and Roosevelt stacked the new commission with reformers who shared his outlook. They proposed statutory provisions to address a host of ills in the tenements, from fire hazards to rampant filth. Unsurprisingly, the Jewish press took a keen interest in these developments given the stakes for untold Jewish immigrants. The commission’s work ultimately culminated in the passage of the Tenement House Act, which would take effect shortly after Roosevelt’s departure from the governor’s mansion.[220]

* * *

Among the perquisites of gubernatorial office is the power of appointment, and Roosevelt placed a number of Jews in important positions. These ranged from a seat on the Court of Appeals to executive posts like the State Gas Meter Inspector.[221] Roosevelt also named a Jewish woman in Syracuse, Etta Falker, to the Board of Managers for a women’s prison. According to the press, she was the first Jewish woman to receive an appointment from a New York governor.[222] Nor was it easy to find a comparable figure beyond New York’s borders. The *Hebrew Standard* newspaper mused, “Probably no other Jewish lady in the United States occupies such an important social and official position.”[223]

As governor, Roosevelt was dogged by a philosophical contradiction with respect to hiring and promotion: he valued Jewish participation in government, but he also espoused a meritocratic ideal that paid faith no heed. In a private letter to a Gentile, Roosevelt emphasized his deliberate efforts to ensure religious diversity in his appointments. “On the State Board of Charities,” he wrote, “I thought it was right to see that the different creeds had representation, and I think that the Jews whom I appointed … were as fine a body of American citizens as have ever been put on such a board.” And yet, in that very same letter, Roosevelt denied that the religious identity of prospective appointees informed his decisions about whom to name for various offices. “When I appointed Judge Hirschberg of Newburg on the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, I did so not because he was a Jew but because I thought he was the best judge for promotion,” TR insisted. The rest of the letter oscillated between the ideals of intentional pluralism and faith-blind merit. In one sentence, Roosevelt explained that he recruited Jews to his police force, in part, to counter negative stereotypes about Jewish weakness. But in another sentence, he celebrated that his promotion of a Jewish Rough Rider to lieutenant bore no relationship to the soldier’s religious background.[224] TR would prove just as inconsistent on this issue during his presidency.

Governor Roosevelt’s interest in Jewish appointees wasn’t limited to his own state. When he caught wind that antisemitic forces were trying to stymie a Jewish candidate under consideration for a federal post, TR personally intervened with President McKinley. “I have seen a good deal of Mr. [Israel] Fischer and am very strongly prepossessed in his favor,” Roosevelt shared. “He is a public man of high character—a man who in every way comes up to the standard of qualifications you have a right to demand.” TR then confronted the question of religious bigotry directly, acknowledging, “I have been informed that some opposition has been expressed to you because of Mr. Fischer’s faith, he being a Jew, but I know that it is absolutely needless for me to say anything whatsoever on this score, for I know that you are incapable of so much as considering whether a man is Jew or Gentile, Catholic or Protestant, so long as he is a good American and a good citizen, and both of these Mr. Fischer is.”[225] Fischer received his appointment.

* * *

During his governorship, Roosevelt had occasion to address anti-Jewish prejudice not just at home but overseas as well. The world over was then paying close attention to France’s most notorious episode of antisemitism: the Dreyfus Affair. Alfred Dreyfus was a Jewish captain in the French army who had been wrongly convicted of divulging state secrets to the Germans. Although the charges were bogus, they dovetailed with long-running stereotypes found in many countries that Jews were disloyal citizens. Now Dreyfus was serving a life sentence on Devil's Island, a French penal colony off the South American coast. French animus against Jews made it difficult for the imprisoned Dreyfus to secure a fair appeals process by which he might clear his name and regain his liberty.[226]

As France's baseless persecution of Dreyfus drew international condemnation, the inveterate antisemite Henry Adams saw the global clamor as yet more evidence that Jews were secretly pulling the strings of world affairs. Adams's paranoia earned him the ridicule of his friend John Hay, who was then serving as the American ambassador to the United Kingdom and would later become Roosevelt's secretary of state. In a personal letter to a fellow diplomat, Hay mocked Adams for becoming "clean daft over the Dreyfus affair." It seemed to Hay that Adams believed "the Jews are all the press, all the cabinets, all the gods and all weather. I was amazed to see so sensible a man so wild." In a similar vein two months later, Hay joked to a senator's wife that Adams—still exasperated by worldwide advocacy for Dreyfus—was liable to blame Jews for the eruption of Italy's most notorious volcano: "When he saw Vesuvius reddening the midnight air, he searched the horizon to find a Jew stoking the fire."[227]

The irony here is that the Jewish reaction to the Dreyfus Affair was fairly reserved. To be sure, Jews on both sides of the Atlantic earnestly called for his release, but they generally did so with a measure of moderation. French Jews feared that strident agitation could backfire. America's Jewish leadership, meanwhile, was reluctant to recognize that the Enlightenment project of religious equality might be failing in Western Europe. These uptown Jews preferred to treat the Dreyfus Affair as an anomalous miscarriage of justice against an unfortunate Frenchman, not as a symptom of structural antisemitism. To grapple with the full implications of French prejudice would have raised uncomfortable doubts about the Jewish future in supposedly civilized nations. Downtown Jews, however, proved an exception to this dynamic. With the memory of their own Old World oppression all too fresh, they drew a straight line from Russian pogroms to Dreyfus's persecution.[228]

Governor Roosevelt’s views on Dreyfus stood in sharp relief to Henry Adams’s, their shared social circle notwithstanding. When word reached America that Dreyfus was finally granted a retrial, Roosevelt wrote a sympathetic letter addressed to three interested parties: two Jewish philanthropists and a philosemitic preacher who had just authored a book about Jewish contributions to the world. “Gentlemen, I feel the most heartfelt joy over the action now taken in relation to Captain Dreyfus, and the attempt to partially redress the hideous wrong done to him,” Roosevelt conveyed. And he praised a French colonel who had come forward with exculpatory evidence on Dreyfus’s behalf despite immense pressure on that colonel to conceal it: “I trust also that we shall not forget the splendid courage and disinterested patriotism and loyalty of gallant Colonel Picquart.”[229] Dreyfus would be convicted yet again in his retrial that summer, but the ensuing global outrage induced the French president to summarily pardon him.[230]

The *Idaho Daily Statesman* saw in the Rough Rider legacy an American answer to the Dreyfus Affair. The paper reprinted a quotation from Roosevelt extolling his regiment’s religious diversity and then added in its own wording, “In France, that pretends to be a republic, they degrade an officer and send him into solitary confinement because he is a Jew, but in the United States there is no difference between the Jew and Gentile.”[231] The *Statesman* was overselling the case—America had its own issues with religious prejudice. But even so, no antisemitic incident comparable to the Dreyfus Affair marred the records of the U.S. military. And Roosevelt’s frequent plaudits about his Jewish Rough Riders did indeed offer a marked contrast to France’s deplorable treatment of Captain Dreyfus.

* * *

Governor Roosevelt looked ahead to his political future with ambivalence. William McKinley was pursuing reelection but needed a running mate owing to the death of his vice president the prior fall. The president opted to stay neutral in the selection process, content to defer entirely to the discretion of the upcoming Republican National Convention.[232] Roosevelt was the odds-on favorite, but he didn't thrill to the prospect. The vice presidency of that era was an office best suited to an empty figurehead content to idle away the time. In other words, it was a terrible fit for TR.[233] He preferred to seek a second term as governor. Before the convention, Roosevelt lamented to a friend, "In the Vice-Presidency I could do nothing." But he was prepared to abide the convention vote.[234]

As the delegates were deciding the destiny of the ticket on a hot June day in Philadelphia's convention hall, Roosevelt holed up in a nearby hotel room awaiting the results. He distracted himself with the writings of Josephus, the acclaimed scholar of ancient Jewish history. So immersed was Roosevelt in Jewish antiquity that he failed to notice that his sister Corinne had knocked at his door, entered his room, and was standing over his shoulder. When she saw what Roosevelt was reading, Corinne broke the silence with laughter. She later recalled finding it irresistibly "quaint" that amid all the pomp and politicking of the convention, her brother was "quietly apart, perfectly absorbed in the history of the Jews of a long-past day."[235]

The RNC delegates enthusiastically nominated Roosevelt to serve as McKinley's running mate, with 925 votes in his favor and only one opposed. The lone dissenter: Roosevelt himself.[236] He made his peace with his fate and accepted the nomination. Roosevelt dashed off a letter to an American diplomat a few weeks later, acknowledging, "I am completely reconciled to being the candidate for vice-president now."[237] His mixed emotions aside, Roosevelt was boundlessly energetic as a campaigner, crisscrossing America at a frenetic pace on behalf of the Republican ticket. The race offered voters a rematch of the 1896 cycle when McKinley had faced off against William Jennings Bryan. On election day, McKinley and Roosevelt notched a dominant victory.[238]

Among Roosevelt's well-wishers on his electoral triumph was a friend from the police force. "Best success to you in your new office," telegrammed the Jewish police officer Otto Raphael. "May God have only happiness in store for you."[239] Roosevelt was "touched" by the gesture from his old sparring partner.[240] Meanwhile, Lucius Littauer—a Jewish congressman whose relationship with TR dated back to their Harvard days

—messaged Roosevelt with words of “joyous congratulations!” But Littauer’s comment came with a caveat: “My only regret is that you must waste four years in a position unsuited to your abilities.”[241] Four years would prove far off the mark.

Merely six months into his second term, McKinley was shaking hands with a crowd in Buffalo when an anarchist shot him at close range. McKinley underwent emergency surgery, and Roosevelt rushed to Buffalo. After a few days, McKinley’s condition was sufficiently improved that Roosevelt set off to join his family on a planned vacation in the Adirondack Mountains of upstate New York.[242] The vice president received a gracious letter the next day from William Cohen, a Jewish jurist who was now practicing law after a stint on the bench. Roosevelt counted Cohen as a legal advisor and a friend—they had most likely first met when both were law students at Columbia in 1880.[243] “As everyone knows, you have been placed in many delicate and trying situations in your busy life; I venture to say that no one of them called upon you for more judgment and tact than when you were at the side of our wounded president,” wrote Judge Cohen. “Never in your whole public career has your conduct been so perfect; silent and dignified when the outcome was uncertain, cheerful when the conditions warranted—with a sense of duty always present, reluctantly ready to act in case you should be called upon.”[244] The letter made an impression on Roosevelt, who told Cohen that he would “keep it permanently.”[245]

Just when it seemed that McKinley had been spared, his wound grew infected, and the once-favorable prognosis became grim.[246] A ranger hurried up the mountainside where Roosevelt was hiking to convey the urgent news.[247] Early the next day, as Roosevelt was hastening back to Buffalo, McKinley took his final breath.[248] “Now the dreadful has occurred,” a somber Roosevelt relayed to Judge Cohen, “and the only thing for me to do is to take up the burden and bear it as manfully as I can.”[249] After arriving in Buffalo, Roosevelt quickly took the oath of office in a friend’s parlor. At age forty-two, he had become—and remains still—the youngest president in American history.[250]

* * *

Roosevelt’s trajectory to the Oval Office was astounding. In four short years, he had accelerated through a dizzying succession of roles: police commissioner, navy official, Rough Rider, New York governor, vice president, and now, suddenly, he was the most powerful man in America. At every stage in this improbable journey—from the East Side slums to the San Juan Heights—Roosevelt deepened his relationship with the American Jewish community.

He was a collector of stories, and his haul from these years had been especially abundant when it came to Jewry. There was the episode of Hermann Ahlwardt, the German hate-monger whom Roosevelt cleverly guarded with Jewish policemen. There was the tale of Otto Raphael, the Jewish immigrant who braved a burning building and earned not just a police badge but Roosevelt’s friendship. There was the legend of Sam Greenwald, the Jewish soldier whose courage facing down Spanish bullets alongside Colonel Roosevelt won him a promotion. These stories mattered—to Roosevelt and to American Jewry alike—because they advanced an aspirational vision of national life where Jew and Gentile would stand as equals.

But the question of Jewish belonging at home would soon become eclipsed by the question of Jewish survival abroad. Roosevelt did not yet know, as he inherited the mantle of presidential power, that the momentous years now facing him would coincide with the greatest crisis for global Jewry of his lifetime. The Jewish people prayed that this youthful new president—this teller of Jewish tales—might prevent the next chapter in the Jewish story from being written in blood.

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2

ROMANIAN NOTE

At the time that Theodore Roosevelt assumed the American presidency, some five thousand miles away Romanian Jews were suffering under the heel of an oppressive state and society. The Treaty of Berlin had recognized Romania’s independence in 1878, and in the ensuing decades, the newly sovereign nation subjected its Jewish community to a relentless succession of indignities. Although Jews had lived there for centuries, they weren’t considered citizens. Jews were prohibited from residing in many towns. Hospitals had quotas on Jewish patients. The Romanian government wasn’t content to merely bar Jewish students from public schools—it also thwarted a bid by the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, a French-based Jewish aid organization, to subsidize a Jewish school system. Meanwhile, a series of laws banned Jews from ever more forms of employment, from educated professions like lawyer and broker to working-class occupations such as farmer and peddler. Jewish artisans were disallowed from retailing goods made by their own hands. Abject poverty was all but inevitable for the great mass of Romanian Jews. Thousands of them might have starved to death were it not for the charity of the *Alliance*. And beyond a legal regime of discrimination, the government actively promoted pogroms in which organized mobs ransacked Jewish property and assailed Jewish people.[1]

The Romanian treatment of Jews was all the more egregious in light of the conditions under which the preeminent powers of Europe had granted

Romania its independence. The Treaty of Berlin expressly forbade Romania from practicing religious discrimination in its political or economic affairs.[2] With Romania brazenly flouting that treaty, the country's 400,000 Jews found themselves in a deepening disaster.

Western European and American Jewry fretted about the increasingly desperate situation in Romania. In 1902, a Jewish philanthropist in England, F. D. Mocatta, wrote to the American Jewish leader Oscar Straus about an imminent law in Romania that would ban Jews from some of the few remaining jobs they were still legally permitted to hold. Britain was a signatory to the Treaty of Berlin and thus had some standing to pressure Romania, but Mocatta was dubious that his own nation or the other signatory powers would catalyze action to enforce the treaty's terms. He reasoned that the United States, despite not being party to the treaty, was actually more likely to initiate an effort on behalf of Romanian Jewry.[3] In that respect, Mocatta was typical of European Jews who had far greater faith in the American government than their own. Mocatta was hopeful that an American plea to Romania might encourage Britain to then lend its own support to the cause.[4]

Mocatta was prudent in enlisting Oscar Straus, for the latter counted among a small handful of Jews who were positioned to exert real influence on Roosevelt. Straus was a consummate uptown Jew. He had been born in Germany and raised largely in America. An alumnus of Columbia Law School, Straus worked as an attorney before serving as an ambassador to the Ottoman Empire in the 1880s and 1890s.[5] He had known TR since at least 1900 when, as governor of New York, Roosevelt appointed Straus to a committee tasked with studying the status of indigenous people in the state.[6] A month before Mocatta sent his letter, Roosevelt tapped Straus to fill one of America's four seats on the newly created international tribunal in The Hague.[7] The president had some hesitation at first in making the appointment—Straus, after all, was a Democrat—but the owner of the *New York Times*, also a Jew, successfully prevailed upon Roosevelt.[8]

Straus's obligations to The Hague did not preclude him from continuing to reside stateside, and over the course of the Roosevelt administration, he would emerge as TR's most trusted Jewish advisor, offering valued advice on issues far beyond the scope of his official remit. The two men were distinct by many measures. Roosevelt had a commanding presence; Straus was mild-mannered. Roosevelt could enthrall a crowd; Straus was best suited to backroom diplomacy. Roosevelt epitomized charisma; Straus decidedly did not.[9] Yet there was a great deal for these two statesmen to appreciate in one another. Both staked out moderate positions in the era's struggle between capital and labor. Both saw themselves as embodying an ethical code that transcended the crass materialism of an industrializing America. And both thought that the United States was a fundamentally virtuous nation.[10]

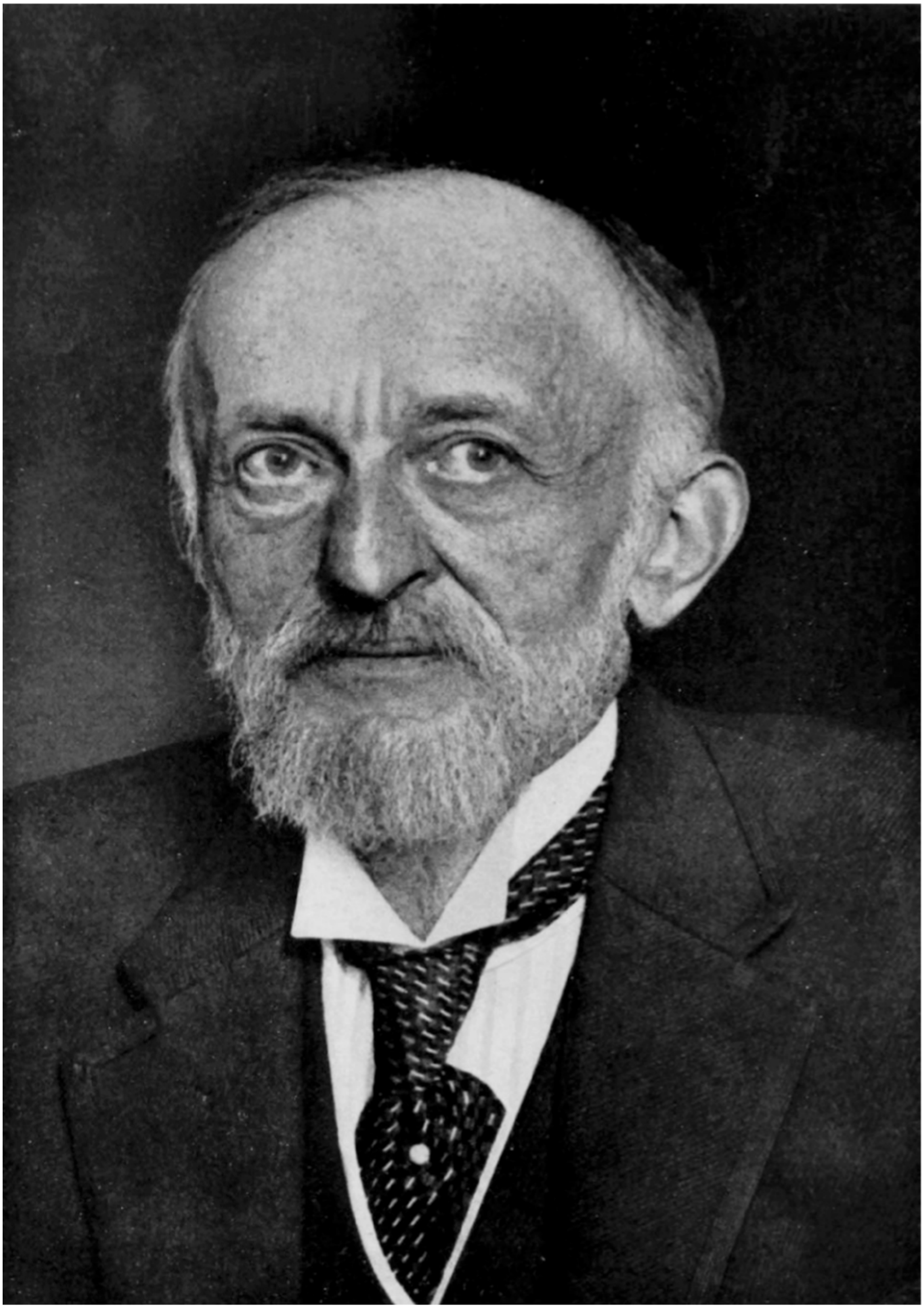

FIGURE 2.1. Oscar Straus. *Source*: *The World's Work*. Vol. 31, *November, 1915, to April, 1916. A History of Our Time*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1918.

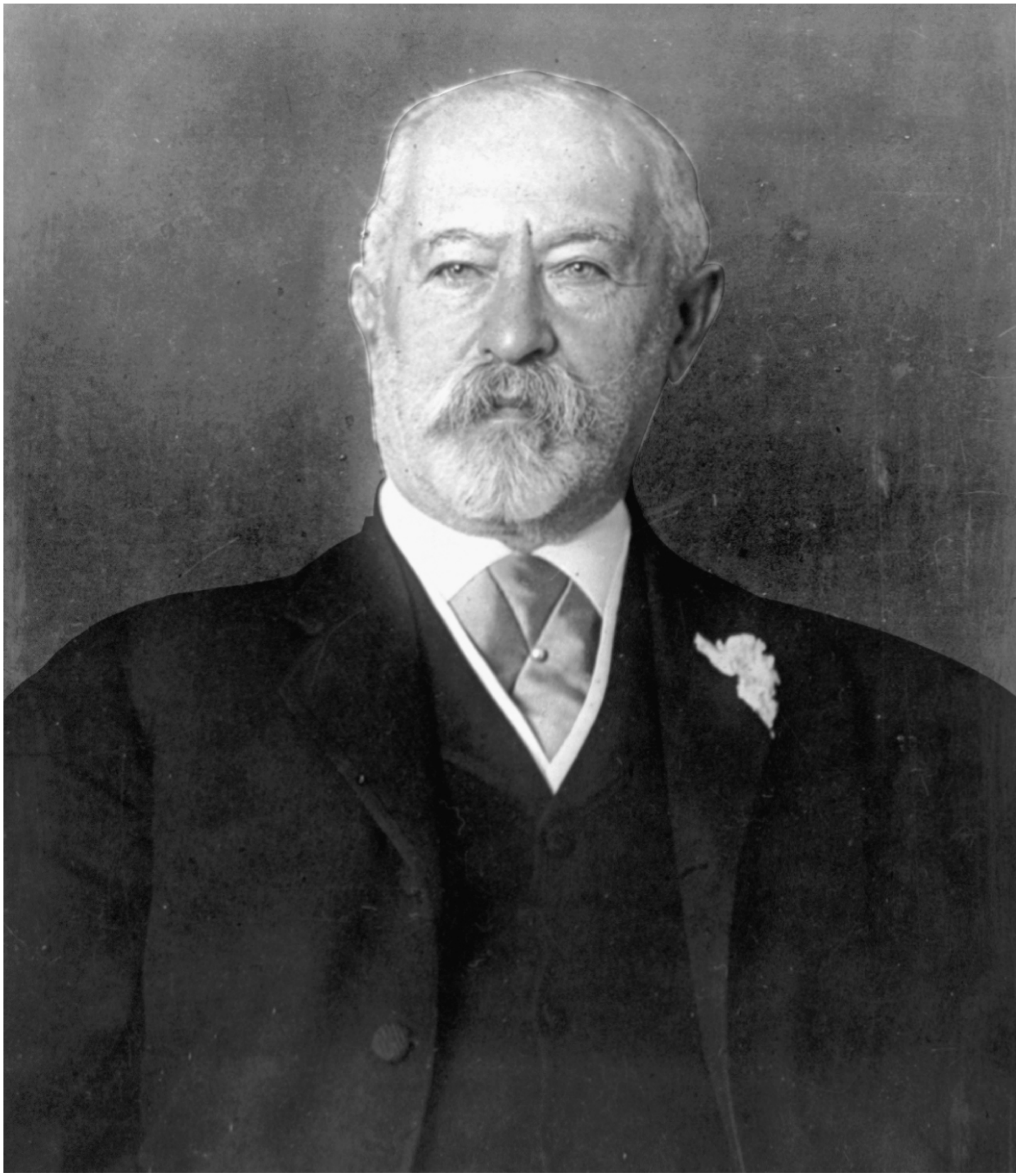

FIGURE 2.2. Jacob H. Schiff. *Source*: The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Print Collection, The New York Public Library.

The plight of Romanian Jews fell outside Straus's purview—the matter certainly wasn't before The Hague—but he was sufficiently alarmed that he spent what political capital he had to advance their cause. To press his case for Romanian Jewry, Straus turned to someone who enjoyed, for the time being, even more clout with Roosevelt: Jacob Schiff. Although Schiff was a Republican and Straus a Democrat, they were both German-born members of the Jewish elite in America, and they worked well together on Jewish issues. A contemporary described Jacob Schiff as having "an aristocratic quality in his personality." He had amassed a fortune as a banker in New York and devoted much of his riches to philanthropy, particularly Jewish causes. Schiff possessed a flair for the dramatic. He could be combative or compassionate depending on the circumstances. As America's foremost advocate for Jewry, Schiff was a man whom any president of the era would be wise to cultivate as an ally and adviser on Jewish topics. And Roosevelt was savvy enough to recognize as much.[11]

* * *

After Straus and Schiff deliberated in early 1902 on a strategy for influencing Roosevelt's policy toward Romania, they agreed that Straus would draft a memo about conditions on the ground there, which Schiff would then personally deliver to the president.[12] Straus understood that it was a violation of diplomatic norms for any given country to involve itself in another's domestic affairs. At that point in world history, altruism on its own would typically offer an insufficient basis for the United States to press Romania on its persecution of Jews (although exceptions did exist). Straus's memo conceded, "If the matter were of concern … from only a humanitarian standpoint, I would not have the president's noble heart disturbed." Because Roosevelt would need a pretense to intercede, Straus provided a rationale for action that directly implicated American interests: immigration. Straus explained that as a consequence of Romania's offenses against its Jews, "these people are emigrating *en masse*" to the United States. Romania through its "persecutions" effectively forced thousands of impoverished Jews to flee, which constitutes an "unfriendly act" by

Romania toward America—one that “gives our government the right, not only to protest, but to remonstrate against such inhuman laws that discredit the age in which we are living.”[13] In truth, Roosevelt wasn’t actually opposed to accepting Romanian-Jewish refugees. Not even seven thousand had entered America the prior year. The immigration excuse would be pure pretext.[14]

Straus’s memo suggested some possible courses of action that Roosevelt could pursue. TR might encourage a congressional resolution “expressive of sympathy and protesting against the inhuman treatment” of Romanian Jews. Another option was the appointment to Romania of a special commissioner with “diplomatic rank” who would convey America’s disapproval to the regime there. Whatever the president might choose to do, any movement from the Roosevelt administration—Straus predicted—would prompt further action from the great powers of Europe that had signed the Treaty of Berlin.[15] Those signatories were Britain, Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire.

Jacob Schiff had occasion in April of 1902 to meet with Roosevelt and deliver Straus’s memo. Roosevelt summoned his secretary of state, John Hay, to join that meeting. Hay was measured in his reaction, cautioning that the path advocated by Schiff and Straus was not without “difficulty,” but Hay still assured Schiff that he wouldn’t simply let the matter rest.[16]

Secretary Hay would become a central figure in the Romanian affair moving forward, a trusted aide whom Roosevelt expected to work collaboratively with Jews like Straus and Schiff on a solution. Although Hay didn’t quite share Roosevelt’s pro-Jewish instincts, neither did Hay espouse the genteel antisemitism that afflicted so much of the Anglo-Saxon elite of his day. Perhaps Hay was less prone to anti-Jewish prejudice because his background was atypical of the patrician class with whom he fraternized. He wasn’t born into the East Coast establishment but rather grew up in rural Illinois. Moreover, Hay owed his riches to the modern railroad industry, not an inheritance from a colonial-era fortune; accordingly, he wasn’t troubled by the anxieties of the Old Money set who saw enterprising Jews as rapacious capitalists. Recall that Hay laughed off the paranoid antisemitism of his friend Henry Adams. To be sure, Hay wasn’t wholly devoid of bias himself. He once expressed a wish that a friend of his would soon be “getting [as] rich as a Dutch Jew.”[17]

At TR’s request, John Hay met with Oscar Straus and asked him to produce a second memo on Romania’s Jews that could inform the administration’s actions. Straus dutifully drafted a new report, which he sent straight to Roosevelt in May. That report uneasily grappled with the reality that any formal objection to Romania would force the United States to adopt a self-contradictory position. In order to justify its interposition in the domestic affairs of a foreign power, America would have to invoke as a pretext its own interests—in this case, the migration of Jews from Romania to America. Yet the United States was supposed to be a sanctuary for those fleeing subjugation. By bemoaning the influx of Romanian Jews to American ports, the Roosevelt administration might appear hypocritically xenophobic.

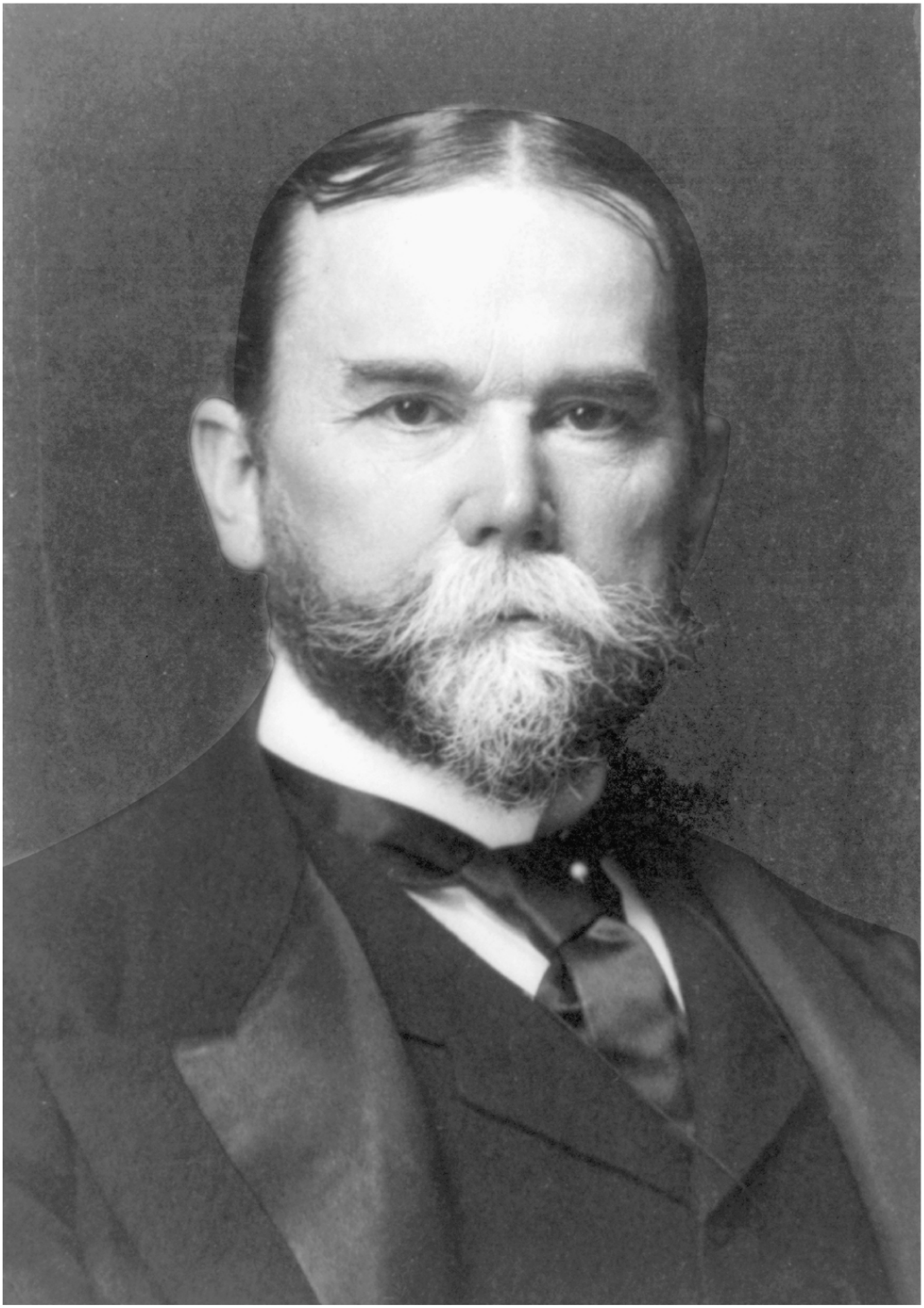

FIGURE 2.3. John Hay. *Source*: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

Straus was not obtuse to this predicament and tried as best he could to paper over it in his report for Roosevelt. On the one hand, Straus reasoned that America was uniquely positioned to criticize Romania because the United States would “in all probability receive the largest number of those oppressed people.” On the other hand, he insisted that reliance on immigration as the basis for a diplomatic protest should *not* be interpreted as a plea “against receiving these refugees in this country, which from the day that the Pilgrim Fathers set foot upon our shores, has been the haven of refuge.” Try as Straus might, that inconsistency would continue to present challenges for the Roosevelt administration as it developed its Romania policy.[18]

Some passages of Straus’s report notably sidestepped that tension by arguing that humanitarianism alone actually *could* justify an American reproach. He cited a few historical examples, including instructions sent in 1872 from the U.S. secretary of state to American ambassadors across Europe; those instructions had called on the ambassadors to convey to their host nations that America was gravely concerned for the “inhumanly persecuted Hebrews” on Romanian territory. Straus closed his report with an “earnest appeal” for Roosevelt to challenge the Romanian state over its prejudice and to enlist the European signatories to the Treaty of Berlin to follow suit. He optimistically predicted that inveighing against Romania’s treatment of its Jewish population “cannot fail to have great influence at this present crisis.”[19]

* * *

The American public grew increasingly aware of Romanian Jewry’s dire condition. A newspaper in Michigan reported that thousands of them were en route to the United States on account of “systematic persecution.”[20] Another paper, in Vermont, predicted that this cohort of immigrants is “only the beginning of what promises to be an exodus of Romanian Jews” who were escaping “oppressive legislation.”[21]

In Philadelphia—among the leading cities for American Jewish life—the *Alliance* organized a mass gathering to decry the treatment of both Romanian and Russian Jews. Speakers emphasized that Jews in the United States, who enjoyed religious liberty and economic opportunity, shouldered a special obligation to aid their embattled coreligionists overseas. As a local rabbi told the crowd, "The voice of Jewish suffering, of Jewish sorrow … must find a responsive chord in every heart." Notably, not all orators that day were Jewish. One Gentile speechmaker insisted that Christians ought to be deeply concerned with the barbarous treatment of any human being, regardless of the victim's faith. The meeting concluded with fundraising for the *Alliance*'s work and a vote in favor of resolutions condemning Romania and Russia.[22]

As the Roosevelt administration considered its options, the president came under pressure to do something on the diplomatic front from Lucius Littauer—a college friend, fellow Republican, and Jewish congressman representing a district in upstate New York.[23] Roosevelt assured Littauer, "Hay is already at work on the Romanian business."[24] Indeed, a plan was afoot to have an American diplomat, Charles Wilson, confront the Romanian authorities about antisemitism. The United States had no embassy in Romania, so Romanian-American diplomacy was handled by Wilson, the regional chargé d'affaires based in Greece (a chargé d'affaires is a diplomatic officer who has lesser rank than an ambassador but enjoys comparable powers in conducting foreign policy).

Secretary Hay tasked a seasoned State Department employee with formulating instructions for Wilson, which would become known as the "Romanian Note." In mid-July, Hay forwarded a draft to Roosevelt for the president's blessing. Hay included with the note a cover letter to Roosevelt acknowledging the same difficulty that Straus had well understood: America wanted to make a humanitarian plea but needed to cite immigration as a pretense to avoid breaching protocol. The United States was, by chance, in the midst of pressing Romania for a naturalization treaty, which would specify the conditions under which each country would formally recognize that a given individual had traded one nation's citizenship for the other's. That endeavor could provide the Roosevelt administration with some grounds for exerting pressure on the topic of Jewish rights, since the absence of Jewish rights was prompting Romanian Jews to seek naturalization in America. “You will see in reading it that it has not been easy to handle,” Hay confessed to Roosevelt, “but I have availed myself of what seems our only excuse, the pending naturalization treaty with Romania, to read them a pretty drastic letter on their duty to the Jews. Please let me know if it meets your approval.”[25]

The note that Hay submitted for Roosevelt’s consideration made the case that, in light of a prospective naturalization treaty, the United States was well within its rights to “scrutinize most jealously the character of the immigration from a foreign land”—especially when that land’s maltreatment of its own inhabitants spurred the emigration of destitute refugees to America. Any nation so aggrieved may “point out the evil and make remonstrance” against the offending country. Having established this principle, the note considered the litany of abuses against Romanian Jews: civil disabilities, special taxes, employment blacklists. “In the overcrowded cities … they are forced to dwell and engage, against fearful odds, in the desperate struggle for existence,” the note continued. The Jews—amid this “state of wretched misery” and “enforced degradation”—have little hope for advancement. They thus confront two options: “submissive suffering” or “flight to some land less unfavorable to them.”[26]

Much of the note awkwardly grappled with the tension between the United States’ self-professed commitment to sheltering refugees and its complaint that Romania was forcing its Jewish population onto American shores. “The United States offers asylum to the oppressed of all lands,” the note proclaimed. But this principle did not constitute a willingness to stand idly by while a bad actor created such inhumane conditions that its impecunious residents had no choice but to embark for American ports. The exodus of the Romanian Jew was not “the healthy, intelligent emigration of a free and self-reliant being” but rather “the mere transplantation of an artificially produced diseased growth to a new place.” These Jews arrived as “outcasts, made doubly paupers by physical and moral oppression in their native land.” Under such terms, their immigration wasn’t “acceptable or beneficial.” Such a damning assessment of Romanian-Jewish immigrants risked sounding antisemitic in itself, and so the note took pains to speak well of Jewish immigrants at large: American history showed that “the Jews possess in a high degree the mental and moral qualifications of conscientious citizenhood,” so long as they come suitably “equipped in mind and body.”[27]

Fabricated concerns about immigration may have given the Roosevelt administration its requisite pretext, but the note still acknowledged and even championed the humanitarian agenda actually motivating its authorship—America was moved “in the name of humanity.” Even as the note conceded that it could not “authoritatively appeal” to the Treaty of Berlin’s text since the United States wasn’t a signatory, it would nonetheless “earnestly appeal” to the treaty’s guiding ideals “because they are the principles of international law and eternal justice.”[28] Initially intended to be a confidential message to an American diplomat—which would inform his messaging to the Romanian regime—the note’s impassioned rhetoric indicates that it was drafted with an eye toward eventual release for public consumption.[29]

Roosevelt had no hesitation in giving the draft his imprimatur. “I think that the memorandum to the Romanian government is admirable,” he told Hay. The president also asked that the State Department furnish him with an additional copy that he could show his Jewish ally in Congress, Lucius Littauer.[30] Hay acceded to the request and counseled Roosevelt that Jacob Schiff and Oscar Straus would be interested in the note’s contents as well.[31] Appearing as a letter under Hay’s name, the note was sent off to Charles Wilson, the diplomat who was to convey its gist to Romania.[32]

The Jews in Roosevelt’s circle were uniformly pleased. As Jacob Schiff told Congressman Littauer, “I have read this communiqué with much interest, and I agree with you that it forms a masterful presentation.” Schiff and Littauer alike urged the Roosevelt administration to share the note with the signatory nations.[33] Hay agreed that the United States should involve the signatories, writing to Roosevelt, “I think we might do it.”[34]

Before the note was dispatched to the signatories, Charles Wilson acted upon it. He met with a Romanian official to discuss the possibility of a naturalization treaty, who explained to Wilson that the king in fact objected to any such treaty. The king was concerned that if a treaty required that all U.S. citizens living in Romania be afforded robust rights, then a Romanian Jew could abscond to America, become a U.S. citizen, and return to Romania with far greater freedoms than his coreligionists who had never left. American citizenship would thereby become an end-run around the regime of Jewish persecution to which Romania was so ardently committed. This, the king would not abide.[35]

Wilson wrote Hay with the details of this meeting. Notably, Wilson's letter made no mention of his having communicated to the Romanian official America's general opposition to the conditions of Romanian Jewry—presumably because Wilson did not. Perhaps Wilson discussed the naturalization treaty only and pressed no further because the official's negative reaction to naturalization made it apparent that any remonstrance about Romanian antisemitism would fall on deaf ears. Or maybe Wilson misunderstood Hay's note by failing to appreciate that the treaty discussion was the pretext, not the point.[36] Either way, Romanian obstinance appears to have only reinforced for the Roosevelt administration that it should indeed forward the note to the signatories. Hay initiated that process just days after hearing from Wilson. The note was accompanied with a request that the signatories take whatever steps they deem suitable to dislodge the Romanian government from its present policy.[37]

* * *

The *American Hebrew* periodical broke the news in early August. It reported that John Hay wired a "most forceful remonstrance" concerning the peril of Romanian Jewry. "Our government shows that it is still in the forefront whenever it comes to questions of humanity and justice," the paper boasted.[38] Roosevelt was highly satisfied. As Hay informed his subordinate who drafted the note, "The President is greatly pleased with your circular, and the Hebrews—poor dears!—all over the country think we are bully boys."[39] The coverage in the *American Hebrew* was based on an unofficial leak and lacked the Romanian Note's actual text. Other newspapers held off on commentary until mid-September, when the

Roosevelt administration confirmed the story and provided the press with copies of the note itself.

At that point, front-page headlines nationwide carried word of the diplomatic protest. Many papers reprinted much, and sometimes all, of the Romanian Note. “United States Appeals to Save Jews,” declared the *Evening News* in San Jose.[40] Although the note was produced at Roosevelt’s direction and drafted by one of Hay’s underlings, it was Hay who signed it; accordingly, many headlines gave Hay the credit. The *Salt Lake Telegram* announced, “Hay Appeals to the Powers for Suffering Jews.”[41] Jewish newspapers, of course, lavished the administration with praise. In New York, the *Hebrew Standard* attributed the Romanian Note to “the head and heart of President Roosevelt.”[42] These plaudits for the Republican president were all the more notable given that the *Hebrew Standard* leaned Democratic.

Some journalistic outlets highlighted the note’s atypical character. The *New York Times*, for instance, emphasized that the administration’s conveyance of the Romanian Note to the signatories constituted an “unusual course” and that the content of the note itself was “remarkable in several respects.” The *Times* did not offer specifics as to why the American tactic departed from convention. It was too obvious to spell out that the United States was hardly in the habit of pressuring European countries to adhere to the terms of a treaty to which America was not itself a party. The paper did acknowledge the “double purpose” of the note: “protecting the long-suffering Jews” on the one hand and sparing America a “horde of poor people” on the other.[43]

An editorial in the *Washington Post* expressed concern that this latter rationale about immigration undermined America’s altruistic plea and thereby weakened the note. “If our only objection to [Romanian antisemitism] resides in the fear that those hapless people will flee to America and so introduce into our civilization a degrading and abhorrent quantity, we cannot reasonably expect our appeal to exert a very potent influence,” the editorialist surmised. The author fully appreciated that impoverished newcomers were being invoked “merely as a justification” for the humanitarian appeal. Secretary Hay may have been hamstrung by diplomatic protocol that rendered human rights an insufficient basis for intervention, but “what he wants to say … is that the American people view with horror and indignation the pitiless pursuit of a race by the government of Romania.”[44] It is striking the ease with which the *Post* contributor was able discern the administration’s pretextual maneuvering. Editorials like this one mattered—with sophisticated polling still decades in the offing, politicians of the day often relied on the press as the best thermometer of the public temperature.[45]

* * *

The Roosevelt administration had made its move; the question remained how Europe would react to this uncharacteristic bid by the United States. Some European papers praised America for setting an example that the Continent should follow. A Viennese daily observed that it had been left to “America to admonish the European powers concerning their obligations to civilization” after Europe “bowed itself so impotently and pitiably before Romania’s barbarities.”[46] Berlin’s paper of record lauded America’s refusal to “keep silence in the presence of international wrong” and warned that it would be “highly shameful” if Europe did not respond in like manner.[47] The paper fully grasped that America seized on immigration as a pretense for pursuing what was really a humanitarian endeavor, suggesting that “the United States does not need the protection of Europe against pauper immigration” and therefore was motivated in actuality by “feelings of humanity.”[48]

Despite these voices of support, other corners of the European press were far less favorable toward the United States. One German newspaper derided the Romanian Note as an exercise in hollow sanctimony, insisting, “The prattle about humanity and eternal justice, especially in an American mouth, is an empty phrase.”[49] A number of the European critics accused the United States of hypocrisy for intruding in Old World affairs after long resisting comparable interventions by Europe into the Western Hemisphere. President James Monroe had first articulated in 1823 what became known as the Monroe Doctrine, which held that any European attempt to colonize an independent nation in the Americas would be interpreted as an act hostile to the United States. Given this history, an Austrian daily condemned the “impertinent meddling” from a nation that “maintains the Monroe Doctrine” and thus “has the least right of any country to exercise a similar influence.”[50]

In the Russian capital of St. Petersburg, one of that nation’s oldest papers, *Zeitung*, found a different basis for accusing America of a double standard. The United States was then engaged in a brutal occupation of the Philippines, and *Zeitung* conveyed that it “doubts the unselfishness of the American step, since the Romanian Jews are probably much better off than the Filipinos.”[51] In the same vein, a paper from the German city of Dresden argued that the United States had precious little credibility not merely because of its maltreatment of Filipinos but also because of “lynch law” whereby countless American Blacks were savagely murdered. “Romania should either remain silent or send a protest to the United States against lynch law and the treatment of the Filipinos, lest the negroes and Filipinos all emigrate to Romania,” the paper sneered.[52] This kind of commentary previewed a recurring theme throughout Roosevelt’s presidency wherein America’s own human rights abuses would undermine his claim to an altruistic agenda abroad.

The European newspapers, divided as they were on the propriety of the Romanian Note, also diverged in their predictions of its impact. Some thought it would prompt action from the signatory nations; others expected continued inertia.[53] Britain fell into the former camp. The British government had already been under pressure from a coterie of powerful Jews and Gentiles within its borders to join any remonstrance that might come from Washington.[54] When the note from the State Department went public, Britain sent a note of its own to the fellow signatories. That British note seconded American concern for Romanian Jewry and sounded out the other European powers about what action they might collectively take. The Foreign Office in London released a statement that its note “follows and supplements the action taken by the American government, which is entitled to full credit for seeking to alleviate the condition of those oppressed people.”[55] However, an unnamed member of the Foreign Office candidly acknowledged to the press that Britain was unlikely to inspire the Continent to do anything: “Nothing that will be of any permanent good can result from Secretary Hay’s note … unless somebody is willing to crush Romania, and no power seems anxious to take on that task.”[56] His pessimism proved well-founded.

Two days later, the *New York Times* announced that Germany would definitively not intercede on behalf of Romanian Jewry. Germany’s official rationale was the diplomatic custom of abstention from another nation’s internal affairs, but the *Times* contended that Germany had financial incentives to refrain. Germans held significant shares of Romanian securities, making the German government hesitant to meddle and thereby risk those investments. Austria and Russia were equally unwilling to act.[57] Several state-funded newspapers in the capitals of the various signatories suggested that these countries were more likely to collaborate on a rebuke of America for undue interference in European matters.[58]

Romania, for its part, showed little willingness to mend its ways. The Romanian minister to Britain gave an interview in which he simply dissembled about the condition of Romanian Jews. He peddled the fiction that Jews were leaving Romania owing to an agricultural decline.[59] This was a particularly audacious lie given that Romania forbade Jews from purchasing farmland, working someone else’s land, or even living in rural areas.[60] With nonexistent support from its fellow signatories, Britain had to content itself with a symbolic gesture of its displeasure: the Romanian ambassador was deliberately excluded from a banquet hosted by the Lord Mayor of London.[61]

* * *

The Romanian Note may have failed to stir meaningful action in Europe, but it did prove strikingly successful in winning over the affection of Jews in the United States. At a synagogue on the Upper East Side, a rabbi delivered a sermon that was quoted at length in the *New York Times* in which he extolled the “noble plea” of the American government to “prevent the upstart monarchy” from “crushing into dust its unfortunate Jewish subjects.” The rabbi also lauded the Romanian Note as embodying the principles of the Declaration of Independence.[62]

Ever since the note became public, John Hay had been inundated with messages of thanks from Jews across the country.[63] Jews in Milwaukee who had established a Romanian Relief Committee sent a telegram to Hay that expressed “profound gratitude for the timely protest.… An all-wise Providence will bless our Nation for acts like this.”[64] A rabbi in Indiana sent a letter of thanks to John Hay written exclusively in Hebrew. Hay drafted a response in English and then tasked a translator at the State Department with producing a Hebrew version for the rabbi. This marks perhaps the only instance in American history when a secretary of state sent a message on official department letterhead in Hebrew.[65]

The administration was repaid for the Romanian Note with public praise from a key figure in Jewish advocacy and Republican circles: Simon Wolf. Like Jacob Schiff and Oscar Straus, Wolf was a self-made German-Jewish immigrant who emerged as a key spokesperson on Jewish causes. And like Roosevelt, he was a veritable Swiss Army knife of versatility: prominent lawyer, prolific author, former diplomat, outspoken advocate, and energetic philanthropist. Wolf was known as “the Nestor of American Jewry”—an allusion to a sage king from Greek mythology. He enjoyed the ear of many presidents throughout his long career, and Roosevelt was no exception.[66]

Not long after the Romanian Note’s publication, Wolf delivered a Yom Kippur address in Washington that was covered in the press. He celebrated the “high resolve and exalted humanity” of the U.S. government. Even as Wolf conceded that the note had been shrugged off by Romania and the signatories—“the absolute effect of this immortal circular may not be apparent”—he nonetheless argued that the note formed a virtuous precedent whose “moral effect will be lasting for all time.” John Hay had received much of the public acclaim, but Wolf knew that Roosevelt also deserved credit. In his Yom Kippur remarks, he made sure to show appreciation “for the noble President who inspired it, and the no less noble Secretary who gave it expression.”[67] Wolf was equally enthused about the administration in correspondence. He privately told the publisher of a Jewish newspaper that he was “thoroughly satisfied” with the “splendid letter,” which was “record making and bound to be of great service to our people at home and abroad."[68]

Jacob Schiff penned an effusive letter of indebtedness to Roosevelt for sending a note of "such momentous importance."[69] In reply, Roosevelt credited Schiff and Congressman Littauer for their involvement in the matter: "It was you, and second to you, Lucius Littauer, who did the most to fix my attention on the matter of the persecution of the Romanian Jews. You have every right to feel pleased with the result."[70] Schiff was gratified by the administration and confident it would undertake additional efforts for Romanian Jewry. As he wrote the head of the *Alliance*, which had been so central in giving humanitarian aid to embattled Jewish communities, "I believe we can count upon the president's willingness to follow up what has already been done by further action, which it might be necessary and practicable to take."[71]

Jacob Schiff's letter didn't specify what "further action" might entail, but Simon Wolf had a concrete idea that he floated to Roosevelt. Recall that the United States did not have a diplomat specifically for Romania; Wolf reasoned that the appointment of one might placate the king and ease his hostility toward Jews. He told Roosevelt, "Such representation would be of great service to both countries and the unfortunates for whom you have interested yourself so splendidly."[72] Regardless of the merit or naiveté of Wolf's proposal, Roosevelt did not pursue it.

* * *

The 1902 midterm elections were then looming, and Republicans well understood that they could court Jewish voters on the back of the Romanian Note. A Gentile politico, Charles Treat, advised Roosevelt to dispatch John Hay to Jewish neighborhoods in New York City in advance of election day. "The mere fact of his presence, and words of cheer and advice, would arouse more enthusiasm than all the meetings we have had," Treat insisted. "The appreciation of the Hebrews for Mr. Hay's splendid defense [on] their behalf in the Romanian matter has evoked a tremendous outburst of gratitude."[73] Hay would make no such entrée into the political sphere, but

Democrats were nonetheless concerned that Republicans were poised to perform well with Jewish constituents. The *New York Times* reported that the Romanian American Citizens' League—apparently a Jewish organization—would endorse the Republican ticket as a gesture of thanks for the Romanian Note.[74] On the Shabbat before the vote, the Romanian Note was read in a number of synagogues to remind Jews where the Roosevelt administration stood.[75] Measuring the influence of the Romanian Note on the midterms is difficult. Political observers would have to wait another two years to see the impact of Roosevelt himself at the top of the ballot.

For all the goodwill from American Jews, consternation arose from an unexpected corner. Recall that in 1898, the prominent rabbi Joseph Krauskopf had convened with Roosevelt in Cuba and favorably reported on that experience for the American press. But after the midterm elections of 1902, the same rabbi gave a sermon at his synagogue in Philadelphia that criticized the Romanian Note. Most Jewish commentators had been content to overlook the inherent tension in the administration's diplomatic gambit: the United States made a humanitarian plea for the woeful Jews of Romania while justifying its remonstrance by objecting to the influx of those very same Jews to America. The result was a note that could appear sympathetic *and* disdainful—and Krauskopf would not let this inconsistency pass unmentioned. He acknowledged the "humanitarian" element of America's appeal to Romania but lamented that "by far the larger part" of the note was "self-protective." This dissonance, he insisted, accounted for the lack of progress in mitigating the hardships endured by Romanian Jewry. Although in reality the note's stated misgivings about indigent newcomers was a fabricated pretext for the humanitarian entreaty, Krauskopf feared that the reverse was true: altruism was a mere cover for nativism. In his words, the Romanian Note's grievance about immigration "throws the humanitarian phase into questionable form that makes it appear as but a diplomatic sugar coating of a very bitter pill."[76] Possibly as a concession to Roosevelt, the rabbi waited until after the midterms to render his opinion. Or perhaps Krauskopf's timing was simply designed to avoid the impression that his remarks were politically tinged.

Krauskopf may have misinterpreted the administration's motives, but he wasn't wrong about the note's futility. There seemed to be little cause for optimism that Romanian Jews would enjoy better circumstances on the ground. Two weeks after the note became public, Hay had forthrightly acknowledged to Oscar Straus that concrete action from either the signatories or Romania was unlikely. "For the moment Romania seems obdurate, and some of the great powers indifferent, to the moral question involved," Hay conceded, while still offering with vague optimism that perhaps "some good may result from what we have done."[77] Three months later, Jacob Schiff confessed to a prominent German Jew, "I fear nevertheless that there has been no radical change in Romania in favor of the Jews.… But let us not lose hope."[78] There was some small reason for hope—conditions may not have improved for Romanian Jewry, but neither did they worsen. In the wake of the note, the Romanian government abstained from new restrictions on Jews. Still, that would have been little recompense for a Jewish community that was among the most oppressed in the world.[79]

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Although the note proved ineffectual for Romanian Jews, its repercussions in other realms were significant. The affair began to solidify what might be called Roosevelt's Jewish kitchen cabinet: Jacob Schiff, the tycoon; Oscar Straus, the diplomat; Lucius Littauer, the lawmaker; and Simon Wolf, the renaissance man. Having consulted these Jewish leaders about the Romanian issue, Roosevelt would turn to them on other matters of Jewish concern throughout his presidency. This approach to statecraft more closely resembled a past era when Court Jews aided European royals than it did our modern age's reliance on professional technocrats.

The Romanian Note also demonstrated the potential for foreign policy initiatives to influence domestic electoral politics. Votes could be had in Jewish neighborhoods in America if Roosevelt was willing to make gestures—even largely symbolic ones—in defense of Jewry abroad. No historical evidence suggests that Roosevelt was motivated by an electoral agenda in this particular instance, but after now glimpsing the value at the ballot box of supporting Jewish causes, the president would be mindful of such considerations in the future.

That the United States confronted Romania at all is notable when measured against the non-reaction of the European signatories, Britain excepted. European Jews realized that their efforts were wasted in requesting the aid of their own governments. Far better for them to rally their American coreligionists to put pressure on Roosevelt.

Moreover, the Romanian Note set an important precedent that the Roosevelt administration would potentially intercede in the internal affairs of another country on a humanitarian basis, even as that humanitarianism was awkwardly couched in (contrived) objections about immigrants. To be sure, there have been moments in American foreign policy when the country clothed its self-interest in the garb of human rights; the Romanian Note stands as a vivid illustration of the reverse.

* * *

Months after Romanian Jews ceased to make front-page headlines, Roosevelt maintained his interest in their plight. He asked Hay in March 1903, “Would it be possible to have our Minister, when he goes to Romania, find out what has been accomplished under your note concerning the Romanian Jews?”[80] The minister in question was John Jackson, the newly installed ambassador in Greece whose regional remit covered Romania. Secretary Hay tapped Jackson to uncover whether the note—circulated to the signatories fully seven months earlier—had moved them to bring any pressure to bear on Romania. “The matter is one in which the president has deep interest,” Hay emphasized.[81]

The following month, Jackson informed Hay that the European powers had taken no action whatsoever. He also trivialized Jewish affliction in Romania, claiming that the country didn’t perpetuate antisemitism. After painting a fictitiously rosy picture of Romanian-Jewish life, Jackson’s letter concluded, “Their sufferings have been exaggerated.”[82] Jackson’s glib disregard for Jewish anguish is striking given the relatively bold intervention that the administration had made the prior summer on behalf of Romanian Jewry. While Jackson took their plight far less seriously than did Roosevelt, imminent events showed just how terrifying life could become for Eastern Europe's Jews. The very next day in Kishinev—a city situated just over the Romanian border, in southwestern Russia—a sudden explosion of anti-Jewish violence would shock the American conscience.

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3

KISHINEV PETITION

At the dawn of the twentieth century, Kishinev was a handsome and even elegant city. It served as the capital of the province of Bessarabia and featured a number of stately government buildings. The principal avenue was a wide thoroughfare lined with acacia trees. Amid the upscale streets of the city center, townsfolk patronized stores, banks, and jewelers. Fashionable crowds would congregate in the evenings at the People's Park to enjoy performances by military bands. The pleasing architecture, rich foliage, and Royal Gardens all gave Kishinev the feel of an affluent and modern community. But underneath this civilized exterior, an antisemitic rage burned.[1]

Bessarabia had been annexed into the Russian Empire during the early nineteenth century. Part of the Pale of Settlement, Bessarabia in general and Kishinev in particular were home to a sizable Jewish population.[2] The city's 130,000 residents included 50,000 Jews, another 50,000 Moldavans, and 8,000 Russians. Most of the remainder originated from various Balkan territories. Some of these Jews enjoyed prosperity, but a majority were impoverished laborers and craftsmen. As with other places in the Pale, Kishinev's Jews subsisted under special strictures. They were forbidden from purchasing land or serving in high government posts. And although Jews comprised nearly 40 percent of the population, state schools implemented quotas that kept Jewish enrollment at no more than 5 percent.[3]

The prejudice against Kishinev’s Jews began to metastasize into something even more sinister in the late 1890s. Under the direction of a virulently bigoted editor, the city’s sole newspaper—the *Bessarabetz*—inundated readers with an endless torrent of antisemitic vitriol. One conspiratorial story after the next painted Jews as traitors to Russia and as threats to Christianity. The *Bessarabetz* circulated widely among municipal bureaucrats, police officers, and the lower classes. Kishinev was fast becoming a tinderbox of Jew hatred. Then came the spark that would ignite a conflagration.[4]

* * *

In February of 1903, the corpse of a missing Christian boy was uncovered in a village outside Kishinev. The murderer would ultimately turn out be the victim’s own cousin, but a rumor abounded that Jews had slain the child. It was alleged that homicidal Jews needed the boy’s blood as an ingredient in their unleavened bread for the Passover holiday.[5] This kind of blood libel against Jews was a hoary trope with medieval roots.[6] The *Bessarabetz* recklessly perpetrated the rumor and demanded vengeance against the Jewish community. Fearful that a violent outbreak was imminent, Kishinev’s Jews appealed to authority figures for help. The provincial governor offered them words of reassurance but took no action to preempt a pogrom. When the city’s chief rabbi asked the Greek bishop to disavow the baseless accusations, the bishop refused, confessing that he wasn’t sure the Jews were actually innocent. The police chief, for his part, reportedly said it would “serve the Jews right if they were driven from the city.”[7]

On Easter Sunday came the attack. What began with some rowdy youngsters picking on Jews soon escalated into adults ransacking Jewish businesses.[8] A mob plundered a saloon on Armenia Street owned by the Feldstein family. One rioter uncovered a slab of meat in the saloon, climbed atop the roof, and announced to the horde below, “Here are the remains of a Christian child found in the house of the wealthy Jew.” When the gang broke into Feldstein’s cellar and uncovered champagne, rioters toasted the editor of the *Bessarabetz* newspaper.[9]

Thus began a two-day pogrom whose brutality would evoke worldwide horror when the details later became known. Mobs roamed the streets, pillaging and massacring with abandon. At No. 13 Asia Street—an apartment building whose eight families were all Jewish—pogromists found a tradesman named Mordecai Greenschopin taking refuge in a shed. They forced him out and beat him lifeless with poles. Other residents of No. 13 were then hunted down and savagely killed, with rioters using crowbars as instruments of death. The victims' corpses were left to rot on the street for hours.[10]

In one of Kishinev's most indigent Jewish neighborhoods, a gang stormed Meyer Weissman's small grocery store. He had sixty rubles and offered his assailants the money in exchange for his life. But the gang leader wasn't satisfied with the rubles alone, announcing, "Now, we want your eye; you will never again look upon a Christian child." Weissman had already lost one eye in his youth, and he now pleaded with the mob to murder him—he would rather die than be fully blind. They used a pointed stick to puncture his one good eye, leaving Weissman to live in darkness.[11]

Throughout Kishinev, Jewish women endured appalling gang rapes. Many of these women knew their rapists by name and fruitlessly begged them to stop. One such victim was twenty-four-year-old Rivka Schiff. After she was found hiding with other Jews in an attic, she was raped more than half a dozen times. Rivka personally knew one of her assailants, pleading with him, "You have known me for many years." Her cries fell on deaf ears, as her husband and other Jews watched her assault in horror.[12]

Christian homeowners warded off the gangs by drawing crosses on their windows. When Jews tried to fool the mobs with the same tactic, it proved ineffective, which suggests that the pogromists were given advance knowledge about which homes were Jewish.[13] Most policemen were indifferent and made little effort to protect Jewish lives, but there were some officers who arrested rioters and safeguarded individual Jews. Moreover, a number of Christians hid their Jewish neighbors. Still other Jews took their fate in their own hands. Around 250 of them—bearing guns and clubs—congregated in a courtyard and managed to stave off pogromists. But whatever success that group had was anomalous; elsewhere in Kishinev, Jewish efforts at resistance were too isolated to overcome the mob’s numerical advantage.[14]

Late in the afternoon on the second day, Bessarabia’s governor authorized the use of military force to break up the pogrom. The soldiers also picked up the corpses littering the streets; many of these bodies had been showered in feathers as a final act of degradation.[15] In the end, forty-nine Jews were killed and many others hospitalized with severe physical trauma. More than a hundred children became orphans. Property damage amounted to over two million rubles (about $40 million in American dollars today). Entire streets had been effectively demolished. Kishinev Jewry lay in ruins.[16]

* * *

The first reports of the slaughter appeared in the American press on April 23, two days after it concluded.[17] Soon the papers were casting doubt on Russia’s official narrative of the pogrom, which had sought to downplay the extent of the violence.[18] By April 29, the Jewish leader Simon Wolf decided to write Secretary of State John Hay about the “terrible outrages and massacres practiced upon the Jews of Kishinev.” He noted that a number of U.S. citizens wished to send aid to relatives in Kishinev who might have been afflicted. Wolf also asked whether the State Department would tap its ambassador in Russia, Robert McCormick, to furnish “prompt and reliable information” about the condition of the victims and to inquire whether the Russian government would permit charitable donations from Americans.[19] The State Department acted on Wolf’s request, and Ambassador McCormick cabled back to Washington: “It is authoritatively denied that there is any want or suffering among Jews in southwestern Russia.”[20] McCormick here was merely relaying the Russian position, not vouching for its accuracy.

Just as Russia was brazenly denying reality, eyewitness accounts of the pogrom began to surface in American papers.[21] Meetings were organized by various synagogues and Jewish societies in New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland, and Milwaukee.[22] Yiddish newspapers in America initiated fundraising drives.[23] From affluent bankers to impoverished immigrants, Jews nationwide donated what they could. “The heart of Israel is touched,” said a member of a relief committee. “It is sore with the sorrow for its martyred brethren.”[24] Although the Jewish community in the United States had any number of internal divisions, Kishinev united American Jewry like nothing else.

The Windsor Theater in lower Manhattan staged a specially produced play, *The Destruction of Kishinev*, and donated half the proceeds of the play’s five-night run to a relief fund.[25] Other theaters contributed a portion of their revenue from their regularly scheduled performances.[26] In an early indication that the pogrom would awaken the conscience of non-Jews, a Chinese theater in New York sponsored three benefit shows that sold out all five hundred seats each evening.[27]

Daily newspaper coverage divulged graphic details as they became available about the pogrom’s carnage. Western journalists debunked the blood libel that had been invoked to justify the violence. They also blamed Russian authorities—central and local—for allowing such atrocities.[28]

Public pressure mounted in the United States for the Roosevelt administration to take some kind of action. In New York, a group of five hundred Jewish veterans of the Spanish-American War passed a series of resolutions calling on the president to coax Russia into prosecuting the pogromists.[29] Appeals for some kind of official response inundated the State Department.[30] And mass meetings were held in Baltimore, Boston, Dallas, Hartford, Philadelphia, and even Texarkana.[31] Some of these gatherings attracted thousands of people.[32] Leading citizens and elected officials—Jew and Gentile alike—joined the fray on behalf of Kishinev’s victims. In Chicago, a large assemblage at the Star Theatre heard two public icons inveigh against Russia: the settlement house pioneer Jane Addams and renowned trial lawyer Clarence Darrow.[33]

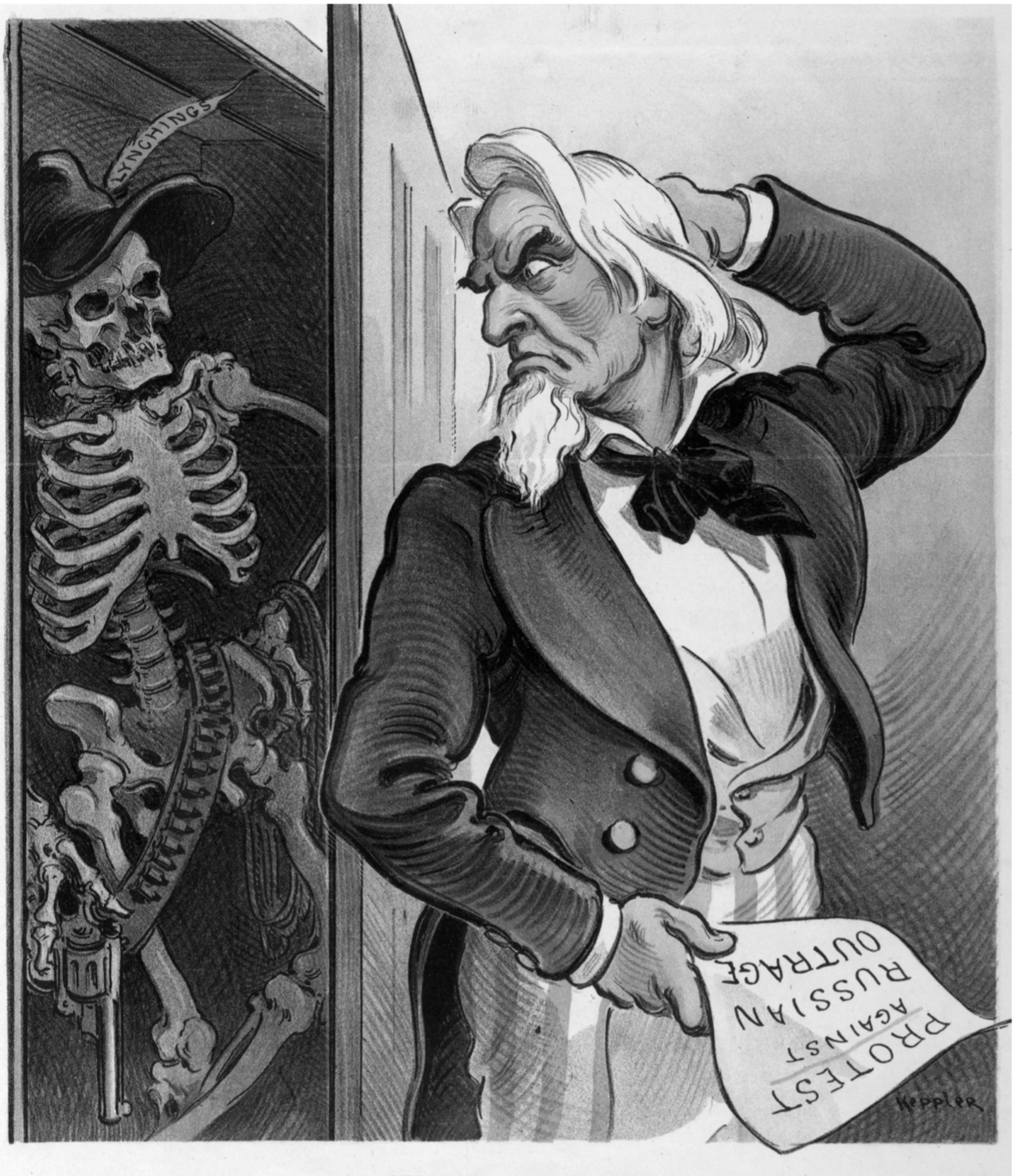
Meanwhile the Russian ambassador to the United States, Count Arthur Cassini, issued an extraordinary statement to the Associated Press. He blamed Kishinev’s Jews for the crimes that had been visited upon them. Count Cassini insisted that the “unfriendly attitude” toward Jews in Russia was justified because Jews opted to work as moneylenders instead of agrarians. The typical Jewish financier took “advantage of the Russian peasant, whom he soon has in his power and ultimately destroys.” Thus any animosity toward Jews was “only natural.”[34] Given this callous diatribe from Russia’s ambassador, Americans could hardly have been surprised when their press began reporting that the criminal probe in Kishinev was led by a prominent antisemite who was all too eager to exonerate the pogrom’s culprits.[35]

* * *

Jacob Schiff, the influential Jewish philanthropist, beseeched John Hay to speak out against Russia. But Hay was resistant. “I might feel precisely as you do in regard to it,” Hay wrote Schiff, “but you are free to express your feelings and I am not.” Hay believed, as a matter of diplomatic protocol, that the United States had no business interfering with internal Russian affairs. He pointedly challenged Schiff, “What possible advantage would it be to the United States, and what possible advantage to the Jews of Russia, if we should make a protest against these fiendish cruelties and be told that it was none of our business?”[36] It is unsurprising that Hay proved more reluctant here than he had been with the Romanian Note the year prior. Russia was a more powerful country than Romania; Hay well understood that alienating the former was a higher-risk proposition that could meaningfully threaten international trade for American businesses.

As public demonstrations from San Francisco to Yonkers continued apace, Theodore Roosevelt considered his options. The president asked Hay “if it would be advisable for me to contribute one hundred dollars [about $3,500 today] to some fund for the relief of the Russian Jews.” He directed Hay to solicit the opinion of other cabinet members as well; the secretary of war quashed the idea.[37] Thus began a pattern that would recur throughout the Kishinev affair wherein Roosevelt exhibited sympathetic instincts toward Jews that his Gentile advisors then tried to rein in.

The president was, of course, receiving a very different message from the Jewish community. Stephen Wise, a young rabbi known for his captivating oratory and inspired activism, personally met with Roosevelt and encouraged him to issue a statement condemning the bloodbath. Rabbi Wise followed up with a letter to TR highlighting instances over the past thirty years when the United States had spoken out against antisemitism on humanitarian grounds. Wise also conveyed his anxiety that the Kishinev pogrom was merely a “prelude to further scenes of violence” and stressed that a public word from the president would likely “have the effect of staying the hand of the oppressor.”[38]


LYNCHINGS
PROTEST AGAINST RUSSIAN OUTRAGE
KEPPLER

A SKELETON OF HIS OWN.

FIGURE 3.1. The U.S. government symbolized by Uncle Sam whose proverbial skeleton in the closet is race-based lynching. *Source*: “A Skeleton of His Own,” *Puck,* July 29, 1903.

Roosevelt’s instinct was to do *something*, but he would not pursue any particular plan without Hay’s assent. A few days after hearing from Rabbi

Wise, the president wrote Hay wondering, “Would it do any good for me to say a word [on] behalf of the Jews such as asked for, or would it do harm?” Roosevelt’s letter grappled with the uncomfortable reality that Russia had arguably just as much as right to censure America’s own problem with extralegal killing. “I suppose it would be very much like the czar expressing his horror of our lynching negroes,” he reasoned.[39] Pogroms and lynchings did involve the same grisly factors: targeted violence at a marginalized group, the effective consent of local authorities, and a spurious insistence that the bloodshed was legitimate retribution for some alleged wrongdoing.[40] There is no extant reply from Hay to Roosevelt’s letter—perhaps he responded by phone or in person—but we can glean from Hay’s later behavior that he surely did not advise the president to speak out about Kishinev.

* * *

Public pressure for action against Russia proved unrelenting. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* detailed in late May that there was “little or no abatement during the week in the interest aroused by the reports from Kishinev,” adding, “Everywhere in the civilized world … the sentiments aroused by this dreadful affair are those of horror.”[41] A play entitled *The Story of Kishinev: A Tragedy in Five Acts* was selling out nightly in New York.[42] Gatherings in support of the victims proliferated in large cities and small towns alike; often these meetings adopted resolutions requesting a diplomatic response from the Roosevelt administration.[43] Although there would be some compassionate reaction in Europe to the Kishinev pogrom—a couple protests and fundraising for the victims—it was nowhere near the scale of the outcry in America.[44] This discrepancy is unsurprising. For one, more Jews were living in the United States than in any European country, aside from Russia itself.[45] And Europe’s tortured history of antisemitism had taught Old World Jews the hazards of speaking up too emphatically.[46]

The most prominent demonstration in America took place in late May in New York’s Carnegie Hall. Before a throng of 3,500 people, Mayor Seth

Low celebrated the city as a haven for Jewish life dating back to the days of Dutch colonial rule. He also proudly noted that fundraising for Kishinev's Jews had begun on the Lower East Side even before the pogrom became a newspaper sensation. A number of other Gentile luminaries gave speeches, including the president of Cornell University and a prominent Baptist minister.[47]

The main attraction at Carnegie Hall that evening was an ex-president, Grover Cleveland. His presence elicited an effusive display of affection from the audience. As the *New York Times* observed, "The two upper galleries, thronged to their utmost capacity, were white with waving handkerchiefs and echoed with applause."[48] Cleveland asked the crowd to condemn the atrocities of Kishinev and provide financial relief for the survivors with "all the moral force which our American citizenship gives to us." But then he struck a cautionary note, maintaining that the "dictates of American conservatism and moderation" required the public to "forgo perplexing and extreme demands upon our government" for diplomatic interference with the Russian Empire.[49] A local paper was displeased with the former president's call for restraint, expressing "regret that Mr. Cleveland followed up his warm and manly denunciation of the murders and outrages with a timid plea for the withholding of pressure."[50]

Kishinev continued to command daily attention from the American press, and with good reason. Because it took time for a full accounting of the facts, some novel piece of information from Kishinev was always surfacing. Western journalists had to make the journey to Kishinev, where upon arrival they unearthed new stories based on testimony from victims and witnesses on the ground. They also covered the pogrom's aftermath in Kishinev—the fate of survivors, the response of Russian officials, the consequences (or lack thereof) for the accused. And once these newspaper correspondents left Russian soil and thus no longer had to contend with the Russian censors, they could furnish additional details they had earlier withheld.[51] What's more, the ceaseless sequence of public gatherings within the United States ensured that there were perennially fresh stories on the domestic front. From the American Baptist Missionary Union to the city council of Detroit, rising numbers of Gentiles were organizing in protest of

Kishinev's violence. It was a mainstream story, not just a Jewish one.[52] Increasingly, questions about the proper diplomatic play from the Roosevelt administration came to preoccupy journalists.

* * *

Letters urging action from John Hay deluged the State Department in numbers too numerous to enable replies, but one particular missive did merit a response. Simon Wolf had written Hay asking him to meet with the leaders of B'nai B'rith, the oldest Jewish humanitarian organization in the country (B'nai B'rith means "Children of the Covenant"). Wolf himself was a member of B'nai B'rith's executive committee. The barrage of public pressure apparently was having some effect—it was announced in early June that Secretary Hay would indeed meet with a delegation from B'nai B'rith in two weeks' time.[53]

As the B'nai B'rith meeting in Washington drew near, Russia released a statement seeking to stymie both donations for victims and criticism of its government: "The Emperor has the means at hand to relieve suffering wherever it appears in his empire," and so aid from abroad "must be declined."[54] This line was just spurious posturing—Americans had already sent nearly 200,000 rubles to Kishinev (over $3 million U.S. dollars today).[55] The Russian statement further cited the principle of noninterference between nations and announced, accordingly, that St. Petersburg would refuse "to receive any representations regarding the Kishinev incident from a foreign power."[56]

Caught between Russian obstinance and American outcry, Roosevelt met with Russia's ambassador, Count Cassini, for nearly an hour in Washington on June 12. Neither party offered any public word about that meeting in its immediate aftermath. But behind closed doors, Cassini assured Roosevelt that several hundred suspects were in custody and would be held to account in court. He also informed TR that Russia had replaced the governor of Bessarabia.[57] Undoubtedly, Cassini's principal aim here was to preempt an embarrassing censure of his country from the United States on the global stage.

Foreign policy wasn’t the only source of friction between Count Cassini and President Roosevelt. Both statesmen were alarmed by the combustible companionship between their irreverent daughters: nineteen-year-old Alice Roosevelt and twenty-one-year-old Marguerite Cassini. Together, Alice and Marguerite formed a rambunctious duo that romped their way through the socialite scene. “Our friendship had the violence of a bomb,” Marguerite later recalled. They were thrill-seekers who scorned social convention; their penchant for fast cars, day drinking, and betting at the race track all scandalized polite society. Newspapers gleefully reported on what Marguerite called their “veritable reign of terror.” The American president and Russian ambassador were each convinced that the other’s daughter was a nefarious influence on his own.[58]

Meanwhile Simon Wolf and the other members of the B’nai B’rith Executive Committee converged on the Arlington Hotel in Washington on June 14.[59] The pinnacle of luxury, the Arlington served as the accommodation of choice for princes, dukes, and emperors visiting the American capital. Numerous senators took up residence in the hotel’s elegant quarters. The Arlington’s manager enjoyed wide renown for his diligence in meeting guests’ every need. But the B’nai B’rith leaders didn’t likely have time to avail themselves of the hotel’s ornate parlors or billiard room.[60] They were consumed with preparations for not one but two meetings: after convening with John Hay, they would be granted an audience with Theodore Roosevelt himself. Count Cassini sent word that he wanted to personally speak that day with Simon Wolf and the B’nai B’rith president, Leo Levi. They refused the offer, feeling it inappropriate to take a meeting with the Russian ambassador when they already had one pending with their own country’s secretary of state and president.[61]

B’nai B’rith’s leaders decided that they would present the Roosevelt administration with two possible courses of action. The first would entail a petition of protest—arranged by B’nai B’rith and signed by leading American citizens of all religions—that the administration would “unofficially or semi-officially” transmit to the czar. The second option would be for the United States government to organize an international conference addressing “persecutions and oppressions” rooted in “racial and religious prejudices."[62] It is unclear whether B'nai B'rith intended the prospective conference to deal only with Russian pogroms or to confront hatred worldwide.

FIGURE 3.2. Alice Roosevelt. *Credit*: Frances Benjamin Johnston. *Source*: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

At 10:30 the following morning, Wolf, Levi, and several other members of B'nai B'rith's executive committee arrived at the State Department to see John Hay. Levi, as president, spoke for the group and offered its recommendation for a petition or conference.[63] He also gave Hay a memo outlining why the Roosevelt administration would be justified in taking either or both measures, despite the fact that no Americans were victims in Kishinev: Russian persecution drove Jewish émigrés to the United States, and their anti-Russian sentiment helped foment hostility to Russia among the American public generally, thereby weakening Russian-American relations. Pogroms were thus implicated in international relations and a proper subject of diplomacy. This was similar, if not quite identical, to the rationale that the administration had used to legitimize the Romanian Note the year prior.[64]

John Hay fully appreciated that this meeting wasn't merely an opportunity for him to hear from representatives of the Jewish community. It was also an exercise in public relations. The press had already widely reported that the administration would receive a delegation from B'nai B'rith. And so Hay responded in the meeting with prepared remarks that were transcribed for public release. Nearly two months since the pogrom, Kishinev still made daily news—Hay could be sure that whatever statement he offered, the first official one from the administration, would become front-page fodder. He began by recognizing the "deep emotion" that the "cruel outrages" in Kishinev had inspired around the world. Hay also noted the estimable role of Jews in American life. "Nobody can ever make the Americans think ill of the Jews," he insisted. "We know them too well." Hay's categorical assertion here was more aspirational than factual given that antisemitism still had some purchase in the United States.[65]

Hay then made clear that he was firmly committed to noninterference, a position he tried to finesse by lauding American Jewry for its "power of self-restraint" and suggesting that the Roosevelt administration "must exhibit the same." He asked his Jewish visitors to pay heed that "no civilized government in the world has yet taken official action—this consideration alone would bid us to proceed with care." Hay also celebrated the czar as a "man whose personal character is even more elevated than his exalted station" and praised Russia as a "great and friendly nation." America was thus obliged to assume that such an "enlightened sovereign" was surely "doing all that lies in his power to put a stop to these atrocities."[66] These obsequious comments, which were sure to make the papers and come to St. Petersburg's attention, reflected Hay's desire to preserve Russian-American relations rather than any heartfelt admiration for the czar. Hay was plainly disinclined to endorse action from the administration.[67]

After meeting for forty minutes, John Hay accompanied the B'nai B'rith delegation to the White House, where the president welcomed the Jewish leaders. They had already drafted the text of a petition that the administration could submit to the czar, and Levi handed it to Roosevelt. It began with a damning recitation of the facts surrounding the Kishinev pogrom, wherein "derelict" local officials allowed mobs animated by "religious prejudice" to butcher "hapless Jews." The petition maintained that the circumstances precipitating the pogrom—a toxic mix of bigotry and lawlessness—weren't unique to Kishinev but pervasive throughout the Pale of Settlement. Haunted by the prospect of additional massacres, Russian Jews faced a difficult choice: (1) abandon their homes and struggle as foreigners abroad or (2) stay in Russia and brace for the next wave of bloodshed. The Jewish exodus from Russia now had the dubious honor of surpassing Spain's Inquisition and rivaling Pharaoh's Egypt, the petition alleged.[68]

While exhibiting little restraint in its rhetoric about pogroms, the petition did strategically soften its tone when discussing the czar. It credited him with helping establish the international court at The Hague. The petition urged the czar to announce that "the humblest subject or citizen may worship according to the dictates of his own conscience." If the czar defended that basic right, he would "add new luster to his reign and fame."[69]

Roosevelt closely read the petition before launching into a lengthy discourse. A stenographer was on hand to record his words for circulation to the press. The president first noted that while the Kishinev pogrom had elicited worldwide sympathy, it was only natural that expressions of compassion were most fervent in the United States. After all, America had always enjoyed a special relationship with the Jewish people, Roosevelt said. He further observed that "anyone who goes through any of the old cemeteries of the cities" on the Eastern seaboard "will see the names of many an American of Jewish race, who, in war or in peace, did his full share in the founding of this nation." In an age when many native-born Americans feared that the recent influx of Jewish immigrants undermined the Anglo-Saxon heritage of the country, Roosevelt here tacitly rejected that nativist logic by emphasizing Jewish contributions to the republic's birth.[70]

Unlike Hay, Roosevelt had longstanding ties to the Jewish community, which enabled him to speak at length about his personal relationships with Jews in a way that Hay could not. Roosevelt warmly recounted the Jewish policemen on his force in New York and the Jewish Rough Riders whom he fought alongside in Cuba. Precisely because of those deep and enduring connections to Jewry, "I have felt a degree of personal sympathy and personal horror of this dreadful tragedy," the president explained.[71]

Roosevelt also referenced his positive meeting with Count Cassini three days prior and relayed that "the government of Russia shares the feelings of horror and indignation." In that moment, it must have appeared to the B'nai B'rith delegation that Roosevelt would echo Hay and invoke Russia's supposed concern for Kishinev's victims as a pretext for American inaction. But in fact TR was willing to go beyond Hay. Roosevelt promised he would "consider most carefully the suggestions that you have submitted to me." The president needed time to contemplate whether "existing conditions are such that any further official expression would be of advantage to the unfortunate survivors." In closing, Roosevelt avowed, "Nothing will have my more constant thought than this subject."[72] Perhaps Cassini's last-ditch effort to avert diplomatic censure from the United States would prove fruitless.

At the end of the hour-long meeting, the parties agreed that the White House could publicize all documentation from that morning—the B'nai B'rith memo, the petition, and the transcribed comments of Hay and

Roosevelt. Both the secretary of state and president also acceded to B’nai B’rith’s request for signed photographs for display at the organization’s headquarters. Roosevelt then had to make haste to attend a festival in Baltimore, and he inquired whether Simon Wolf would care to attend as the president’s guest. Wolf, of course, obliged.[73]

* * *

The meetings at the State Department and White House garnered considerable attention. Many newspapers printed substantial portions—sometimes even the entirety—of the remarks by Roosevelt and Hay.[74] The Jewish press, in particular, trumpeted Roosevelt’s sympathetic words to the Jewish delegation. “His answer is in itself a protest and a mighty one,” pronounced the *Jewish American*.[75]

As Roosevelt weighed his diplomatic options in the days that followed, some on the home front were satisfied that, given his widely covered caucus with B’nai B’rith, the president had done as much as was prudent. He ought to push Russia no further. The *New York Press*, for instance, maintained that Roosevelt’s comments, while fully warranted, also marked “the very limit” of propriety since no American citizens were victims of the pogrom. It would be ill-advised to proceed along the lines B’nai B’rith recommended in light of the “voluntary assurances of Russia that the murderers would be punished and the governor of the province removed.” On other hand, the *New York News* was frustrated that Roosevelt hadn’t been bolder. “In spite of the thousands of protests and petitions presented to him, President Roosevelt has refused to make remonstrance to Russia,” the *News* grumbled.[76]

As the president deliberated whether to forward the B’nai B’rith petition to Russia, Count Cassini spoke to the Associated Press on June 19 in what was surely a calculated bid to influence Roosevelt’s decision. Cassini publicly emphasized to the AP what he had already told Roosevelt in private: the Bessarabian governor had been replaced and the guilty would pay for their crimes. The Russian ambassador also stressed his country’s commitment to protecting its Jewish residents, a message that offered a stark contrast from the prior month when he had insisted that the Jews provoked the pogrom with their greedy moneylending. In conciliatory fashion, Cassini asserted that the attitude of both the Russian government and the Russian people toward the United States was amicable. “To disturb these relations owing to false impressions conceived in hostile quarters would be most deplorable,” he warned.[77]

Count Cassini’s claim that Russia was committed to the security of its Jews was, of course, rooted less in reality than in his desire to soothe tensions with the Roosevelt administration. Simon Wolf was infuriated by the Russian ambassador’s dissembling. And so Wolf took it upon himself not only to issue a piqued letter to Cassini but also to disseminate it to the press. The letter called attention to the systemic degradations imposed on Russian Jews, declaring that the American people and their government would not be misled by Cassini’s attempt to “deceive and obscure.” Wolf pointedly suggested that if Russia was truly as “friendly” toward the United States as Cassini contended, then it could “evidence the friendship by deeds and not by empty phrases.”[78] John Hay—who had so effusively celebrated Russian-American amity in his remarks to B’nai B’rith—must not have been pleased with the contents of Wolf’s publicly released letter.

Nor could Hay have been delighted to learn that Roosevelt resolved to forward B’nai B’rith’s petition to the Russian government. In late June, Hay informed Wolf of the president’s decision in a letter that soon appeared verbatim in the papers. Hay’s letter explained that TR’s determination had hinged on the question of whether such a petition would benefit or harm Russian Jews. Roosevelt, in the end, “decided to accept your opinion, and that of numerous and intelligent groups of American citizens of the Jewish faith whom you represent.” Hay also underscored that the administration couldn’t be sure how Russia might react.[79] Leo Levi, as president of B’nai B’rith, told the press that his organization would work expeditiously to collect signatures for the petition.[80]

Although the historical record doesn’t offer insight into why Roosevelt chose B’nai B’rith’s approach over noninterference, there can be little question that Roosevelt did so against Hay’s counsel. The *New York Times* reported that Roosevelt had initially opted against the petition idea before reversing course: “After consultation with his advisers, he determined not to forward the petition, because Russia might resent it and … break off diplomatic relations.” But then Roosevelt “reconsidered.” The president, despite the undoubted misgivings of his secretary of state, was prepared to take a diplomatic risk for Jewry.[81]

Word of Roosevelt’s decision was, of course, poorly received in St. Petersburg. According to a “semiofficial news agency” in Russia, the czar’s government would deem the petition to be foreign meddling in domestic matters.[82] The *Los Angeles Times* anticipated a “diplomatic rupture” between the two countries. The paper also predicted that Count Cassini, who was scheduled to take an imminent summer vacation, would soon find himself on permanent holiday owing to St. Petersburg’s displeasure with the turn of events.[83] Meanwhile, foreign envoys in Washington disapproved of Roosevelt’s pending interference into Russia’s internal affairs. The French ambassador wrote back to Paris that the American president was currying favor with “the influential Jewish coterie” and thereby setting a “most vexatious precedent … a very dangerous policy.”[84]

With tensions escalating, the Associated Press tipped off the State Department in early July about a story that would break in a few hours: the Russians were now confirming their earlier semiofficial refusal to accept the petition and they were denying that Count Cassini had ever engaged in official discussion about Kishinev with the Roosevelt administration. Because John Hay was vacationing with his daughter in Newport, Assistant Secretary of State Francis Loomis received the news from the AP. Loomis immediately wired the president, who was at his summer home in the town of Oyster Bay on Long Island. Loomis’s telegram to Roosevelt disclosed that the AP was about to release the following announcement to the papers: “The Associated Press is authorized to state that the Russian government most positively and absolutely denies the reports that it has offered any official explanation to the American government” through Cassini. The AP statement further relayed that Russia would “categorically refuse” to accept any petition from a foreign power about its domestic life.[85]

Of course, Count Cassini *had* supplied an explanation when he met with Roosevelt on June 12. Maybe Russia was treating that conversation as unofficial and thus felt justified in refuting the notion that it had furnished an "official explanation." Or perhaps the June 12 meeting had indeed been official and the Russians were now lying about it. After all, Russia's instinct for falsehood had been brazen throughout the Kishinev affair: first Russia gainsaid the pogrom's very existence, then it blamed the Jews for their own macabre fate, and finally it insisted that the victims required no charitable aid. An exasperated Roosevelt would later vent to a friend, "What I cannot understand about the Russian is the way he will lie when he knows perfectly well that you know he is lying."[86]

The president was riled that Russia had gone straight to the American press with the message that the petition would be a futile gesture instead of communicating that position through diplomatic channels. He well understood that the Russian government was attempting to indirectly pressure him by dampening public support in the United States for the petition. Roosevelt fired off a furious letter to John Hay, still in Newport. "I am angered over what I regard as the impertinent action of the Russians in this matter," TR fumed. "They are endeavoring to appeal to the people over our heads." He vowed that if Russia persisted in its present manipulation campaign instead of engaging directly with the State Department, then he would remain steadfast in his resolve to transmit the petition.[87] Russia's strategy was backfiring.

Roosevelt crafted a press release for Loomis to distribute to the papers. TR wrote it such that the remarks were attributed to an unnamed "high official" at the State Department rather than to the president himself. The statement made clear that the Roosevelt administration would disregard Russian declarations made outside the formal methods of diplomacy. It also reaffirmed the U.S. government's willingness to follow through on its commitment to B'nai B'rith, promising to "give expression to deep sympathy felt not only by the administration but by all the American people for the unfortunate Jews." Roosevelt's press release clarified that the administration's failure to have thus far transmitted the petition to Russia was "due solely to the delay in furnishing the address to the State Department by the petitioners," lest anyone misinterpret the ongoing lag to mean that the president had opted, as a concession to Russia, not to forward the petition after all.[88]

The newspapers, with their insatiable interest in all things Kishinev, diligently covered this exercise in diplomatic brinksmanship.[89] Count Cassini declined to issue a rebuttal. St. Petersburg was frustrated that the situation had deteriorated under Cassini’s watch. He was put under strict orders to pass along to the Roosevelt administration verbatim messages from St. Petersburg and not to improvise his own comments.[90]

Journalists were attuned to the fact that the pro-Jewish statement Loomis released—although nominally ascribed to a “high official” at the State Department—had the all the signs of Roosevelt’s doing and none of Hay’s. As the *New York Times* reported, “It is the understanding that the utterance given out by Assistant Secretary Loomis was authorized from Oyster Bay, [and] there is reason for the belief that it was without the knowledge of Secretary Hay.”[91] Rumors soon began swirling that the divergence between Hay and Roosevelt over the petition might well prompt Hay to resign or Roosevelt to fire him.[92]

* * *

Russian antagonism had made the president want to proceed more quickly with the petition. He directed the State Department to impress upon Simon Wolf the importance of providing the petition to Washington immediately. Wolf wrote a pained letter to Roosevelt in early July explaining that it was a “physical impossibility” for B’nai B’rith to summarily complete its collection of signatures. He reminded Roosevelt of a point that the B’nai B’rith leadership had made in person at the White House: the petition must bear the names of prominent citizens of all faiths and from numerous cities nationwide. Gathering signatures from such a religiously and geographically diverse cohort would convey a resounding message about “the universal feeling” throughout the United States toward Kishinev’s victims. But an endeavor that vast also required time, Wolf noted, especially with so many of the prospective signers on their summer vacations. In his memoirs, Wolf would later recall feeling the “utmost embarrassment” that he could not instantly comply with Roosevelt’s request.[93]

Wolf wrote a follow-up letter to Roosevelt the next day offering the president a chance to change his mind about the petition. “Will it be helping you, the administration, or the American people by not sending the petition?” Wolf inquired. “If so, do not hesitate to say so to me.” Although reversing course now would entail a sacrifice for American Jews, Wolf affirmed that his Jewish compatriots would bear that burden in the name of good citizenship. “The Jew has ever aided and suffered or both,” he observed. “We are prepared to do so now, if by our suffering the Republic of free conscience is benefitted.” But the majority of Wolf’s letter set forth why the president should in fact stand up to Russia. The Russian Empire was merely “masquerading” as a “friend” of the United States as it connived to “create public opinion inimical to your action, and to prevent signing of the petition.” Moreover, Wolf alleged that Russia bribed certain American editorialists to condemn Roosevelt’s handling of the Kishinev affair.[94] Wolf was stretching on this bribery claim. Some of the president’s domestic critics were apt to find fault with any policy that his administration pursued; they required no greasing from Russia to see lapses in TR’s judgment.[95]

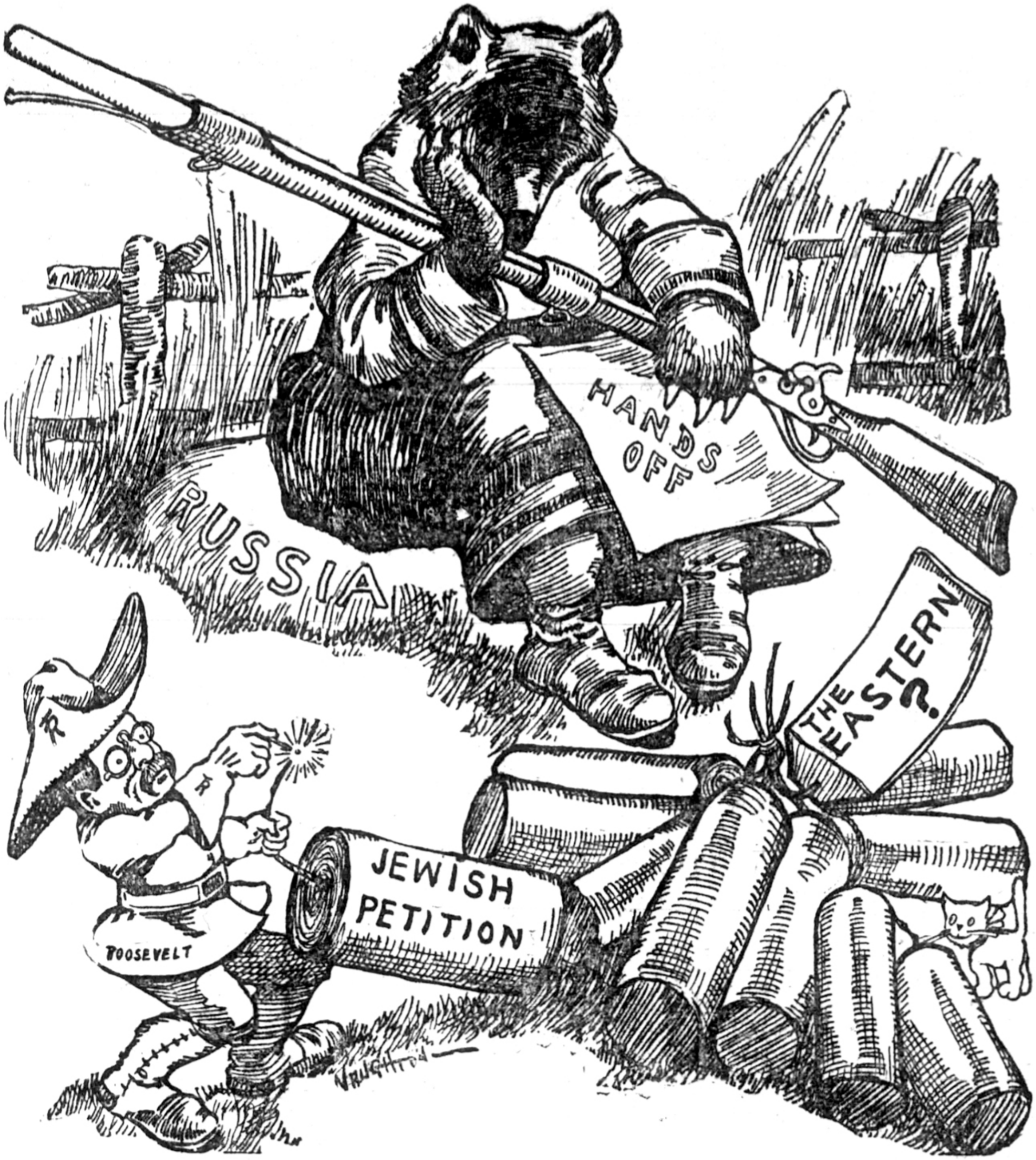
Roosevelt, in turn, asked a Jewish contingency—consisting of Simon Wolf, Oscar Straus, and Leo Levi (the B’nai B’rith president)—to plan for a meeting with him in Oyster Bay, to take place in mid-July, for discussion of the petition.[96] In the intervening days, Roosevelt’s personal aide telegrammed Wolf that it would “very inadvisable” for him, Straus, or Levi to speak publicly prior to their meeting with the president.[97] The three Jewish leaders heeded that advice. They convened quietly among themselves several times prior to the Oyster Bay meeting to ensure their own views were in harmony so that they could present a unified opinion to the president.[98] B’nai B’rith, meanwhile, was hastily gathering more signatures.[99]

* * *

That Theodore Roosevelt and Czar Nicholas II both seemed willing to hazard Russian-American relations over a petition is a striking testament to the power of words in international affairs. The standoff was all the more remarkable considering its potential repercussions for East Asian geopolitics. Both Russia and Japan were pursuing imperial ambitions in the region, with Russia then occupying Manchuria while the Japanese controlled Korea, directly to Manchuria's south. Russia and Japan each saw the other as a threat to its own territorial acquisitions. And the United States, for its part, was frustrated that Russia didn't allow American merchants an "open door" to Manchurian ports. With the Russians facing the prospect of a preemptive Japanese invasion of Manchuria, it hardly behooved Russia to antagonize America into siding with Japan.[100] And yet the czar appeared ready to risk Russia's precarious position in Manchuria to forestall a petition about Jews, just as Roosevelt was prepared to jeopardize his own country's prospects for trade in Manchuria to send that very petition.

Some editorialists questioned whether the petition was worth the peril it portended for an already fraught situation in Asia. "It is while this ticklish condition of things exists in the Far East," wrote one New York paper, "that President Roosevelt goes out of his way to fling an insult at Russia which will surely be resented by that country."[101] But the *Salt Lake Telegram* argued that Roosevelt's approach was admirable precisely because he was daring to privilege principle above profit. The paper acknowledged that Russian-American relations were increasingly estranged and anticipated that if the president proceeded with the petition, "the open door in Manchuria, for which Secretary Hay had been laboring, will be closed by Russia." With so much on the line, Roosevelt's resolute stance was "suggestive of good red blood in the veins." The *Salt Lake Telegram* advised Roosevelt to show no reluctance in conveying America's disdain for "the butchers of Kishinev."[102] Irrespective of their take on the wisdom of the petition, newspapers of all stripes agreed on this much: the stakes were real, and the consequences global.

Amid speculation that Hay would possibly leave the administration over the Kishinev Petition, he denied as much to both the president and the press.[103] But privately Hay confided in his wife that he might well resign. “I am not ‘doing fixed time’ as in a penitentiary,” he told her.[104] Hay’s frustration is unsurprising—the Manchurian “open door” had long been among his signature ambitions, and now Roosevelt was risking that endeavor in service of a Jewish cause that elicited limited sympathy from Hay.


HANDS OFF
RUSSIA
THE EASTERN ?
JEWISH PETITION
ROOSEVELT

ONE LITTLE MATCH MAY FIRE THE WHOLE BUNCH.

FIGURE 3.3. Roosevelt could upend great power politics in the Far East by sending the Kishinev Petition. *Source*: “One Little Match May Fire the Whole Bunch,” *Camden Post-Telegram*, July 10, 1903.

TR summoned Hay to his summer home in Oyster Bay to discuss, among other matters, the Kishinev affair.[105] Hay was annoyed. Not only was the Kishinev Petition possibly closing Manchurian doors, but now Hay was being dislodged from his holiday excursion with his daughter—all to attend to a president who wasn't always mindful of other people's time. As Hay was preparing to leave for Oyster Bay, he complained to his wife, "I always find TR engaged with a dozen other people, and it is an hour's wait and a minute's talk—and a certainty that there was no necessity of my coming at all." It would, in fact, be more than an hour's wait on this particular occasion. When Hay reached Oyster Bay, Roosevelt was characteristically playing host to a mélange of guests, which included several senators, a poet, and a shipping tycoon. The president asked Hay, "Will you excuse me till I play a game of tennis?" adding, "I have had no exercise all day." At that moment, a Rough Rider veteran suddenly surfaced to see whether he could hold serve against his former colonel.[106]

Hay bided his time ambling about the eighty-acre estate, which Roosevelt had named Sagamore Hill as an homage to an Indian chieftain who had ruled there centuries earlier.[107] The assortment of gardens, meadows, and orchards must have been some recompense for the slighted secretary of state.[108] Sagamore Hill's greatest charm was its vista; the unspoiled views gave the pleasingly false impression that Roosevelt and his guests had all of Oyster Bay to themselves.[109] The property's Queen Anne style house was sizable—three stories, twenty-eight rooms—but more folksy than luxurious. It certainly lacked the splendor of the Newport mansions where high-society types passed the warmer months. Mounted on the walls of the home were taxidermied animal heads that kept a constant vigil over the Roosevelts and their guests.[110]

Not until the evening did TR finally give Hay a private audience. Whatever precisely was said between them remains unknown, but Hay's pique melted away amid Roosevelt's warmth.[111] The next day Hay confessed to his wife, "The president was so cordial and hospitable that I felt ashamed of my surly crossness at having to go there."[112] In the immediate wake of his trip to Sagamore Hill, Hay was irked by journalists who continued to conjecture that his resignation was imminent. "I despair of the newspapers," Hay wrote Roosevelt, fretting that "the stupid rumor will not cease."[113] But Roosevelt reassured him, "Do not ever give a thought to the newspaper and other swine who delight to invent tales about our relations.” The president further gushed over “what a really great secretary of state you are.”[114] With appreciation for the heartening words, Hay thanked Roosevelt “a thousand times for your kind and generous letter” and described his pleasure in serving a president who “happened to be born a gentleman.”[115]

Their rapprochement aside, Hay continued to push Roosevelt to relent on the Kishinev Petition. Seizing on a recent consular report (albeit of questionable accuracy) that Russia was holding the pogromists responsible, Hay counseled that the Roosevelt administration should back off. “The less we do and say now … the better, in my opinion,” he cautioned.[116] By all accounts, Hay’s sentiment was indicative of the State Department at large.[117] It remained to be seen whom, in the end, Roosevelt would heed: his secretary of state or his Jewish advisors.

* * *

The Jewish delegation journeyed to Oyster Bay on July 14 to meet with the president. While en route, Wolf remarked to Levi and Straus that whether Russia accepted their petition was immaterial. He reasoned that if the Roosevelt Administration at least *attempted* to submit the petition, that bold act on the world stage—more so than Russia’s reaction to it—would ensure that the petition achieved its purpose.[118]

Upon arrival at Sagamore Hill, the Jews were greeted by Roosevelt with his characteristic “cordiality and informality,” Wolf later recalled. Roosevelt had invited a few other guests who happened to be on hand to join him and the Jewish delegation at lunch. The whole group spent the meal deliberating over the predicament with Russia. The president’s manner of formulating his foreign policy here is striking—a free-flowing conversation with not one member of his State Department but rather Jewish leaders, a British judge, a magazine editor, and his teenage daughter, Alice Roosevelt.[119] Perhaps Alice’s notorious friendship with the Russian ambassador’s daughter gave her unique insight into Russia’s ruling class. Perhaps it compromised her objectivity. Perhaps both.

Straus, Levi, and Wolf were concerned that B’nai B’rith had collected only three thousand signatures so far, and these were disproportionately from citizens in the Northeast. In other words, the petition was too thin in volume and too unrepresentative in geography. But the Jewish delegation also understood that Roosevelt wanted to act immediately—indeed, the president had been eager to move forward with the petition fully two weeks earlier. And so during the meal, Straus, Levi, and Wolf suggested a compromise measure: instead of sending a petition with too few signatures, the administration should instruct its embassy in St. Petersburg to convey the petition without any signatures to the Russian government and inquire whether the czar himself would accept the petition. If the czar was amenable, then B’nai B’rith would take the time to gather more signatures, secure in the knowledge that the completed petition would meet with a favorable reception. But if the czar refused as expected, then B’nai B’rith would still invest the time required to amass signatures, with the resulting document to be deposited in the State Department’s archives. There, the petition would endure in perpetuity as a historic symbol of religious freedom. This plan was designed to satisfy Roosevelt’s sense of urgency and B’nai B’rith’s desire for a comprehensive list of signatories.[120]

The time for Roosevelt to make his final decision was now at hand. In the nearly 3 months that passed since the atrocities in Kishinev, 77 public meetings had convened across America in support of the victims, and 363 speeches were delivered—by rabbis and reverends, senators and judges, editors and lawyers. Substantial sums were raised for survivors.[121] Newspapers had relentlessly covered both the pogrom and its ripple effects around the world. If Roosevelt proffered the petition to Russia, he could do so with confidence that he spoke for a broad-based movement spanning the United States.

But then again, there were compelling reasons for Roosevelt to reverse course in the eleventh hour. By submitting the petition, he might not only imperil American trade in Manchuria but provoke Russia to dissolve all diplomatic ties with the United States. No one could be sure of the unintended consequences that such a rupture could foment. The president’s own secretary of state had repeatedly advised against estranging St.

Petersburg. Some voices in the American press were arguing that Roosevelt had already fulfilled his humanitarian duty with his compassionate statements about Kishinev's Jews and that it would be reckless for him to alienate Russia any further. He could seize on newspaper reports that Russia was bringing the guilty to justice as a convenient pretext for noninterference. Even Simon Wolf had offered to withdraw the petition if it suited the president, affording Roosevelt cover with domestic Jews in the event that he changed his mind. And perhaps most significantly, no other head of state in the world had dared to challenge Russia over the pogrom. If Roosevelt sent the petition, he would stand alone in the global arena.[122]

And so he did. The president announced to his lunch companions at Sagamore Hill that he would proceed precisely as the Jewish delegation recommended and transmit the petition now, sans signatures. The group retired to Roosevelt's study where he declared, "Now let's finish this thing up." Roosevelt crafted language for a cable to the American embassy in Russia, incorporating feedback from his guests. When the cable was finished, Oscar Straus was entrusted with hand-delivering it to the State Department.[123] He, along with Wolf and Levi, caught the 4:18 p.m. train out of Oyster Bay.[124]

The president notified Hay via telegram that Straus was en route with a cable, which Hay was to forward without delay to St. Petersburg. The remainder of the telegram reflected TR's perceived need to defend his decision to Hay—Roosevelt insisted that this course of action would appease B'nai B'rith, demonstrate cordiality to Russia, and conclude the affair at long last.[125]

That same day, the president also felt compelled to justify his position to Edward Everett Hale, the esteemed writer and minister. Hale had recently urged Roosevelt in a letter to "take an old man's counsel" and "think three times before you offer advice to the czar."[126] Roosevelt replied that he wasn't "offering advice at all" but merely inquiring whether the czar would "receive a petition couched in respectful language." He assured Hale that the administration's decision-making process was duly deliberative: "We decided to send the petition only after careful and rather prayerful consideration."[127]

B’nai B’rith president Leo Levi issued a statement to the press the next day concerning the Oyster Bay meeting but divulged no specifics owing to Roosevelt’s request for continued discretion. Still, Levi provided strong hints: “Our views and those of the president are in perfect accord.” With B’nai B’rith collecting more signatures by the day, Levi’s press release celebrated the petition as a broadly American—rather than narrowly Jewish—endeavor. He also maintained (implausibly) that the petition shouldn’t be interpreted as a bid to intervene in Russia’s internal affairs.[128]

That very morning, Straus personally handed the cable to John Hay.[129] Hay wired it at once and, at Roosevelt’s request, shipped the original cable to B’nai B’rith as a keepsake.[130] With the American ambassador to Russia having taken leave to attend a wedding in Chicago, the cable was instead addressed to John Riddle, the chargé d’affaires who was administering the embassy in the ambassador’s absence. The cable instructed Riddle to meet with Russia’s foreign minister, share the text of the petition, and ask whether the minister would forward it to the czar.[131] With this fateful message dispatched to the U.S. embassy in St. Petersburg, the State Department stood by for word of Russia’s response.

What Hay and Roosevelt did not know was that before the cable reached Riddle, the Russian foreign minister had already summoned Riddle to discuss the petition. The Russian authorities, as it turned out, had been carefully reading newspaper reports about the imminent prospect of a petition to be forwarded under the auspices of the U.S. government. Anticipating this eventuality, the foreign minister in St. Petersburg raised the issue with the czar, who was adamant that the petition be refused. Czar Nicholas regarded his authority over Russian territory as absolute and could not brook any petition that concerned Russia’s domestic life. The foreign minister, in turn, met with Riddle to explain the czar’s position and reasoning.[132]

In their conversation, the foreign minister told Riddle that if he were to personally hand over the petition, it would be handed back unread; if the petition were delivered by courier in an envelope, it would be returned unopened. But the foreign minister also conveyed that the czar entertained a “kindly feeling toward America.” Czar Nicholas plainly didn’t want

Russia's refusal of the petition to undermine relations between the two nations. In that spirit, the foreign minister made clear to Riddle that he was offering this information "informally" in the hopes of precluding the "discourtesy" of having to rebuff any attempt by Riddle to physically transmit the petition.[133]

Shortly thereafter, the cable from Hay arrived at the U.S. embassy in St. Petersburg. Since Riddle had already discussed the petition with the foreign minister, Riddle felt that he had in effect followed the cable's directive; he didn't think it necessary to meet a second time and have the same conversation again. Riddle relayed to Hay all that the foreign minister had said and also shared his own determination that he had, for all intents and purposes, done his duty. "I shall consider your instructions as already carried out by the present report unless I am ordered to take further steps," he concluded.[134]

Hay forwarded Riddle's message to Roosevelt at once.[135] TR saw no need for Riddle to undertake the formality of literally handing over the petition only to have it handed back. It was sufficient that Hay had wired the cable to Riddle and that Russia had given its answer, even if the sequence of those two events was the reverse of what had been expected. From the president's perspective, his pledge to B'nai B'rith was fulfilled. And, critically, the controversy had been resolved without Russia cutting off diplomatic ties to the United States. Roosevelt authorized Hay to release to the press both TR's cable to Riddle and a brief summary of Riddle's reply back to Washington. The president also directed Hay to tell the Jewish leaders from the Sagamore Hill meeting that they could now speak freely on the matter.[136]

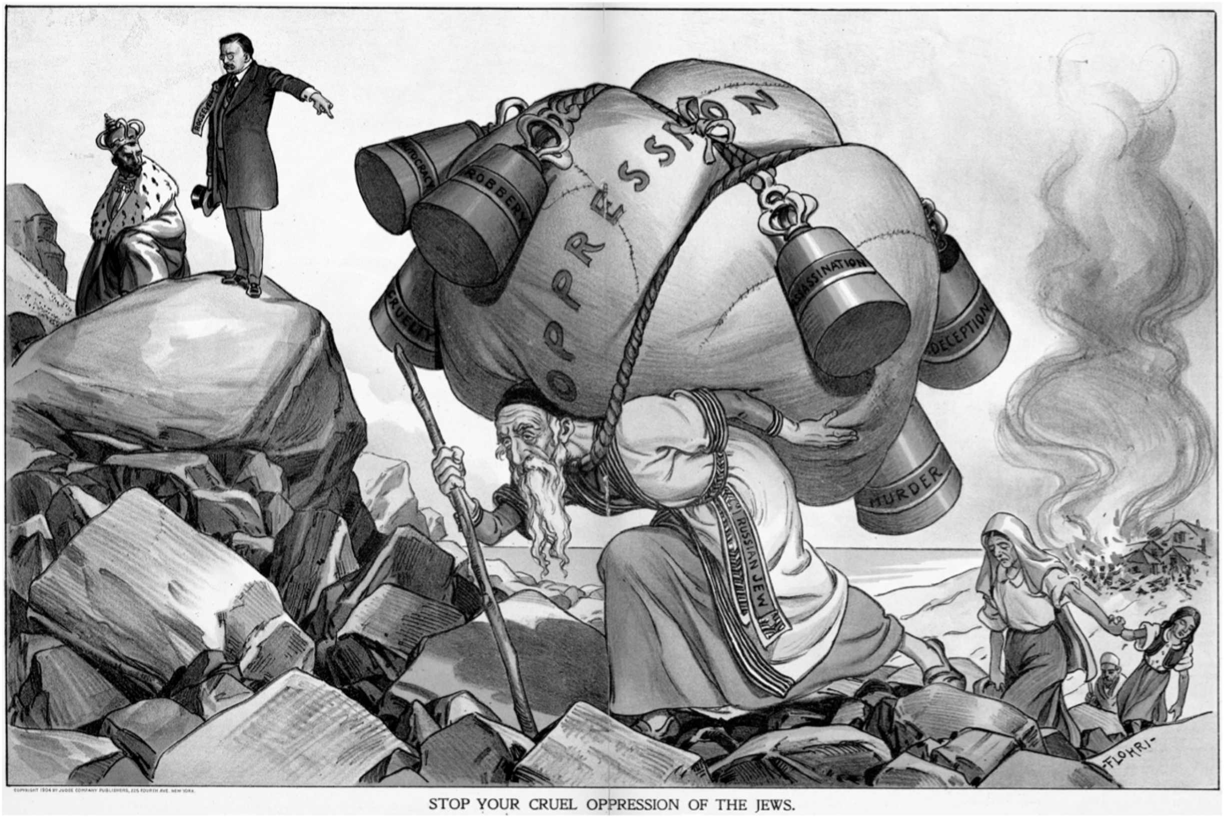
* * *

Breaking news of the petition received comprehensive coverage from the papers. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* described Riddle's discussion with the Russian foreign minister as tantamount to submission of the petition. Riddle had put "Russia in possession of the petition fully as much as if it had been delivered with all the formality of many sheets of paper and thousands of signatures."[137] An editorial in the *New York Times* minimized Russia's rejection of the petition as a trivial afterthought; the publicity surrounding the petition had ensured that its message was heard. Russia was now "on notice that the civilized world views with amazement and pain its failure to prevent within the dominions of the czar the murder of men and women for reasons of faith."[138] Back in St. Petersburg, the Russian Foreign Office spoke to the Associated Press, reiterating Russia's resistance to external interference but also its commitment to amicable relations with America.[139]

Leo Levi, on behalf of B'nai B'rith, trumpeted the outcome as a victory in his own remarks to the press. He celebrated the people of the United States for memorializing in a petition their outrage over Kishinev, and he lauded the Roosevelt administration for forwarding it to Russia. The initial plan as conceived in June had been to furnish Russia a petition *with* signatures, and Levi felt it important to clarify that the subsequent proposal to submit a signatureless petition came from the B'nai B'rith leadership, not from Roosevelt. Levi appeared to be concerned that the public might misinterpret the unsigned petition as some kind of half-measure that the administration had pressured the B'nai B'rith leadership into accepting. In his words, "We, upon our own initiative, and without any suggestion whatsoever, besought President Roosevelt to alter his decision to send the signed petition, and to transmit its text instead." Levi also noted proudly that the petition would ultimately endure in the State Department archives where it would "forever testify to the lofty humanity" of the American people, their president, and his administration.[140]

In a letter to Roosevelt, John Hay praised him for besting Russia in diplomatic brinksmanship. "They would have scored by receiving the petition and pigeonholing it. I think *you* have scored, as it is!" Hay exclaimed. "You have done the right thing in the right way, and Jewry seems really grateful." Given Hay's earlier resistance to the petition, perhaps this letter was a somewhat contrived bid to shore up his own relationship with the president after their widely publicized disagreement over Kishinev. Or maybe—with the deed done and Russian-American relations still intact—Hay was freed from his anxiety about a diplomatic rupture and could now more easily see wisdom in Roosevelt's judgment.

Hay’s letter was also uncharacteristic in its blunt disparagement of the Russians, which was absent from his earlier correspondence with the president about the Kishinev affair. “What inept asses they are,” Hay scoffed. He denigrated the Russians’ habitual dishonesty, predicting that they would still “lie to us as volubly as ever.”[141] Roosevelt, for his part, was pleased with the outcome, writing Hay, “I think the Russian business is in pretty fair shape.”[142]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ASSASSINATION
DECEPTION
MURDER
RUSSIAN JEW
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STOP YOUR CRUEL OPPRESSION OF THE JEWS.

FIGURE. 3.4. Roosevelt admonishing Czar Nicholas II as Russian Jews flee a pogrom. *Source*: “Stop Your Cruel Oppression of the Jews,” *Judge*, circa September 1905.

The president’s Jewish constituents were apt to agree. On behalf of the B’nai B’rith executive committee, Simon Wolf thanked Roosevelt for honoring his commitment. “The people of the United States, especially your Jewish fellow citizens at home and abroad, bless you,” Wolf wrote. “You have lifted the veil, and the light of reason and humanity is streaming in.”[143] Roosevelt replied in kind, conveying his appreciation to Wolf for his “admirable good sense” throughout the affair.[144] Other expressions of gratitude from the Jewish community to Roosevelt were more public. Oscar Straus, for instance, authored a note to the president that appeared verbatim in several newspapers. With purple prose, Straus gushed that Roosevelt had ushered in "an era in that highest realm of diplomacy, the diplomacy of humanity, which marshals the enlightened spirit of civilization against persecution."[145] The president was pleased with the favorable publicity and felt it well-deserved. He indicated as much to Lucius Littauer, the upstate Jewish congressman who had befriended TR in college. Roosevelt asked "Litt" whether he had seen the Straus letter in the press and crowed, "We certainly went to the limit in taking the lead on behalf of humanity."[146]

Curiously, one ally of Roosevelt's in the Jewish community opposed the president's approach to the Kishinev affair: Jacob Schiff. Three weeks after the petition was cabled to St. Petersburg, Schiff wrote the president, "Petitions to the czar's government profit no one." His appraisal of Roosevelt on this count was a marked deviation from Jewish-American opinion at large. Instead of a petition, Schiff preferred protests like "the Carnegie Hall meeting in N.Y., and in other cities," which "will not fail of their purpose."[147] It is unclear why he believed public protests were more effective than petitions in preempting pogroms. Roosevelt's reply, while respectful in tone, ceded no ground. "The action of the government concerning the petition was in effect (only to an infinitely greater degree) doing just what the Carnegie Hall meeting attempted to do," the president insisted.[148]

Schiff wasn't the only critic of Roosevelt in the Jewish community. The Democratic-leaning *Hebrew Standard* suggested that the president was motivated only by "Jewish votes" and that "no one suspects Mr. Roosevelt or Mr. Hay of any very burning feeling of indignation" over Kishinev.[149] But the *Jewish American* defended TR on that score: "It requires a mighty mean little soul to believe that President Roosevelt took the stand he did in the Kishinev matter for sake of catching a few Jewish votes."[150] The fairest assessment is that both newspapers had some purchase on the truth—Roosevelt was certainly alive to the electoral benefits of the Kishinev Petition, but he also felt genuine compassion for the pogrom's victims.

In the months that followed, B’nai B’rith collected thirteen thousand signatures for the petition. The loose pages from around the country were collated, bound in leather, and put in a custom-made ebony box, together with a volume detailing the petition’s origins. Simon Wolf had the honor of hand-delivering the petition to John Hay in late October. Wolf also gave Hay a letter from B’nai B’rith president Leo Levi expressing gratitude to the administration. Levi well understood the novelty of the government’s submitting a petition from private citizens to a foreign power about its internal affairs. “If it be without precedent, it is the more precious for becoming one,” he wrote. Hay replied that the petition would be “sacredly cherished” in the State Department annals.[151]

* * *

The consequences of the Kishinev pogrom would be long-lived and far-reaching—for global Jewry, for American politics, for international relations, and for Roosevelt’s role in all the above. Outrage beyond the borders of the Russian Empire did little to palliate conditions for Jews within them. The editor of the *Bessarabetz* newspaper, who had used its pages to incite the butchery in Kishinev, was undeterred in his bigotry. Just months after the pogrom, he became the first-ever publisher of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion,* which outlined an alleged conspiracy for Jewish world domination and would emerge as the most widely circulated antisemitic text of the twentieth century.[152]

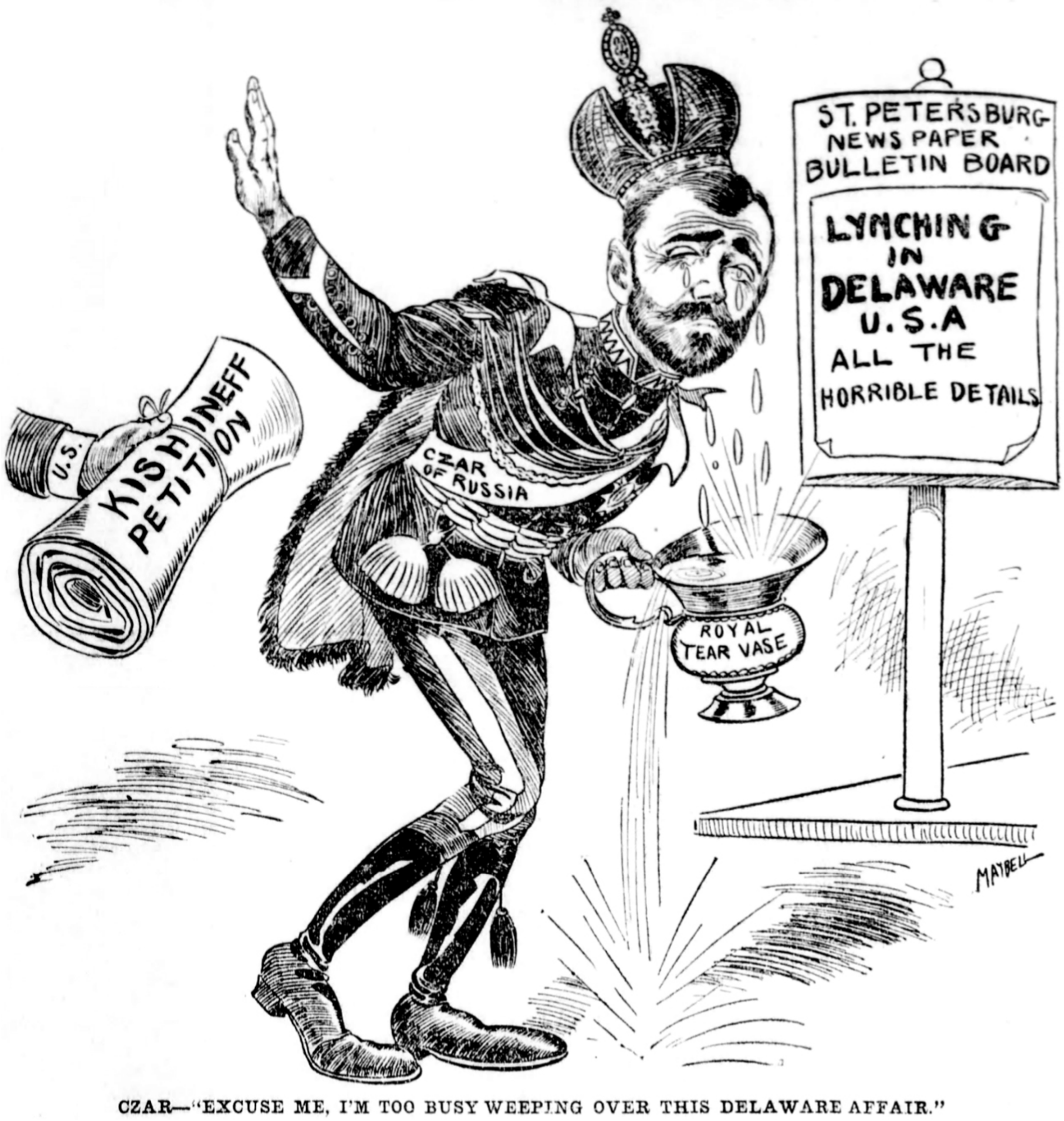
Meanwhile, the trials of the pogromists in Kishinev, conducted in secret, were largely a farce. The court made a full airing of the facts impossible, and prosecutors with honest intentions resigned in frustration. In the end, only a few perpetrators among the hundreds of defendants were found guilty. Even those who were convicted typically received light sentences. Jewish victims, moreover, were given no legal recourse to seek compensation for stolen or damaged property.[153] The American explorer and Russia expert George Kennan (a distant cousin of the more famous statesman by the same name) personally translated excerpts from the trial transcripts for Roosevelt. Kennan told the president that Russia was run by "a government of cruelty, duplicity, and medieval barbarity."[154]

Although Americans hoped that the Kishinev Petition would shame Russia into forestalling further slaughter of Jews, in fact Kishinev marked only the beginning of a new phase of Jewish bloodletting.[155] The massacre in Kishinev and subsequent pogroms made plain that Russian Jews could not subsist under the czarist regime.[156] Some of these Jews allied with revolutionary agitators in Russia who hoped to depose the czar. Others moved to the Holy Land, as Kishinev gave new life to Zionism—the movement to create a Jewish homeland in Palestine. But far more Russian Jews chose a third option: migration to America.[157] As we will see, the accelerating influx of Jewish immigrants to the United States stoked nativist anxieties and presented the Roosevelt administration with discomfiting challenges.

The fallout from Kishinev reverberated beyond Russia, Palestine, and America all the way to Asia. Roosevelt felt newly emboldened to confront Russia about the Far East. He remained frustrated that Russia didn't provide an "open door" for American trade in Manchuria.[158] Merely four days after Roosevelt resolved to send the petition, he informed John Hay, "I have not the slightest objection to the Russians' knowing that I feel thoroughly aroused and irritated at their conduct in Manchuria." The public uproar in the United States over Kishinev had impressed upon Roosevelt the depth of anti-Russian sentiment at home—animosity that might afford him wide latitude if the dispute over Manchuria intensified. "I am year by year growing more confident that this country would back me in going to an extreme in the matter," the president told Hay.[159] About two weeks later, Roosevelt wrote Hay again to express his annoyance with Russia's control of Manchuria. "I am beginning to have scant patience," he confessed. Smirking at Russia's appetite for deceit, the president added, "They never find any treachery *really* difficult."[160]

His increasingly anti-Russia posture stood to benefit not just the Jews but the Japanese as well. Japan was eager to see Manchuria rid of the Russians, and the Japanese press anticipated that America's disaffection from Russia over Kishinev might well redound to Japan's benefit in Far

Eastern affairs.[161] Sure enough, within a few months Roosevelt was staking out a markedly pro-Japan position in the region. That October, the United States and Japan signed complementary treaties with China calling for an “open door” in three key Manchurian cities. Although those treaties wouldn’t actually be operable so long as Russia colonized Manchuria, they did the symbolic work of signaling America’s burgeoning affinity for Japan. Indeed, the Russian ambassador in Tokyo now considered the Americans and Japanese allied against his own nation.[162] And so—even before B’nai B’rith had finished preparing the petition for its hand-off to the State Department—the ripple effects of Kishinev had circumnavigated the globe.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ROYAL TEAR VASE
MAYBELL
CZAR—"EXCUSE ME, I'M TOO BUSY WEEPING OVER THIS DELAWARE AFFAIR."

FIGURE 3.5. "Excuse Me, I'm Too Busy Weeping over This Delaware Affair." *Source*: *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, July 2, 1903.

Closer to home, contemporary observers in the United States saw disturbing parallels between carnage in Kishinev and lynching in America.[163] The *Springfield Daily Republican* in Massachusetts lamented, "Melancholy is the fact that we have Kishinevs of our own."[164] On the very day that Roosevelt and his Jewish advisors were drafting the historic cable to the St. Petersburg embassy, the *Salt Lake Telegram* published a list of all American lynchings in the first six months of 1903. Forty-six lives—forty Blacks and six whites—had been lost, nearly matching the death toll from Kishinev. “Russia may well advise us to do a little house-cleaning at home before we try to reform Russia,” the *Telegram* advised.[165]

Some newspapers tried to minimize the comparison between Russian pogroms and American lynchings. They suggested that Roosevelt’s critics, who accused the president of applying a double-standard to Russia, weren’t genuinely outraged about lynching but merely seeking to score “a point against the administration.”[166] Roosevelt himself privately told John Hay that pogroms and lynchings were not equivalent, that Jewish victims of pogroms “infinitely” outnumbered Black victims of lynchings in the years since the American Civil War.[167] The president was wildly inaccurate here—Black fatalities had exceeded Jewish ones by orders of magnitude.[168] Roosevelt’s erroneous claim betrays that he more easily felt sympathy for Jews than for Blacks. Even as he gravely misrepresented the depths of Black suffering, the similarities between lynchings and pogroms were too obvious for the president to entirely ignore. In the letter to Congressman Littauer, after Roosevelt indulged in some self-congratulations for his handling of the petition, he added, “I wish to Heaven our course were clearer in the lynching business!”[169]

Much of the Black press bristled that white America seemed much more willing to denounce lawless violence abroad than at home.[170] Other Blacks sought to make common cause with Kishinev’s Jews. A meeting of the self-described “negro members of the Louisville bar” issued a statement in support of the pogrom’s victims. These Black lawyers alluded to lynchings by noting that they, too, were “acquainted with sorrow” and “the oppressor’s wrongs.” In a spirit of solidarity born from shared suffering, they decried “the hapless condition of our Hebrew brethren” and called on the government to welcome Jewish refugees to America.[171]

And there were Jews, in turn, who translated their dismay over pogroms into support for the anti-lynching movement. Anna Strunsky was the most notable example. A Russian-born Jewish immigrant to America, Strunsky returned to the Pale of Settlement to investigate pogroms as a journalist. It was painfully obvious to her that antisemitic bloodshed in her native land resembled anti-Black violence in her adopted home. She went on to become a founding member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, or NAACP.[172]

* * *

As the Kishinev Petition dominated headlines in 1903, Roosevelt was already looking ahead to its implications for 1904. He had inherited his office from his fallen predecessor and would soon seek to capture the presidency in his own right. The Jewish vote mattered in states that would be essential to his success at the polls. Roosevelt had long courted Jewish support in his days as a New York politico; his elevation onto the national stage in no way diminished his interest in cultivating Jewish constituencies. The president cheerfully informed Congressman Littauer that Oscar Straus, the most prominent Jewish Democrat in the country, would back Roosevelt's reelection bid: "Straus, by the way, volunteered the statement that, whoever was against me for president, he should support me."[173] Jewish endorsements would mean something to Jewish voters. So would Jewish diplomacy—between the Romanian Note and Kishinev Petition, Roosevelt had done much to bolster his stock with this key slice of the electorate. But neither episode had directly implicated U.S. citizens of Jewish faith. Come 1904, Jewish voters would focus their attention on Russia's brazen assault against the rights of American Jews themselves.

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4

PASSPORT QUESTION

Henry Pinkos was diligent in his work, mild in his manner, and American in his citizenship. This peaceful tradesman led a quiet life in St. Petersburg with his wife and their child in the early 1880s when the local police suddenly ordered the Pinkos family to vacate the Russian capital. The reason for their ouster was uncomplicated: they were Jews. Henry Pinkos sold his modest property and purchased tickets for an outbound ship departing the empire. The boat was scheduled to set sail from Kronstadt, a small town on an island some twenty miles west of St. Petersburg. After having his family’s bags loaded onto the ship at Kronstadt, Pinkos presented the police there with both his U.S. passport and the order evicting him. Here his troubles quickly compounded. The police in Kronstadt denied him permission to exit Russia on the grounds that the order from St. Petersburg only expelled him from that city, not from the Russian Empire at large. Then the ship captain refused to refund the Pinkos family for their tickets even though they couldn’t embark. And the final blow: the boat sailed off with their luggage still on board. The Pinkoses were left destitute. They were instructed by the Kronstadt police to return to the very city from which they had been banished. Back in St. Petersburg, the family subsisted on private donations until, eventually, they did manage to secure passage out of Russia.[1]

Henry Pinkos's nightmarish experience was of a piece with Russia's arbitrary approach to Jewish rights. Russian law technically banned Jews from St. Petersburg and many other cities. However, exceptions abounded —sometimes explicitly by way of official exemption, other times tacitly by authorities choosing not to enforce restrictive laws too severely. Local officials were given wide latitude to implement or relax civil disabilities on Jews. This ambiguous state of affairs meant that a Jew could, with little notice, face eviction from a given municipality on religious grounds.[2]

That Henry Pinkos held American citizenship did not protect him from this kind of cruel caprice. But it should have. An operative treaty from 1832 then governing Russian-American relations specified that the inhabitants of each nation shall freely enter the other and enjoy the "same security and protection as natives of the country."[3] The U.S. government, acting discreetly through diplomatic channels, conveyed to Russia that Pinkos's expulsion was a violation of the foregoing treaty.[4]

The Russians were unmoved. They argued that because Russia drew legal distinctions between its own Jews and Gentiles, and had been doing so prior to 1832, it ought to be fairly presumed under the 1832 treaty that Russia could also draw distinctions between Jews and Gentiles from America. Russia, moreover, insisted that it already had significant trouble with its own Jews, who were allegedly a troublesome people in league with revolutionaries. Taking on more Jews from abroad was unacceptable.[5] Russian paranoia about Jews was unhinged. Although an underground revolutionary movement in Russia did claim some Jewish members, in reality most Russian Jews were too focused on the daily survival of their hardscrabble lives to engage in subversion.[6]

Tensions only worsened after the Pinkos incident. No later than 1886, the Russian government began directing its consulates abroad to refuse visas to foreign Jews who wished to visit Russia. When Americans did apply for visas at Russian consulates within the United States, they faced interrogation about their religious identity; applicants professing Judaism were denied entry papers.[7] By 1895, the issue became sufficiently prominent to merit comment in the State of the Union message. President Grover Cleveland derided the Russian consulates for having the audacity to pressure American citizens—on U.S. soil, no less—to reveal their faiths. He condemned these antisemitic inquisitions as an "obnoxious invasion of our territorial jurisdiction."[8]

At particular risk were American Jews of Russian birth. Some of these naturalized citizens desired to visit Russia for familial or commercial reasons. If they tried to reenter Russia, they were liable to be turned away. And even if they managed to circumvent the bar on Jews, once in Russia they could face severe punishment for having adopted U.S. citizenship without Russian permission. In August of 1901—five months into the McKinley administration—the State Department issued a circular warning Jewish Americans of Russian origin about the hazards of Russia's visa policy.[9] William McKinley drew his dying breath six weeks later, and Theodore Roosevelt inherited the "Passport Question" that had bedeviled so many administrations before his.

* * *

The following year, a Democratic congressman of Jewish faith named Henry Goldfogle decided to press the Roosevelt administration on the issue. Goldfogle was then in his first of seven terms in Congress and represented the epicenter of immigrant Jewish life in America: the Lower East Side. At his initiation, the House of Representatives passed a resolution calling on Secretary of State John Hay to furnish information about Russia's visa policy and what steps, if any, the State Department had taken to rectify the situation.[10] Hay's written response to Congress, which was released to the press, noted that Russia's restrictions against Jews from the United States applied with equal force to Jews from other nations. Hay also detailed that the State Department for many years had been engaged in "efforts to secure uniform treatment of American citizens in Russia." Those efforts "have not been attended with encouraging success," but diplomatic protest would continue unabated, Hay assured the House.[11]

Four weeks later, a spirited public meeting was held at the Educational Alliance, a Jewish settlement house on the East Side, to rally against Russia's ban on American Jews. A series of Jewish luminaries addressed the packed crowd. One speaker elicited ardent applause after connecting the Passport Question to pride in Jewish facial features. He argued that Jews shouldn't content themselves with merely looking Jewish; they needed to advance Jewish values as well. In his words, a "hooked nose and kinky hair" alone do not "make an Israelite." Being an Israelite also required "loyalty to ideals," which in this case meant opposition to Russian "despotism and tyranny." The speaker elaborated, "That Hebrew who relies on a great big nose … well, he's not Israel at all." Some high-profile Gentiles gave speeches, including a former congressman and a prominent Catholic priest. Their presence and words affirmed that the rights of Jews with U.S. passports should concern Americans of all backgrounds. To reinforce that point, Congressman Goldfogle insisted in the final remarks of the day, "The question before us is not a Jewish question. There is nothing of racial character in it. It is a matter of pure Americanism."[12]

Soon the macabre sensationalism of the Kishinev pogrom relegated the Passport Question to the margins for both American Jews and the Roosevelt administration. But when Kishinev receded as a front-page issue, passports reemerged as the focal point of Jewish concern. Just three weeks after B'nai B'rith delivered the Kishinev Petition to the State Department, Congressman Goldfogle indicated to the press that he planned to make noise about Russia's visa policy.[13] An election year was looming, and Republicans were poised to overperform with the Jewish vote thanks to the Romanian Note and Kishinev Petition. The unresolved Passport Question thus presented an opportunity for Goldfogle to reclaim ground for the Democratic Party.

In January 1904, he introduced a second passport resolution in the House that differed from his 1902 resolution. Whereas the first resolution had merely made a factual inquiry and was addressed to John Hay, this second resolution called for action and was directed at Roosevelt. It asked the president to initiate negotiations of a new treaty with Russia that would guarantee the unfettered admission of American citizens regardless of their faith.[14] After a hearing on the topic by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs in February, the House adopted the resolution in April in a bipartisan vote.[15] Both parties saw the defense of Jewish Americans as a winning issue.

The *New York Times* treated the Goldfogle resolution as a well-intended but ultimately futile exercise. The paper reported that any diplomatic push by the United States had “little prospect of success.” According to the *Times*, Russia feared that a Jew bearing a U.S. passport would, under the pretext of peacefully conducting international business, “gain access to Russian territory and prosecute his real mission of political disturbance and possibly nihilistic violence.”[16] In Russian eyes, Jews at home and abroad were radicals who threatened the czar’s empire.

* * *

The Goldfogle resolution may have been unlikely to alter Russia’s policy, but it did stand to improve Democratic performance with the Jewish vote in the upcoming election. And so Roosevelt began to make countermoves. The Republican National Convention was fast approaching and would provide a critical opportunity for the party to signal its commitment to Jewish causes, including the Passport Question. Presidential candidates of the era did not themselves attend the conventions, so Roosevelt was relegated to behind-the-scenes strategizing. In early June, TR wrote a letter to Elihu Root—who had recently stepped down as war secretary—with advice for the keynote speech that Root was to deliver at the convention a few weeks hence. “I hope that you can make some allusion to the action taken as regards Kishinev and the Jew passports,” Roosevelt urged. “It will be a good thing to recite what has been done in the Kishinev matter, and the steady and unwearied efforts of the State Department to secure passports from Russia for all well-behaved Americans, whether Jew or Gentile.” Although Roosevelt wanted Root to take up these Jewish causes in a speech, the president nonetheless cautioned, “We can hardly put this in our platform.”[17]

Roosevelt didn’t delineate why the platform ought not remark on the Kishinev Petition. As for the Passport Question, he told Oscar Straus that it wasn’t a proper subject for the platform because such a plank would smack of naked political opportunism. “Unless we mean to do something further than simply protest," TR explained, "it would look like an effort to catch votes, for such statements in the platform could not be regarded for any other purpose."[18] Roosevelt's reasoning here is arguably tenuous. After all, he felt that the Passport Question ought to be included in a convention speech, which surely would be a transparent bid to "catch votes."

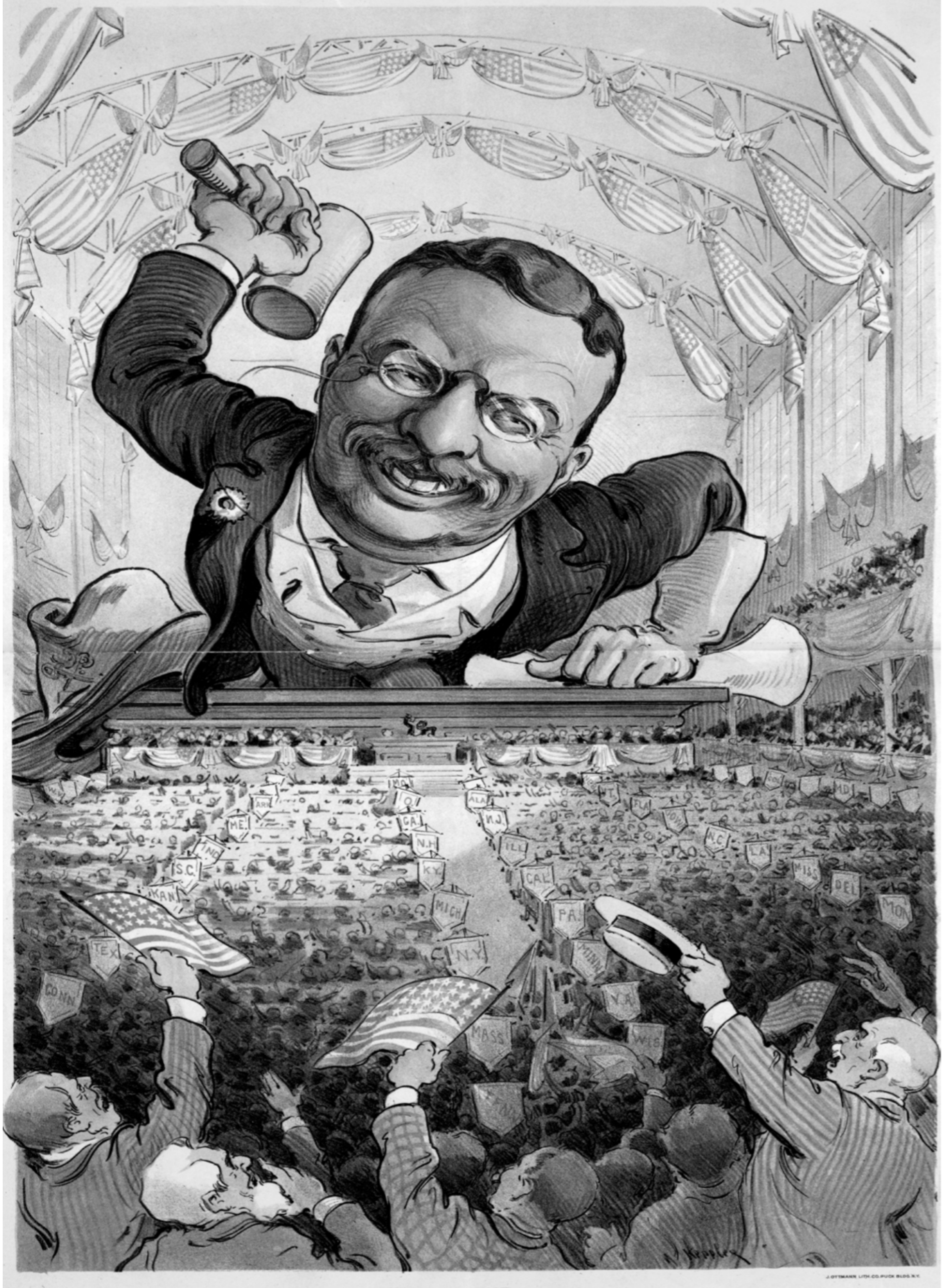
Perhaps that inconsistency reflected a president caught between two competing imperatives: courting Jewish voters and preserving Russian relations. The American and Russian governments were then engaged in secret discussions (which became public only years later) concerning a wholly distinct issue—namely, a potential agreement ensuring that any given corporation based in one country would enjoy legal standing in the other.[19] Roosevelt may have been worried that pressing Russia too hard on the Passport Question in public might compromise ongoing negotiations in private. TR *was* amenable to a platform that included abstract language about the rights of U.S. citizens overseas, but only so long as the plank was framed in generalities without express reference to either Jews or Russia.

To that end, the president tapped a Jewish ally of his from New York, Judge William Cohen, for input on the platform.[20] This was the self-same Cohen who had praised Roosevelt's dignified composure at McKinley's deathbed in a gracious letter that TR made a point of keeping. Once, Roosevelt flattered Judge Cohen by calling him a "bold man," and Cohen in turn gushed with delight, "If *you* call a fellow a 'bold man' he must be a two-footed lion."[21] When TR solicited Cohen's help with the 1904 platform, Cohen proposed some language on a slip of paper that he sent to Roosevelt. The slip doesn't survive today, but apparently Cohen's phrasing satisfied the president's dueling desires to appeal to Jewish voters on the one hand without doing so too overtly on the other.[22] As Roosevelt shared with a Republican senator the following day, "I enclose you this letter from Cohen. I think that the slip which he inserts is good, and saves us from making any direct allusion to either the Kishinev massacre or the passport business."[23]

The delegates convened for the Republican National Convention in late June at the Chicago Coliseum. Opened four years earlier, the Coliseum was an architectural marvel. Massive arches held up the roof, which obviated the need for pillars and thereby endowed the arena with a grand sense of capaciousness. Floor seating, when combined with a balcony that lined all four walls, allowed for ten thousand attendees.[24] Although the delegates didn’t fill the arena to capacity, they loudly voiced their enthusiasm during the convention proceedings. The first mention of Theodore Roosevelt in a speech occasioned particular exuberance. As one journalist reported, “Cheers rang through the hall, and many men sprang upon their chairs and waved hats, handkerchiefs, and banners.”[25]

Elihu Root took the stage for his keynote to great applause. Pacing with his feet and gesticulating as he spoke, Root offered the kind of specificity on Jewish issues that the platform would studiously avoid.[26] He explicitly referenced not only the Kishinev Petition but also the Romanian Note. “When the Romanian outrages and when the appalling massacre at Kishinev shocked civilization and filled thousands of our own people with mourning,” Root recounted, “the protest of America was heard through the voice of its government, with full observance of diplomatic rules, but with moral power and effect.”[27] Curiously, Root’s speech made no mention of the Passport Question despite Roosevelt’s request that he do so. Root’s omission may have been strategic; after all, the president had scored important symbolic victories with the Romanian Note and Kishinev Petition but lacked a public win on the Passport Question.

The day after Root’s keynote, the convention unanimously adopted a platform that included a plank along the lines Judge Cohen had suggested—probably his exact wording—as it nodded to Roosevelt’s response on Kishinev without direct comment on Jews or Russia. “Whenever crimes against humanity have been perpetrated which have shocked our people, his protest has been made, and our good offices have been tendered, but always with due regard to international obligations,” the plank read. The Republican platform was similarly vague about the Passport Question, avoiding mention of Jews, of Russia, or even of passports: “We commend the vigorous efforts made by the administration to protect American citizens in foreign lands, and pledge ourselves to insist upon the just and equal protection of all of our citizens abroad.”[28] With this, the party achieved Roosevelt’s goal of a platform that implicitly gestured toward Jewry. The platform may have lacked specificity, but it was still unprecedented; prior platforms from both parties had neglected to make even discreet allusions to the Passport Question.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CHICAGO, JUNE 21, 1904.

"ALL IN FAVOR OF THE NOMINATION WILL SAY AYE!"

FIGURE. 4.1. Theodore Roosevelt here gavels in his own nomination. In reality, he followed custom by absenting himself from the convention. *Source*: “All in Favor of the Nomination Will Say Aye!,” *Puck*, June 15, 1904.

* * *

In the immediate wake of the Republican National Convention, the Roosevelt administration grasped for tangible progress on passports. John Hay cabled the U.S. ambassador in St. Petersburg, Robert McCormick, sharing with him the text of the congressional resolution on the Passport Question. Hay instructed McCormick to convey to the Russian foreign minister the disapproval—by Congress and Roosevelt alike—of Russia’s ongoing visa restrictions. In Hay’s words, the discrimination against American Jews amounted to “needlessly repressive treatment.” Hay further relayed Roosevelt’s bemusement that Russia perceived itself as somehow benefitting from its prohibition against U.S. nationals of Jewish faith, whom TR considered exemplary members of American society. “In the view of the president,” Hay related, “it is not easy to discern the compensating advantage to the Russian government in the exclusion of a class of tourists and men of business” who were endowed with “intelligence and sterling moral qualities.” This communication was confidential—at least for the time being. Whether and when to publicly release the foregoing cable would ultimately become a source of debate within Roosevelt’s circles, but for now, the State Department quietly awaited a response.[29]

* * *

Democrats convened the following week for their party convention at the St. Louis Exposition and Music Hall. The venue was festooned with colorful fabrics for the occasion, and the seals of each state in the Union hung from the ceiling. The ventilation, however, did not live up to the decoration. As the crowd grew, temperatures rose and overheated attendees resorted to vigorous fanning. One journalist recorded that the hall looked like a “yellow flutter as the palm leaf fans bobbed back and forth.”[30] The

Democrats nominated Alton Parker, an obscure figure with a judicial background, to challenge Roosevelt for the presidency.

Before the Democratic convention, Judge Cohen had warned Roosevelt that “our adversaries intend [on] making some reference” in St. Louis to the “recognition of our passports in Russia.”[31] Indeed, the Democratic platform now offered a plank on the Passport Question that was more extensive in length and specific in detail than the Republican version. While avoiding the words “Russia” and “Jewish,” the plank nevertheless made explicit mention of passports and religious discrimination in a way that the Republicans had not. It also echoed the Goldfogle resolution by calling for treaty negotiations, which the Republican platform had avoided.[32] Jacob Schiff would soon thereafter candidly acknowledge to Roosevelt that although “the platform of both parties makes special reference to this vexatious question, the Democratic platform [does so] even somewhat stronger than our own.”[33]

In a convention speech, a Democratic congressman from Mississippi named John Sharp Williams took aim at the Republican plank about U.S. citizens traveling abroad. Williams—whom Roosevelt once derided as a “drunken skunk”—accused Republicans of hypocrisy: in one breath, the Republican administration resigned itself to Russian discrimination by issuing a State Department travel warning that American Jews wouldn’t be protected in Russia; in the next breath, the Republican platform pledged fealty to equal justice for U.S. passport holders of all faiths. Congressman Williams suggested that “our fellow-citizens of Russian birth and Jewish extraction” would read the GOP platform with “singular astonishment” at its insincerity.[34] His criticism here was arguably unfair given that a party platform was widely understood to be an aspirational policy agenda whereas the travel warning was simply a sober description of facts on the ground. Republicans could take some solace that, according to press reports, convention delegates in St. Louis had “kept up a constant hum of conversation that smothered Mr. Williams’s voice.”[35]

As the Democrats made a strong play for the Jewish vote, Roosevelt wondered whether he would win the grand prize of Jewish endorsements: Oscar Straus. True, Straus was a Roosevelt appointee and a trusted advisor who had already signaled to TR a year prior that his endorsement was forthcoming. But Straus was also a Democrat—perhaps he wouldn't abandon his party after all. The president asked his campaign manager, "Do you know if Oscar Straus intends to support me or not?"[36] Roosevelt did not have to wait long for the answer. Four days later, Straus personally informed the president he would "dedicate my best services to your election" despite having "always been a liberal Democrat."[37] Roosevelt was relieved, replying to Straus, "I need hardly say how deeply gratified I am."[38] Straus soon publicly endorsed the president and announced he would likely stump for Roosevelt.[39] In an article about the endorsement, the *Jewish Voice* newspaper described Straus as "probably the most distinguished Jew of the country," a stature that on its own would render his advocacy of Roosevelt significant. But Straus's blessing was all the more noteworthy—the *Jewish Voice* observed—because he was crossing party lines to back the president.[40]

Another Roosevelt devotee in the Jewish community, Simon Wolf, knew that Straus would be a key ally in rebutting Democratic attacks. As Wolf told a Roosevelt aide, "You will remember that months ago I told you that Oscar Straus would be with us, there will be plenty of others, to offset John S. Williams's slur as to the Jewish question." Wolf also expressed a desire to counter "the slurs of Goldfogle, who claimed that the resolution passed by Congress had been pigeonholed." Wolf's annoyance with these congressional Democrats did not undermine his optimism about the results to come in November. "Every day convinces me more of our success," he shared. "As usual they shout and brag, but we will have the votes."[41] Wolf must have felt especially endeared to Roosevelt at this moment, as just two months earlier the president had appointed Wolf's thirty-six-year-old son to a judgeship.[42]

* * *

Meanwhile, preparations were underway for Roosevelt's nomination ceremony at his Sagamore Hill estate. Roosevelt told his campaign manager that he wanted Jewish representation in the audience. "It seems to me that if we could have one or two of our good Jewish friends out here … it would be all right," the president wrote from Oyster Bay. Naturally, Oscar Straus and Jacob Schiff would top the list, but Roosevelt wondered, "Would three be too many?" He wanted to include James Speyer, whose profile was similar to Schiff's: German by birth, New Yorker by choice, successful in banking, and generous in philanthropy. "They all three have been genuine friends," Roosevelt explained to his campaign manager.[43] Ultimately, three Jews among 125 guests did not prove too many; the full Jewish trio received invitations and, of course, each man accepted the honor.[44] In late July, a special train from New York delivered guests to Oyster Bay for the ceremony. The day's perfect weather augured well for the event. Roosevelt delivered a speech midday from a large porch adorned with American flags before the gathering of supporters.[45] The president's own family members served the visitors at the ensuing banquet.[46]

With this bit of campaign pageantry behind him, Roosevelt turned his energies toward the final element of the nominating process: his formal letter of acceptance. Such letters were published in newspapers and thus offered presidential contenders important outlets to court voters. For an incumbent like Roosevelt, the acceptance letter offered the *only* outlet to make his own case for his candidacy. Alton Parker as the challenger could give stump speeches, but protocol dictated that Roosevelt as the sitting president had to refrain from active campaigning and rely instead on surrogates.[47] The passive demands of incumbency ill-suited the tenacious Roosevelt. A congressional ally wrote him, "I think it depresses you a little to be the only man in the country who cannot take part in the campaign for the presidency." The word "little" understated the president's discontent. As Roosevelt told his son Kermit, "I could cut [the Democratic nominee] into ribbons if I could get at him in the open. But of course a president can't go on the stump … and so I have to sit still and abide by the result."[48] Given these strictures, Roosevelt's acceptance letter was of paramount significance to his reelection bid.

Jacob Schiff encouraged the president to use that letter as an opportunity to signal his commitment to securing Jewish-American rights in Russia. "Assuming that you are about to enter upon the preparation of your letter of acceptance, I should like to suggest that the Passport Question receive some forcible treatment," Schiff urged. He conjectured that the Jewish vote might determine New York state's Electoral College votes and thereby swing the presidential race. "It is not at all unlikely, that the East Side of New York City, which casts upwards of a hundred thousand votes, is going to decide the coming state election and through this possibly the national election," Schiff speculated, "and it will therefore be well that these voters thoroughly understand where we stand on a question so vital to them." Lest Roosevelt entertain thoughts that Schiff was simply pushing a self-interested Jewish agenda, Schiff insisted that the impetus for his writing the president was a desire to recommend a "successful issue" for the campaign more so than "any other motive."[49]

Schiff's true aims extended beyond the ballot box. He believed that a change in Russian policy toward American Jews would have a cascading effect, leading ultimately to legal equality for Russia's Jewish population. As Schiff predicted in a letter to a German-Jewish leader, if the Jews of other nations could enter Russia and enjoy the liberties rightly afforded them as foreign nationals, "then the Russian government will not long be able to insist on maintaining the scandalous restrictive laws against her own Jews."[50] Two classes of Jewry—one of foreign citizenship enjoying basic freedoms, the other of domestic subjecthood denied those same freedoms—would prove untenable.

The Russians, it appears, were proceeding from the same logic as Schiff. A Russian official personally told Schiff that discrimination against American Jews was a precondition for continued discrimination against Russian Jews.[51] This was the very same reasoning that the Romanian king had provided in refusing America's request for a naturalization treaty. Both Russia and Romania appreciated the dangers of having two categories of Jews with differing sets of liberties. The state-sanctioned prejudice against domestic Jews could buckle under the weight of this inconsistency.[52] In turn, the demise of legally enforced antisemitism could well harken the demise of autocracy in those nations. One lesson from Western European countries was that pro-Jewish reforms often worked in tandem with more sweeping liberalization—e.g., the adoption of civic equality, individual freedom, and the rule of law. The despots of Russia and Romania were hardly keen to see liberalism take root on their soil.

Roosevelt proved amenable to Schiff's counsel that he take up the Passport Question directly. "I agree entirely with you and shall dwell upon that matter in my letter of acceptance," TR replied.[53] Three days later, the president followed up with a draft for Schiff's perusal and encouraged him to "make any emendations you desire and send it back to me with your suggestions."[54] Roosevelt also requested advice on the letter from Oscar Straus and Nathan Bijur, a major figure among Jewish Republicans in New York.[55] All three provided him with feedback.[56]

Straus, for his part, advocated that the president adopt language making clear that his administration's attempt to secure entry to Russia for American Jews was a matter of neutrally applied principle rather than a concession to Jews as a special interest. As Straus put it, Roosevelt should convey it had been "high motives that prompted action, [i.e.] that it was not to favor any particular class but to maintain equality of all in their right to protection, be they native born or naturalized, Christian or Jew."[57] This was precisely the kind of messaging that would have appealed to Roosevelt, who was fond of denying that he engaged in identity politics.

* * *

As Roosevelt continued to fine-tune his letter, the diplomatic front in St. Petersburg saw some movement in late August. John Hay's cable to Ambassador McCormick—which had communicated American opposition to Russia's visa restrictions back in early July—was left unattended for several weeks owing to the ambassador's absence from Russia. After McCormick finally returned to the embassy and read the cable, he sent a letter to the Russian foreign minister informing him that Congress and the president alike were concerned about discrimination against American Jews at Russian hands. McCormick explained that religious freedom was a "principle which lies at the foundation of our government." Therefore the passport issue presented a "live question … liable to become acute" and had the potential to "seriously disturb the friendly relations" between the United

States and Russia. Given the potential diplomatic cost to Russia of preserving this “needlessly oppressive” policy, Russia ought to reconsider its Jewish ban, if not on principle then at least as a matter of “expedience and reciprocal convenience” in its relationship with America.[58]

The text of McCormick’s letter wasn’t disclosed to the press, but the Roosevelt administration did quickly inform newspapers that McCormick had made overtures to the Russian foreign minister about passports.[59] Journalists had slim hope that McCormick’s efforts would prompt Russia to reconsider its treatment of American Jews. “While Russia has not yet rejected the proposal of the United States … it is particularly certain that she will decline,” the *New York Times* asserted. Just like Jacob Schiff, the *Times* appreciated that the Passport Question was so weighty because of its implications for domestic policy within Russia: “Compliance with the wishes of the United States would entail a complete change in the laws of the empire, in so far as they affect the Jews.”[60] And that kind of change was of little interest to the Russian regime. But Russia didn’t summarily issue a response to McCormick, and so the American ambassador was left waiting to see whether Russia actually would prove obstinate.

* * *

Roosevelt finally released his acceptance letter for the Republican nomination in mid-September. Some newspapers published the 14,000-word letter in its entirety, while others reprinted select passages owing to its “extreme length.”[61] The president’s letter touted his diplomacy on Jewish issues, asking, “Do our opponents object to what was done in reference to the petition of American citizens against the Kishinev massacre, or to the protest against the treatment of the Jews in Romania?” Roosevelt further acknowledged that Russia “refuses to admit and protect Jews” from the United States, and he defended his administration for having “consistently demanded equal protection abroad for all American citizens.” The Democrats’ insistence that he initiate negotiations with Russia over the Passport Question “shows either ignorance of the facts or insincerity”—after all, his administration was already applying “steady pressure.”

Roosevelt stood by his foreign policy for its commitment to humanitarianism. “Discrimination and oppression because of religion, wherever practiced, are acts of injustice before God and man,” he declared, “and in making evident to the world the depth of American conviction in this regard we have gone to the very limit of diplomatic usage.”[62]

Oscar Straus extended to Roosevelt his “heartiest congratulations” on the letter, which he found “honest, just, and noble in spirit, a great state paper reflecting the author in every line.”[63] The president responded with a request. With the election less than two months away, he was eager to more fully reap credit for the pressure that his administration was then bringing to bear on Russia. Neither the text of Hay’s cable from July nor of McCormick’s letter from August had been disseminated to the public. Roosevelt told Straus that it might become “necessary to publish the State Department dispatches showing what we have done in connection with the Passport Question. I should like your judgment as to just how far we should go.” The president added that other participants in the decision-making would include George Cortelyou, who headed the Republican National Committee. That Roosevelt involved the RNC chair in a decision about declassifying diplomatic correspondence offers striking testimony to the intimate relationship between domestic politics and foreign policy.[64]

Some prominent Jews who were Roosevelt sympathizers had already quietly suggested to Cortelyou that releasing the correspondence would backfire. After all, it had been a Democrat, Henry Goldfogle, who sponsored the congressional resolution that spurred the administration into action, and so the Democrats were possibly poised to benefit from any publicity.[65] Oscar Straus took a different view. After reading the diplomatic dispatches, an elated Straus told Nathan Bijur, who had also seen them, “I had no idea that the matter had been so fully and forcefully presented to the Russian government, and I am especially pleased with Secretary Hay’s instructions, wherein he places the subject upon so high and broad a plane.” Although Straus was sure that declassification would enhance Roosevelt politically, Straus nevertheless told Bijur that TR ought to hold his fire: “Regarding the publication of these dispatches, my judgment is not to do so for the present, but to wait.” If the Democrats renewed their line of attack that Roosevelt had been weak on the Passport Question, Straus reasoned, then the president could play his hand.[66]

Bijur agreed. Later that day, Bijur relayed to John Hay that he and Oscar Straus alike thought "it would be better not to publish these dispatches at the moment, but to await a favorable opportunity."[67] Bijur soon thereafter penned a letter to Chairman Cortelyou that expressed the same message in more vivid language: "It is very important that nothing be done about this Russian correspondence until the psychological moment"—that is, until declassification would have maximal psychological impact on the electorate.[68] Ultimately it was Hay who conveyed the Straus-Bijur position to the president, and in so doing the secretary of state lent his own imprimatur to their measured approach, writing to Roosevelt in late September, "I think [Bijur] and Mr. Straus are probably right in thinking it better not to publish the Russian matter just now."[69] A resigned Roosevelt conceded, "All right, I shall have nothing done about that Russian Jew matter at present."[70]

But then Simon Wolf pitched an idea to Roosevelt that resonated with the president: Wolf could be the one to publicly trumpet the administration's diplomatic play, if only he were given access to Hay's cable. Roosevelt anticipated that Wolf—having taken over the leadership of B'nai B'rith—could functionally serve as a surrogate under the useful banner of a nonpartisan organization. "Simon Wolf has been in, anxious to get the Hay correspondence about the Jews," Roosevelt shared with Chairman Cortelyou. The president was well aware that his inner circle presently opposed declassification, and so he floated to Cortelyou a halfway measure: the administration could provide Simon Wolf with a summary of the cable rather than a verbatim copy, which Wolf could then use in public remarks. "Why wouldn't it do to hand him a statement … which would give the facts of the case?" asked Roosevelt.[71] But Cortelyou was unenthused. For one, he didn't trust Wolf. "Wolf thinks he can do a great deal more than I believe he can," Cortelyou wrote the president, adding, "his influence stirs up a lot of antagonism." Cortelyou had more faith in the tempered judgment of Nathan Bijur. As Cortelyou told Roosevelt, "I have been over the matter of the Hay correspondence about the Jews with Nathan Bijur … and we are holding it, to be given out at just the right time.”[72]

TR did not have the cable released to Wolf, but he still struggled to heed the call for patience on declassification more generally. The following week a restless Roosevelt appealed directly to Bijur, asking him to see “Chairman Cortelyou to discuss with him as to whether we should not send out that State Department statement on the Passport Question?” Roosevelt was anxious about the Democratic push for the Jewish vote. He warned Bijur, “I hear Goldfogle’s speech on the Passport Question is to be issued in immense numbers by the Democratic Committee”—this was most likely a reference to a noteworthy speech that Goldfogle had delivered in Congress just before the House approved his resolution.[73] But before Bijur could meet with Cortelyou, the next day brought momentous news: word from St. Petersburg had finally arrived.

Ambassador McCormick forwarded to Secretary Hay a letter from the Russian foreign minister that was shockingly conciliatory. Russia had authorized a “special commission” with the aim of “generally revising the passport regulations.” The foreign minister also promised to communicate the American position on the subject to this special commission as it proceeded with its work.[74] In reality, Russia would make no effort to redress the grievances of American Jews. But Russia saw value in posturing as though it would, thanks to events transpiring thousands of miles from the halls of power in Washington and St. Petersburg.

* * *

Russian-Japanese tensions in the Far East had, by that point, degenerated precipitously. Recall that Russia controlled Manchuria in China, and the Japanese feared that Russia’s ambitions in the Far East might extend to nearby Korea, which Japan itself had colonized. To avert armed hostilities, Japan proposed an agreement with Russia whereby each power would respect the other’s sphere of influence. But the Russians did not deign to respond to Japan’s proposal, much less accept it.[75] Convinced that military action was its only recourse, the Japanese launched an attack on Port Arthur

—Russia's key seaport in Manchuria—in February of 1904.[76] Thus began a full-blown war that would have reverberating effects on Jewish causes.

Japan's special finance minister journeyed to Western capitals in the spring of 1904 for the purpose of securing war loans. He made little headway until a chance encounter at a dinner in London found him seated next to Jacob Schiff, who happened to be passing through town. The Japanese minister would later recount how Schiff was "justly indignant at the unfair treatment" and "notorious persecutions" that Russia inflicted on Jews.[77] Even before the dinner, Schiff had actively lobbied Jewish bankers in Europe to deny Russia loans for its war effort; now Schiff was presented with a unique opportunity to subsidize the other side of the conflict. Within a matter of days, his banking firm in New York was underwriting a multimillion-dollar bond for Japan.[78]

The Russian interior minister, Plehve, then invited Schiff to come to Russia for a discussion of Jewish rights—this was a self-interested bid to placate Schiff in the hopes that Russia could secure war financing in the loan markets if Jewish bankers relented in their opposition.[79] In a letter to Theodore Roosevelt, Schiff relayed that he had issued to Plehve an ultimatum: "I replied that I would never come to Russia by toleration, and that if I was wanted there, the government would first have to remove the restriction against foreign Israelites in general."[80] This much was untenable to the likes of Plehve.

However, two developments over the summer moved Russia to soon adopt a more accommodating stance on passports. When Plehve was traveling by carriage in St. Petersburg, a revolutionary agitator tossed a bomb at its wheels and assassinated the minister. The man who replaced Plehve was comparatively moderate in his politics.[81] What's more, Japanese forces were pressing ahead with a long and bloody siege of Port Arthur at the very moment when Ambassador McCormick cabled the Russian foreign minister about the Passport Question.[82] With Russian antisemitism proving a tangible obstacle to war funding, it is unsurprising that Russia—on its backfoot militarily and financially—tried to assuage the United States on passports. If Russia softened its hard line, then perhaps Jewish bankers like Schiff would soften their own.[83]

Russian assurances about passport reform would ultimately prove hollow, but that much would not become clear until after the election. For now, the State Department quickly issued an announcement about those assurances, thereby offering Roosevelt the appearance of a win at the height of campaign season. The *Duluth News-Tribune* announced, “Jews May Get a Better Deal.”[84] Even more optimistic was the *Morning Oregonian* front-page: “Plea Not in Vain—America Wins Victory at Russian Court.”[85] Coverage in the *Washington Post* emphasized the unexpected nature of the result in light of Russia’s previous recalcitrance. “This is the first time the Russian authorities have not brusquely declined to entertain American representations upon this question,” the *Post* observed.[86] Roosevelt could rest on this favorable news for now and hold off on declassifying the State Department correspondence until an even more opportune moment. As for Jacob Schiff, he remained resolute in his support for the Japanese and helped arrange additional loans to finance their forces.[87]

* * *

Two days after Ambassador McCormick shared with John Hay the mollifying language from the Russian authorities, McCormick wrote Hay unofficially in order to communicate with total candor. “I have something to add to my dispatch,” McCormick informed him, continuing ominously, “I thought it best not to include what I have to say in my official note.” The ambassador related how he had personally conversed with the Russian foreign minister, Count Lamsdorff, who had been unrestrained in his criticism of Jewry. As McCormick now paraphrased it for Hay, Lamsdorff considered Jews a “veritable plague” who “exploited the Russian peasant” through usury. This Jewish profiteering explained why “the feeling against the Israelite in the lower social stratum was most bitter,” said Lamsdorff. He insisted that “this feeling had to be reckoned with”—in other words, the Russian government was obliged to “protect the peasants” from rapacious Jews. This was the same antisemitic canard that the Russian ambassador to the United States, Count Arthur Cassini, had peddled to the American press after the Kishinev pogrom: Jews invited persecution through their own predatory behavior.[88]

Ambassador McCormick's missive to Hay is striking because he made plain that he found Lamsdorff's indictment of Russian Jews to be credible. McCormick relayed to Hay that Cecil Spring Rice—the chargé d'affaires at the British Embassy in St. Petersburg—had "an example of this leech-like exploitation." Spring Rice described a habit among "the shrewder Jews" who would approach Russian peasants en route to market where the peasants planned to sell produce from their farms. The Jews, purportedly, offered the peasants prices below what the produce would fetch at market, which the "stupid thriftless" peasants tended to accept. "This example goes to explain the feeling existing throughout Russia towards the more thrifty Israelite," McCormick told Hay.[89]

As it happens, Spring Rice—whose first diplomatic assignment twenty years earlier had been in Washington—enjoyed warm relationships with prominent Americans. McCormick's letter to Hay described Spring Rice as "a gentleman who is a friend of yours as well as of mine … who was long enough in Washington to have made many friends there, and among them, President Roosevelt."[90] In fact, Roosevelt and Spring Rice had known one another even before either of them landed in Washington. They were in their twenties when they first met as fellow passengers on a transatlantic ship. By the time the ocean liner docked in England, Spring Rice had accepted Roosevelt's offer to serve as the best man at his wedding.[91] It is unsurprising that Roosevelt's social circle included friends who lacked his own relative liberality toward Jews, given the prevalence of antisemitism among the elite classes.

Ambassador McCormick, for his part, not only took Spring Rice at his word about Jewish trickery but also trusted Russian officials in their besmirchment of Jews as radicals. The ambassador conveyed to John Hay in his foregoing letter, "I learned from Minister Plehve some months before his tragic taking off … that 70% of the Socialists in Russia are Jews." McCormick credulously regurgitated Plehve's antisemitic talking points for Hay: "The stringent passport regulations are directed mainly against the German and Polish Jew, who are the most violent propagandists of the doctrine of socialism in its most extreme form." Here was an American ambassador willing to uncritically believe the worst about a persecuted minority within Russian borders.[92]

Even so, McCormick was skeptical that Russia could subjugate Jews in perpetuity, and in his letter he ultimately walked himself back to a position more in accord with official State Department policy, telling Hay, "The anti-Jewish laws, the passport system itself, and the censorship of the press, are but a part of the rotten underpinning of a system which, in my judgment, must soon give way under the influence" of international censure. McCormick's letter, then, amounted to a mixed conclusion: the persecution of Russian Jews had some justification behind it, and yet Russia's antisemitic agenda was bound to yield in the face of foreign pressure.[93]

* * *

As the election neared, Jewish newspapers increasingly spilled ink about Roosevelt. The Republican-leaning *Reform Advocate* in Chicago reprinted an editorial that maintained, "Jews would be churlish ingrates if they did not recognize the efforts that the United States continues to put forward on behalf of their race." Recalling TR's role in the Romanian Note, the Kishinev Petition, and now the Passport Question, the writer declared, "We hail President Roosevelt as the nearest approach to the political knight-errant that exists in the latter-day world." The editorial also approvingly noted that another paper dubbed Roosevelt "The New Moses."[94]

TR received comparably favorable coverage in *Menorah*, which billed itself "a monthly magazine for the Jewish home." A Jewish undergraduate at Harvard named Joseph Lebowich authored a piece for *Menorah* entitled "Theodore Roosevelt and the Jews." Lebowich reminded readers of the iconic stories connecting Roosevelt to Jewry, like TR's provision of a Jewish police detail for an antisemitic speaker. Even as Lebowich targeted Jewish voters in a Jewish periodical, he praised the president for rejecting identity politics: "In his dealing with the citizens of Jewish faith or race, President Roosevelt has always treated them not as Jews but as citizens of the United States." Lebowich contrasted TR with the "unscrupulous politicians of our country" who "split the voters into sects and classes."[95]

Few would guess that a sitting president in the midst of a reelection campaign would have time to read a piece in an obscure ethnic periodical authored by a college student. And yet Roosevelt enthusiastically wrote Oscar Straus, "I like that article by Mr. Lebowich. Do you know him? If so, I wish you would tell him how much I appreciate it—and add that I wish he had been among the Harvard men in my regiment," referring to the Rough Riders.[96]

The president especially appreciated Lebowich's argument that Rooseveltian politics were based on a common civic identity as Americans rather than a plurality of religious identities as Jews, Protestants, and Catholics. "I am particularly pleased with the way he has grasped exactly what my attitude is," Roosevelt remarked. Whereas "various Democratic papers" have "endeavored to show that I have appealed to the Jew vote, the Catholic vote, etc.," in reality—or, at least, in the president's self-perception—he had sought to "make it evident that each is to have a square deal, no more and no less," irrespective of religious background. Roosevelt predicted that in the fullness of time "there will be presidents of Jewish faith, presidents of Catholic faith," and his stated aspiration was to behave himself just as he hoped future Jewish or Catholic presidents would behave toward their fellow citizens—namely, "without regard to the several creeds they profess or the several lands from which their ancestors have sprung."[97] Lebowich and Roosevelt alike may have been enamored of the idea that America could boast an identity-neutral civic sphere, but that was more of a comforting conceit than a lived reality. Jewish voters cared about Jewish issues, and politicians like Roosevelt courted them accordingly.

Straus was thrilled to receive the president's note. "I thank you for your splendid letter, which I know expresses the innermost feelings of your heart," he gushed. Straus shared that he had relayed Roosevelt's approval directly to Lebowich, which would surely "be a source of great pride and gratification to him."[98]

Not all commentary in the Jewish press was as positive as Lebowich's. The Democratic-leaning *Hebrew Standard* in New York published a guest column from a *New York Times* staffer named Louis Wiley, who derided Roosevelt's recent diplomatic play with Russia as an election-year stunt. "Not until June 1904, on the eve of the presidential campaign, did President Roosevelt begin any action in the matter," Wiley sneered. Prior to election season, the Roosevelt administration had assumed a posture of "utter indifference" as "clearly demonstrated by the fact that it remained silent until after the passage of the second Goldfogle resolution in April 1904." Wiley added, "President Roosevelt should have taken the initiative—that was his privilege and his duty. At least, he might have made some effort when Representative Goldfogle first agitated the matter in Congress in 1902. Yet not a line of diplomatic correspondence between Washington and St. Petersburg, not an effort of any kind was made by the administration tending to correct the abuse." Accusing Roosevelt and the Republican Party of "insincerity," Wiley belittled the president's foreign policy with Russia as "comic-tragic performance."[99]

The very day this editorial appeared, in late October, the Democratic nominee Alton Parker made a surprise appearance on the Lower East Side. He surfaced at a Yiddish theater to see a Judaized rendition of *King Lear*, in tow with local Tammany leaders and Congressman Goldfogle. After the show, Parker enjoyed a meal at Lorber's, a nearby haunt on Grand Street. His dining party included the play's lead actor, some East Side politicos, and a local rabbi who ran a settlement house.[100]

Notwithstanding Parker's late-stage bid for the East Side vote, the conciliatory word from St. Petersburg about passports had been a significant win for the president, and now his administration optimized its impact for his campaign. The Department of State declassified Secretary Hay's July cable to Ambassador McCormick just six days before Americans headed to the polls. The "psychological moment" had finally arrived. Excerpts from the cable appeared in newspapers nationwide.[101] The press projected an air of certainty about an imminent change in Russian policy—articles featured headlines like "Russia Will Favor Jews" and "American Jews to Be Protected."[102]

* * *

Roosevelt delivered a crushing blow to his opponent on election day. His victory of nearly twenty percentage points was the largest in almost a century and translated to a 336-to-140 margin in the Electoral College. Although he lost the South, the president triumphed in the North and West in an unbroken wave stretching from Maine to California.

His success with Jewish voters was, frankly, astounding. On the Lower East Side—solidly Democratic terrain—Roosevelt didn't merely outperform conventional Republican results. He actually *won* the East Side. His victory in that neighborhood, slim as it was, blew away McKinley's showing four years earlier. The Lower East Side's sixteenth assembly district is instructive. That district was overwhelmingly Jewish and reliably Democratic. Among its residents who cast ballots for either major party in 1900, McKinley lost by sixteen points. But in 1904, Roosevelt narrowly edged out his opponent on that same turf by a quarter percent. Another measure of TR's popularity throughout the Lower East Side was his vote count relative to down-ballot Republicans. There were twelve such GOP candidates, running for everything from governor to assemblyman; in East Side districts, Roosevelt outran them all.[103]

Even as TR surpassed these other Republican office-seekers, they benefitted immensely from his coattails. Races that would normally result in Democratic landslides were suddenly competitive. Democrat Henry Goldfogle, for instance, represented the Lower East Side in Congress for many terms. Between 1900 and 1910, Goldfogle consistently dominated his Republican opponent by an impressive average of nearly thirty points—except in 1904. With Roosevelt at the top of the ballot that year, Goldfogle nearly lost his seat as his usual margin of victory plummeted to a measly 2 percent.[104] Meanwhile, the aforementioned sixteenth assembly district—which had unfailingly sent a Democrat to the New York legislature in annual elections for three decades—saw the Republican candidate for the statehouse pull off a stunning upset.[105] Roosevelt had remade the political map with Jewish voters, and the Republican Party at large was reaping the rewards.

Members of his Jewish kitchen cabinet sent words of congratulations. After receiving a telegram from Jacob Schiff, Roosevelt replied, "I understand to the full all that you have done in this election and am very grateful for it."[106] Of course Oscar Straus was elated, confessing to the president, "It has required some time for me to get over the ecstasy of my delight upon the result." He credited Roosevelt's reelection to ordinary Americans rather than to the elite. "It was not the frock-tail gentry, but the plain people who, uninfluenced by Democratic bogies, best understood you," Straus crowed.[107]

Even elements of the Jewish press that had chided Roosevelt now conceded that his historic triumph was attributable to his positive qualities. The *Hebrew Standard* acknowledged that the "enviable and widespread personal popularity of the president" accounted for "the great disintegration of the Democratic Party." Roosevelt may not have been the paper's preferred candidate, but the *Hebrew Standard* nevertheless granted, "The future of a great country lies in the hands of a great man."[108] Similarly, the *B'nai B'rith Messenger* in Los Angeles—which had given a platform to anti-Roosevelt voices during the campaign—now offered, "We are quite satisfied as to the people's choice."[109]

* * *

In the wake of Roosevelt's victory, his detractors surely anticipated that the president would take the path of least resistance on the world stage and ease off St. Petersburg. There was, after all, truth in the critique that he turned up the pressure on Russia only in the heat of campaign season. And Roosevelt wasn't worried about facing voters again—he had announced on election night that his second term would be his last (which wasn't a constitutional requirement, as presidential term limits were still a half-century in the offing). What's more, the Russian foreign minister had assured Ambassador McCormick that passport reform was under consideration, a revelation that could provide Roosevelt a solid pretext to relent on the issue. And yet as the president toiled on drafts of his State of the Union message, he was determined to fulminate against Russia for its treatment of both American and Russian Jews, even at the risk of alienating the Russian government.

State of the Union messages in that era were sent in writing to Congress rather than spoken aloud at the Capitol. Roosevelt summoned Oscar Straus and select others to a dinner at the White House to discuss the contents of his forthcoming message. After the meal, the party adjourned to the president's private study where he reached into a desk drawer and pulled out a draft of various sections of his State of the Union. He turned to Straus for advice on the Jewish-related portions. Roosevelt also shared with the group his frustration that Russia so readily analogized pogroms to racial lynchings in the American South. TR continued to erroneously insist that there were far more pogrom victims. As Straus later recalled, "He argued that the lynchings were comparatively few, and, though bad enough, were nothing compared to the wholesale murder in cold blood under official sanction and perhaps instigation." Roosevelt further remarked that he, unlike the czar, was actually willing to engage foreigners about the shameful propagation of violence in his own country and furnished an example: when a collection of British citizens sent Roosevelt a petition about lynching, he accepted it and issued a reply denouncing the practice.[110]

The State of the Union, in its final form, was unequivocally disparaging of Russia. The president championed "the right for our Jewish fellow-citizens to receive passports and travel through Russian territory." Deriding Russia's policy as "unjust and irritating," Roosevelt insisted there weren't countervailing benefits that could plausibly outweigh the diplomatic animosity Russia was fomenting: "No conceivable good is accomplished by it." So long as American Jews were denied free passage into Russia "merely on racial and religious grounds," the administration was "entitled to protest."[111]

TR didn't limit his censure of the Russians to their visa policy. He also defended his decision to forward the Kishinev Petition to St. Petersburg. "There are … cases in which, while our own interests are not greatly involved, strong appeal is made to our sympathies," he affirmed. Casting aside the diplomatic orthodoxy that prohibited intrusion into another nation's internal affairs, Roosevelt argued that "there are occasional crimes committed on so vast a scale and of such peculiar horror" that it becomes "our manifest duty … to show our disapproval." He cited the "massacre of the Jews in Kishinev" as just such an atrocity. The president effectively acknowledged the Russian retort that a hypocritical America was bedeviled by lynchings—he conceded that the United States suffered from "brutal lawlessness and violent race prejudices here at home."[112] But Roosevelt would not let the scourge of racialized terror within America's borders muzzle his protest against evil perpetrated beyond them.

His allies in the Jewish community naturally celebrated the president's tough-minded treatment of Russia in his State of the Union. The *Reform Advocate*, edited by a Jewish Republican, contrasted Jewry's history of transient wandering with the permanent homeland that Roosevelt's America provided. "Mr. Roosevelt's last message bears testimony to the fact that we are not homeless waifs," the paper pronounced, "but that the Jew in America is a Jewish American and as such has a flag and a country that will speak for him."[113] Meanwhile, B'nai B'rith president Simon Wolf published an editorial celebrating the State of the Union, which "most gloriously vindicated" the government's defense of American Jewry against Russian discrimination. Wolf juxtaposed TR's principled stance with the allegedly self-serving machinations of the president's critics, lamenting how the "Passport Question unfortunately has been made the shuttle-cock by scheming politicians for their own selfish ends"—a veiled reference, no doubt, to Goldfogle and his supporters in Congress.[114]

Roosevelt wasn't the first American president to deem the Passport Question worthy of space in the State of the Union. Chester Arthur in 1883 and Grover Cleveland in 1895 had both raised the issue in their annual messages. Even so, the *New York Times* reported that foreign envoys in Washington were abuzz about Roosevelt's blunt reproach of Russia, which was "amazing" in its departure from the international norms that prevailed in European capitals. But this was Washington, not Vienna or Berlin; Old World customs did not rule American politics. One unnamed diplomat told the *New York Times* that the European powers had "come to regard the United States as entitled to exceptional toleration in matters of this kind." According to the *Times*, foreign emissaries in Washington were speculating that St. Petersburg would likely refuse to amend its passport policy after Roosevelt admonished Russia so publicly.[115] The *Dallas Morning News* similarly predicted, “Roosevelt’s tart reference to Russia … will be received with much distaste at the court of the czar.”[116]

One measure of dissatisfaction by the Russian government was the defensive reaction of *Novoe Vreyma* (New Time), a semiofficial newspaper in St. Petersburg that predictably lampooned the United States for its own raft of extralegal killings. The paper tallied the lynching of thirty-two Blacks in America over the prior seven months. *Novoe Vreyma* suggested that Russia’s objection to the admission of American Jews was rendered in the same spirit that “the people and government of Louisiana” would surely refuse “to be overrun by the dark races of Russia.”[117]

Given that Russia had recently provided assurances to Ambassador McCormick about passport reform, it is striking that Roosevelt would take such a provocative stand. The president surely felt emboldened by the steady stream of headlines about Japan’s tenacious siege of Port Arthur in its war against Russia. With Russia in a weakened condition and still in need of financing, Roosevelt had seized an opportunity to apply pressure on Jewish issues. The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* reported that “military and naval disasters” would likely force Russia’s hand on passport reform. St. Petersburg was facing a reality that “the great Jewish bankers in the countries where Russia must borrow money” would persevere in their favoritism toward Japan so long as Russia persisted in its hostility against Jews. If the Passport Question was resolved to the satisfaction of Jewry, “at least one good will have resulted from the war,” the *Plain Dealer* reasoned. But then the paper sounded a note of caution, recalling that Russia had a penchant for “devious political and diplomatic ways.”[118]

Indeed, the unreliability of Russian diplomacy combined with Russia’s increasingly perilous war footing meant that the situation was unpredictable. No one could be certain what unintended effects the bombardment of a port in the Far East would have for Jews thousands of miles away. Maybe a newly vulnerable Russia would succumb to the exigencies of the moment and offer Jews—foreign and native alike—the dignity of equal standing with Gentiles. Or perhaps a nation long steeped in antisemitism would, in a time of crisis, plunge itself deeper into the abyss of Jew-hatred.

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5

PEACE AT PORTSMOUTH

By the thousands, eager spectators descended on Washington to witness the inauguration of Theodore Roosevelt. They spent the morning of March 4, 1905, under a canopy of clouds that threatened rain, but as the noon hour approached so did the sunlight. Roosevelt had sufficient opportunity to savor his two-mile journey from the White House to the Capitol—after all, his horse-drawn carriage was escorted by slow-moving Civil War veterans "who were fast approaching the Scripture limit of life," one reporter remarked. A steady wind ensured that the countless American flags lining the route down Pennsylvania Avenue were blowing with dutiful enthusiasm.[1]

Outside the east wing of the Capitol, an immense horde awaited the president. Those sufficiently agile to climb trees enjoyed superior vantage points to the throngs below. When Roosevelt finally emerged on the dais, the mass of onlookers erupted with excitement. A journalist recorded, "The shouting began, swelling into a roar like Niagara, rising to cyclonic effects." Roosevelt was accompanied by esteemed personages from across the federal government—members of Congress, justices of the Supreme Court, leaders of the navy and army—as well as foreign dignitaries. Per tradition, the chief justice administered the presidential oath of office upon a Bible. Once Roosevelt finished reciting the words prescribed by the Constitution, he touched his lips to the holy book and commenced his inaugural address.[2]

Nearly four years earlier, Roosevelt had been hastily sworn into office in a parlor in Buffalo, amid the fright and grief of McKinley’s assassination.[3] Now TR stood on the steps of the Capitol before an adoring multitude, not as a deputy who had become head of state by default but as the winner of the presidency in his own right. Top of mind for the newly emboldened Roosevelt was America’s emerging place in the global arena. “We have become a great nation,” he declared to the crowd, “forced by the fact of its greatness into relations with the other nations of the earth, and we must behave as beseems a people with such responsibilities.”[4] Roosevelt and the country alike had reached remarkable heights of power despite their relative youth. Jews on both sides of the Atlantic wondered how he would deploy that power on the world stage.

* * *

TR wasted little time advancing his agenda overseas. Within a week of the inaugural festivities, he redoubled his efforts to serve as peacemaker between the warring Russians and Japanese. Roosevelt’s motivations for seeking a negotiated peace were complex. When the conflict had begun in February 1904, the president and the American public at large favored Japan. He had little regard for a czarist regime that oppressed its people at home and was deceitful in its diplomacy abroad.[5] Unsurprisingly, Roosevelt’s closest Jewish advisor, Oscar Straus, had been of similar mind. “Japan is certainly battling on the side of civilization,” Straus wrote Roosevelt as the war commenced. “May wisdom and victory be on her side.”[6]

Japan’s superiority in troop training, weapons technology, and intelligence gathering all redounded to Russia’s detriment.[7] Roosevelt thrilled to Japan’s surprising string of successes early in the war. But by late 1904, the president’s delight morphed into dismay. The Japanese seemed poised to unconditionally crush Russia and dominate the Far East—and not, Roosevelt feared, in a manner conducive to American interests. He expressed to the British ambassador in St. Petersburg his worry that Japan privately drew no distinctions between Russians and Americans, all of whom the Japanese supposedly considered “white devils inferior to themselves.”[8] If Roosevelt could mediate an end to the war before Russia’s total defeat, he might well secure peace terms ensuring a balance of power in the Far East, one that would benefit America’s own ambitions in the region.[9] And beyond the level of pragmatic geopolitics, the president genuinely believed that war was an evil to be truncated, whenever possible. As he later reflected about the Russo-Japanese War in his autobiography, “The losses of life and of treasure were frightful.”[10] True, this was the same Roosevelt who had lusted for blood in Cuba. But TR had a talent for effortlessly inhabiting a contradiction.

* * *

On March 10, Roosevelt instructed his secretary of state, John Hay, to make discreet overtures to the belligerent parties indicating that the American president was willing to broker a peace. Both Russia and Japan, exhausted by war but hamstrung by pride, suffered from an inertia that threatened to prolong the bloodshed.[11] The Japanese enjoyed the upper hand and wanted to cease hostilities in theory, but only on one-sided terms that Russia was destined to reject. Meanwhile, Russia seemed determined to carry on a losing struggle; such was the arrogance of an autocracy that believed itself immune from facts on the ground. “Did you ever know anything more pitiable than the condition of the Russian despotism?” Roosevelt asked Hay. “The czar is a preposterous little creature.” TR further conveyed his frustration that Czar Nicholas was unwilling to free himself from a quagmire of his own making. “He has been unable to make war, and he is now unable to make peace,” the president lamented.[12]

The Japanese eventually signaled their amenability to Roosevelt’s involvement in late April. They wanted to conduct any peace negotiations with Russia directly, but they were open to TR’s help in clearing what would surely be a difficult path to even reach the bargaining table in the first place.[13] With Japan on board, Roosevelt concentrated his efforts on coaxing Russia toward the same end. The czarist regime proved obstinate, however. The Russians were letting their vainglory override their material interests, for they could hardly afford to fight much longer.

Russia was then enduring not only an embarrassing succession of military defeats but significant upheaval at home. Earlier that year in St. Petersburg, a peaceful demonstration calling for labor reforms ended with Russian troops firing into the crowd, killing 130 people. That massacre—known as "Bloody Sunday"—damaged the czar's standing with the Russian populace and touched off months of domestic unrest.[14] Russia's internal strife swept diverse segments of society, from peasants to professionals and from cityside to countryside. Waves of worker strikes resulted in deadly clashes between protestors and soldiers. Radicals orchestrated political assassinations, including the murder of a high-ranking official in the czar's own family. Some faction of the Russian navy even began whispering about inciting a mutiny. The unrest wasn't centrally organized; the fragmented nature of the resistance allowed the czar to maintain power for the time being. But he was badly weakened, and it was unclear how much longer his grip on Russia would hold. (Lenin would later refer to the 1905 tumult as the "dress rehearsal" that presaged the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.[15])

Russia's lackluster military performance against Japan exacerbated the rebellion within Russian borders. In symbolic terms, the Russian losses in the Far East epitomized the ineptitude and corruption of the czar's autocracy; in practical terms, the war exacted a severe toll on the Russian economy.[16] Still, the czar blindly pushed forward in his conflict with Japan—until a devastating naval loss in late May, combined with considerable cajoling from the Roosevelt administration, finally brought Russia to the table.[17]

Oscar Straus, with his characteristically effusive prose, congratulated TR for this "recent triumph in that humanitarian diplomacy," which had sealed Roosevelt's stature as "the world's greatest peacemaker."[18] The president knew, though, that the difficult work had only just begun. Simply getting the two parties to agree on a city for negotiations was proving onerous. "I have been having a curious time," Roosevelt told Straus. "I have been endeavoring to get Russia and Japan to go to The Hague. Curiously enough, Russia is most reluctant and Japan positively refuses."[19] Both sides were, however, willing to accept Washington, DC. Roosevelt personally harbored doubts about Washington on account of the heat that engulfed the American capital every summer. He began considering New England coastal communities, which could offer the twin benefits of balmy weather and relative seclusion. Posh locales like Bar Harbor and Newport held strong appeal, but it was the picturesque town of Portsmouth on the New Hampshire shoreline that won the honors of playing host.[20] Neither Russia nor Roosevelt yet knew that the Portsmouth conference, for all its focus on the Far East, would present an unexpected opportunity for American Jews to confront Russian officials face-to-face about the pernicious antisemitism that found free rein under czarist rule.

* * *

In the midst of these preparations, Secretary Hay's health rapidly deteriorated. His ultimate fate was approaching faster than anyone realized or wanted to believe. On July 1, with the peace conference mere weeks away, John Hay took his final breath.[21]

American Jews in particular felt the loss of a statesman whose efforts on the Romanian Note and Kishinev Petition they wouldn't soon forget. That Hay had only begrudgingly participated in the latter initiative was readily overlooked in the wake of his death. It is a striking fact that the only memorial service in New York honoring Hay took place at a Jewish house of worship, on the Lower East Side. Although temperatures in the city that day reached 87° Fahrenheit, with the humidity lending the air a "sultry" quality, Jews packed tightly into the Romanian synagogue on Rivington Street. Women and children sat in the balcony, which featured an American flag adorned with black streamers, as befitting a mourning ceremony. The men, gathered below, uniformly wore black ties. Attendees who had never met Secretary Hay openly wept as if a beloved family member had passed.[22]

The service was late to begin owing to the delayed arrival of Henry Goldfogle, the Jewish congressman who represented the district. For an interminable hour, the crush of people in the synagogue waited in the heat. Finally Goldfogle surfaced, and he delivered an address that notably set aside his partisan differences with Republicans. Although he had a history of accusing the Roosevelt administration of feckless disregard for Russian Jewry, Goldfogle now saw fit to praise not just the late secretary but the sitting president as well. “With Theodore Roosevelt, in calling attention to the indignation of Americans at the Russian outrages on the Jews, [John Hay] made himself heard even in darkest Russia,” Goldfogle affirmed.[23] That same day a similar service was held to commemorate Hay in a Philadelphia synagogue.[24] And the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations, which spanned both the United States and Canada, wired a telegram of condolence to Hay’s widow.[25]

* * *

The new head of B’nai B’rith, Adolf Kraus, was making his own arrangements in advance of the peace conference. Kraus was politically adept—he had managed a successful mayoral campaign in Chicago—and he saw in Portsmouth a potential forum to champion the cause of Russia’s Jews.[26] Perhaps the embattled Russian regime, reeling from military defeat and internal discord, could be persuaded in this moment of crisis to relent in its persecution of Jewry. Russia was dispatching one of its leading officials, Count Sergei Witte, to America for negotiations with the Japanese. Witte was considered a reformer, at least by Russian standards. And his wife, a convert to Christianity, had originally been Jewish.[27] Maybe he would agree to meet with a contingent of American Jews during his stay in New Hampshire about what was often called “the Jewish Question.” This phrase referred to debates in various European nations about whether their Jewish residents should remain consigned to second-class citizenship. By Roosevelt’s day, many European countries (but certainly not Russia) had favorably answered the Jewish Question with “emancipation,” or the removal of civil disabilities imposed on their Jewish subjects. If American Jews could convince Witte of emancipation’s merits, then perhaps Witte in turn could convince the czar.

Kraus contacted a Russian consul to see whether such a meeting could be scheduled.[28] Count Witte was, in fact, eager to meet with representatives of the Jewish community. This would be a strategic play on Witte's part. He believed that America's Jews had prejudiced their fellow citizens against Russia—with real consequences. The broad antipathy to Russia within the United States meant that Japan had been able to float war bonds on the American market while Russia could not. If negotiations in Portsmouth failed and the conflict dragged on, Witte hoped that a meeting with Jewish leaders would improve Russia's image in the United States and thereby enhance the Russian war effort. He seemed to think that his optics campaign in America wouldn't necessarily result in U.S. banks' financing Russian forces—that was too quixotic—but he might achieve the more attainable goal of leading American investors to cut off their financial support for Japan. It would take real work, Witte recognized, to reverse Russia's diminished standing.[29]

When word came that Witte was amenable, Kraus began assembling a delegation of Jews to convene with the Russian statesman. Naturally, Kraus solicited Jacob Schiff, the de facto spokesman for American Jewry and an ally of the president's. Schiff, however, had reservations. "I have been urged to meet Mr. Witte and Baron Rosen [the Russian Ambassador to the United States] to discuss with them Jewish affairs, but I have fought shy of them," Schiff privately told the publisher of a Jewish newspaper. "First, because I know it can do no good; and secondly, because I do not wish to have it said that I went to discuss Russian finance with Mr. Witte."[30] Schiff had been the single-most powerful force stonewalling Russia's bid to secure war funds, and he was hardly inclined to lend his ear to the pleas of a country that itself remained deaf to the lamentations of its Jewish inhabitants. But the meeting with Witte was moving ahead either way, and Schiff would ultimately put aside his misgivings to participate.

Three others were tapped for the occasion. Of course, Oscar Straus would be part of the deputation. He was the most politically powerful Jew in America thanks to his close relationship with Roosevelt. And by dint of Straus's ambassadorial experience, he possessed a diplomatic finesse that Schiff hadn't seemed to cultivate in his career as a banker. Joining them was Adolph Lewisohn, whose profile was similar to Schiff's: a German-born New Yorker who had acquired a large fortune and was active in philanthropy.[31] Rounding out the party was the brilliantly named Isaac Newton Seligman. The Seligmans, among the wealthiest and best-connected Jewish families in the country, enjoyed longstanding ties to TR.[32] Although the Roosevelt administration had no official role in the pending encounter between Witte and this Jewish cohort, the president was keen to be discreetly involved from a distance. And so Roosevelt met with Straus and Seligman in advance of the conference, calling on them to keep him apprised of developments in Portsmouth.[33]

* * *

As Count Witte's ship approached New York, he found that a cadre of reporters and onlookers hadn't been content to wait on shore for his arrival and instead filled a "whole flotilla of small vessels" to greet him in the waters. He could not have been difficult for them to spot—Witte had a massive frame, six feet six inches with broad shoulders. Once docked, Witte rode to the city's finest hotel, the St. Regis, where he was led to a lavish suite that boasted a sizable Russian flag draped from his balcony for the occasion. He also enjoyed the protection of the Secret Service, at Roosevelt's behest. The Russian statesman, who was to have a brief stay in New York before heading north, saw his limited time in the city as an initial opportunity to begin a strategic campaign to win over public opinion. On his second day in New York, Witte traveled to the Lower East Side—or "the Jewish ghetto," as Witte called it—where he conversed in Russian with some of the Jewish immigrants there. Witte later explained in his memoirs that, "in view of the considerable influence of the Jews on the press and on other aspects of American life," he had felt it was imperative that he not "exhibit any hostility toward them."[34]

He then took the train to Oyster Bay to see Roosevelt at his Sagamore Hill estate, which Witte thought "looked like an ordinary summer house of a burgher of small means." Witte was even less impressed by the meal inside. "The luncheon was more than simple and, for a European, almost indigestible," he later complained. According to Witte, Roosevelt was an apt representative of his country in culinary matters: "I noticed that, generally speaking, people ate very poorly in America." Although Witte came from a nation maligned on the world stage for its barbarity, he was offended by the lack of tablecloths and wine at TR's lunch. The president used the visit to press Witte into considering treaty terms that the Japanese would find acceptable, an early indicator that Roosevelt—though not formally part of the negotiations—would exercise clout as they proceeded.[35]

* * *

When the delegations from Japan and Russia surfaced in Portsmouth several days later, this sleepy seaside village of colonial homes and leafy streets came alive.[36] Onlookers packed the roadsides to catch a glimpse of the diplomats as they rode in open buggies down a processional route that was festooned with banners and flags. New Hampshire state troops, bedecked in blue and yellow, kept the throngs at bay. Spectators cheered the Russian and Japanese envoys alike; Witte repaid the honor by repeatedly lifting his silk hat. The parties disembarked at the courthouse where the governor ceremoniously welcomed them. At the expense of the American taxpayer, the dignitaries stayed at the Wentworth, a luxury hotel that exuded opulence. The Japanese took the elevator to their suites, whereas the Russians opted to labor up the stairs—perhaps a fitting metaphor given that the negotiations ahead would be more difficult for the Russians, whose bargaining position was far weaker.[37]

Portsmouth didn't technically host the bilateral meetings between the delegations. Every day, the parties would travel just across the Piscataqua River to Maine where the U.S. Navy maintained a facility outfitted with communications infrastructure that would enable the diplomats to easily cable Tokyo and St. Petersburg. The American officials playing host undertook extensive efforts to ensure that the daily cuisine was nothing less than sumptuous. But Witte remained underwhelmed, confining himself to a meager diet of vegetables and grains.[38] "It is highly dangerous to eat the ordinary food which is served in America," Witte later reflected. "I have arrived at the conclusion that Americans have no culinary taste and that they can eat almost anything that comes in their way, even if it is not fresh."[39] When a Japanese negotiator fell ill during the peace talks, Witte blamed the food. Nor was Witte terribly pleased with the Wentworth's accommodations, the hotel's grandeur notwithstanding. For one, the light in his room was disagreeable to his eyes. And when he tried to squeeze his sizable body into the bathtub, Witte twisted his ankle in the process.[40]

FIGURE. 5.1. Sergei Witte outside the Wentworth. *Source*: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

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Reporters had poured into Portsmouth from across the country and around the world: London, Paris, Frankfurt, Rome, and Tokyo.[41] On his fifth day in town, Count Witte finally sat down for an extended interview with a newspaper, giving an exclusive to the *Boston Globe* during a break in the peace talks. Witte's cadence of speech was "animated" yet "deliberate" as he shared strikingly frank views about Jewish people. "The Jews in America possess great influence and have quite naturally used that influence to destroy American sympathy [for Russia], to do all that is possible to enlist sympathy for the Japanese," he griped. Witte must have realized that he sounded conspiratorial and even antisemitic because he then quickly hedged, "I do not say this with any bitterness." Despite Witte's self-directed resolution to present a friendlier face to Jews, it appears he could not help but peddle the hackneyed conceit of the Jew as duplicitous puppet-master.[42]

Witte utilized his interview with the *Globe* to reiterate the Russian sentiment expressed during the Kishinev affair: external interference into internal matters was beyond the pale—in both senses. He conveyed that the "Jewish Question" was strictly a "domestic matter that must be dealt with by Russia herself" and lay outside "the domain of international discussion." To buttress his point, Witte relied upon the popular Russian tactic of referencing race-based lynching in the United States. He contended, "Every country has its own great questions to settle that can only be settled by itself. I need only refer by way of illustration to the negro in America." He then curtailed his commentary by suggesting that it was wise for him not to say too much in advance of his meeting with the Jewish leaders. But Witte had said plenty already.[43]

⁂

That same day, members of the Jewish contingent turned up in Portsmouth.[44] Oscar Straus spoke to the press upon arrival and called for the repeal of hundreds of discriminatory Russian laws targeting Jews. He evoked the Declaration of Independence in his remarks: “We will ask M. Witte that the Jews in Russia be accorded the same right to pursue life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness that others in that country have.” (The “M.” before Witte meant “Monsieur,” a nod to French as the language of diplomacy.) Straus then added, “This is what we ask. No more, no less, to use President Roosevelt’s effective phrase.” He was referencing Roosevelt’s famous line that everyone merits “a square deal, because he is entitled to no more and should receive no less.”[45] Straus also sought to preempt speculation in the press that he was there to purchase civil rights for Russian Jews in exchange for war loans. “This is [in] no way involved with any financial question,” he clarified. “It is purely and simply a question of humanity.”[46]

Loans were indeed not on the agenda, but the *New York Times* discerned that the topic couldn’t have been far from Witte’s mind. “When this war began and [Russia] turned to the financial centers for money,” the *Times* recounted, “she found every Jewish banking house in the world closed to her.” Consequently, a Russian regime that just two years prior had refused to accept a petition sent by an American president would now subject itself to a remonstrance by American citizens. It was an “extraordinary spectacle,” proclaimed the *Times*.[47] To be sure, no explicit quid pro quo was on the table, but many observers thought that if the Russians made moves toward Jewish emancipation, their financial troubles might well ease.

* * *

Witte received his Jewish visitors in his room at the Wentworth Hotel at 8:45 in the evening, joined by the Russian ambassador and Witte’s interpreter. The Jewish delegation revived a line of reasoning that had appeared first in the Romanian Note and then in the Kishinev Petition: the prejudicial treatment of Russian Jews prompted “an influx en masse” of refugees to the United States, rendering the issue international in character.

Therefore, the czar's regime couldn't rightly claim that the Jewish-American representatives before him were "meddling with affairs" internal to Russia. While immigration gave them just cause to state their grievances, they insisted that immigration itself wasn't a viable solution to the Jewish Question. There were too many millions of Russian Jews to simply displace them to other nations. "The Russo-Jewish question must be settled in Russia," they averred.[48]

The Jewish leaders also assured Witte that Russia had nothing to fear from granting civil equality to its Jewish population. After all, Jewish emancipation in France, Germany, and England all demonstrated that once the Jew is granted the full prerogatives of citizenship, he becomes "a lover of his country and supporter of the government." And, of course, in "the United States the Jew has become an ardent American"—so ardent that American Jews of Russian origin were helping rally the U.S. government against their former homeland. The Jewish delegation asserted that "Jewish influence in the United States" was substantial and increasing daily thanks to the arrival of Russian-Jewish refugees. Emphasizing Russia's self-interest, the Jewish representatives urged Witte to consider the detriment to Russia of an icy relationship between the eagle and the bear: "Can it be expected that the influence, which the American Jew is thus gaining upon public opinion, will be exerted to the advantage of the country which systematically degrades his brethren in race and makes their fate almost unendurable?"[49] If Witte worried about Jewish persuasive power in America, then the Jewish delegation was more than happy to leverage his concerns toward their own ends.

Witte, for his part, sought to stake out some middle ground between the typical Russian denial of Jewish persecution and a candid acknowledgement of that reality. He conceded, "Jews in Russia [are] in a very difficult position," yet he still alleged that "the horrors of the Jewish situation in Russia had been presented to the world in a somewhat exaggerated light."[50] Witte also expressed optimism for Russia's Jews thanks to a new development: Czar Nicholas, under pressure from domestic unrest, had recently agreed to institute an assembly—the Duma—that would represent the people's interests. Once the Duma convened, it would likely repeal antisemitic laws, Witte told the Jewish delegation.[51] His prognosis here lacked credibility because the Duma was to exercise merely consultative rather than binding powers, providing a nominal gesture toward liberalism while allowing the czar to preserve absolutism in practice.[52]

The meeting wasn't without its tenser moments. In one instance, Jacob Schiff motioned toward Witte's translator—a Russian national of Jewish faith—and pointedly pressed Witte, "Will you please tell me why you, as a Russian, have full rights in your country while he, also a Russian, has none?"[53] Witte responded with an expression of support for the emancipation of Russian Jews but argued that any progress should be incremental. He conjectured that the "immediate and complete removal of their legal disabilities would, in my opinion, do them more harm than good" because it would provoke hostility from the Russian people.[54]

Unsurprisingly, that answer didn't satisfy Schiff and the others. They countered that if the Russian populace was going to take umbrage at each piecemeal step toward Jewish liberation, all the better for the regime to implement equality "by one single action." The swift and total emancipation of Jewry would limit Russian hostility to one discrete point in time. Alternatively, Witte's proposal to have emancipation "dragged on through partial measures" would only serve to stoke "anew the irritation" among Russians toward their Jewish neighbors in an endless succession of aggravating reforms.[55]

Jacob Schiff was particularly irked when Witte recommended that American Jews use their supposed clout with their Russian coreligionists to sway them away from revolutionary movements and toward loyalty to the czar. Witte was proceeding from the common view in Russia that its Jewish population comprised dangerous traitors. The reality was that only a small minority of Russian Jews were seditious agitators. Most the czar's Jewish subjects were far too preoccupied with the relentless struggle of daily life; insurrection simply wasn't on their agenda. But Schiff did not reject the allegation that many Russian Jews were subversive of state authority. Instead, he argued that they were justified in their radical bid to create a Russian republic. With an edge in his voice, Schiff asked rhetorically, "Is it not probable that the young men became revolutionists in the hope that a republic will grant them just laws which are denied under the rule of the Emperor?” Witte, in turn, dismissed revolutionary aspirations as quixotic, declaring that the end of the czarist dynasty—the Romanovs—would not materialize in their lifetime. “The Romanovs will rule Russia for at least another hundred years,” he insisted.[56] He was off by about ninety.

Despite some friction—at one point, Schiff pounded his fist on the table—both sides were reasonably cordial.[57] Witte would later recall that Schiff’s stridency was “toned down by the more balanced judgments of the other members,” and he singled out Oscar Straus for making an especially “excellent impression.”[58] In the same spirit, Seligman would describe Count Witte as “a gentleman inspired with broadminded views and having a thorough grasp of the situation.” Even if Witte was disinclined to recognize the full depths of Jewish deprivation, the willingness of a high-ranking Russian official to admit any of it was a breakthrough of sorts. Witte offered to resume his discussion with the Jewish leaders in New York City, after he concluded the peace talks.[59]

* * *

Reporters had been patiently awaiting the reappearance of the Jewish delegation from Witte’s suite, as a meeting that was supposed to take one hour stretched to three. Finally, the Jewish leaders emerged just before midnight. Jacob Schiff gave a mixed statement to the press—he surmised that their conference with Witte “could not well lead to any practical result” for Russian Jewry but nevertheless vaguely anticipated that the “frank exchange of views” on the subject would “bear beneficial consequences” in the fullness of time. Oscar Straus added, “There is nothing more for us to do; our mission is done.”[60]

As with the peace negotiations themselves, Roosevelt was officially uninvolved with the Jewish contingent’s endeavor but still proved an important behind-the-scenes player from Oyster Bay. TR had requested that the Jewish participants keep him updated on their gathering with Witte; three of the five dutifully dashed off letters to the president. Jacob Schiff reconstructed at length the contents of the discussion and requested Roosevelt's input. "We have become so accustomed to look to you, dear Mr. President, for advice and guidance in dealing with the momentous questions which at this time touch the weal of our race," Schiff wrote.[61] Isaac Newton Seligman relayed to Roosevelt that Witte expected—or at least claimed to expect—that the pending Duma in St. Petersburg would institute pro-Jewish reforms. Seligman had his doubts. "The past promises and subsequent non-performances on the part of Russia naturally lead us to feel distrustful, and we have some misgivings as to his utterances," Seligman confessed, even as he acknowledged having a "favorable" opinion of Witte.[62] Meanwhile, the president's most trusted Jewish confidant, Oscar Straus, told Roosevelt that Witte had expressed a preference for "gradual emancipation" and that they in response had demanded "equal rights—no more no less—and without delay."[63]

Roosevelt wanted to personally lend himself to their ongoing cause. But his first priority was coaxing the Japanese and Russians into a peace accord. "I am greatly interested in what you tell me about the Russian Jew question," the president assured Straus, "and will of course do anything I can, subsequent to the peace negotiations being out of the way, as I do not want to complicate the latter."[64] Indeed, Roosevelt would soon find himself frenetically working back channels to ensure that the precarious discussions between the warring parties did not end in failure.[65]

* * *

The Jewish summit with Witte garnered front-page headlines nationwide. From the *Colorado Springs Gazette* to the *Augusta Chronicle*, Americans read about the Jewish leaders who confronted the Russian official over the plight of their embattled coreligionists.[66] The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* declared that the Jewish meeting was "far overshadowing" the peace negotiations.[67] One newspaper correspondent vividly captured the significance of the moment. "Great and dramatic is the spectacle presented tonight," he marveled. "Picture, if you will, the mighty bear, rampant and aggressive, with its teeth so often displayed in harsh snarls … humbled before the much despised Jew."[68] After years of practiced obstinance, Russia was now hearing a humanitarian message, from Jewish lips no less.

Opinions in the mainstream press differed over the meeting's potential to appreciably impact the lives of Russian Jews. The *Idaho Daily Statesman* suggested that Witte would surely "carry home with him some new view of the entire subject" after he had not only conversed with the Jewish delegation but also seen firsthand the flourishing Jewish-American community, a model for what Russian Jewry could become if granted equality.[69] But the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* was less sanguine. That paper derided Witte as irrelevant next to the czar, in whose imperial hands the fate of Russia's Jews ultimately rested. Witte was "not supreme" and consistently "overruled" back home by "his weathercock of a master."[70]

When the Jewish representatives returned from Portsmouth to their respective cities, they tried to strike an optimistic note about the near future in their remarks to journalists. B'nai B'rith president Adolf Kraus, who had initiated the meeting with Witte, announced in Chicago, "Better times are coming for our people," and he predicted that the new Duma would dismantle the country's antisemitic legal code.[71] Meanwhile, Seligman—despite confiding in Roosevelt his wariness of Witte—told the New York press that Witte would relay "our message to the emperor in a convincing way that we are confident will bear fruit."[72] Kraus and Seligman were of course incentivized to publicly depict their encounter with Witte as a promising step forward, lest they preemptively undermine their goals.

Other voices in the Jewish community were less hopeful. The Democrat-leaning *Hebrew Standard* reported skepticism in New York among Russian-Jewish immigrants, who were cautioning that "Witte will promise a great deal" but "he will in reality be able to accomplish little."[73] Jews actually living in Russia were also leery. As the Associated Press wired from St. Petersburg, "Prominent Jews here … are pessimistic regarding the outcome of the promised reforms and have little hope of favorable Jewish legislation from the Duma."[74] Witte's reputation for relative liberality appeared insufficient to outweigh Russia's inveterate Jew-hatred.[75]

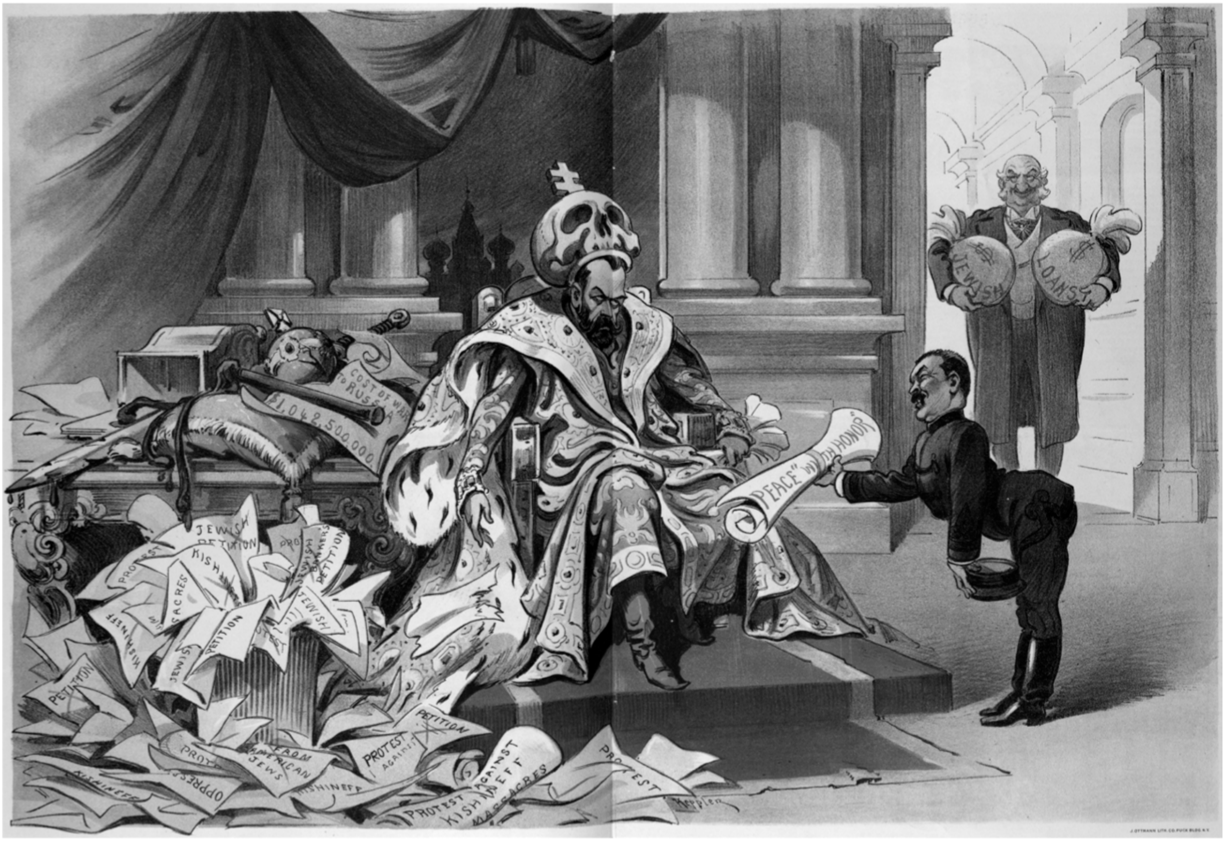
COST OF WAR TO RUSSIA
$1,042,500,000
JEWISH PETITION
KISHINEFF
PROTEST
MASSACRES
JEWISH BANKERS PETITION
JEWISH
PETITION
PROTEST
PETITION
PROTEST AGAINST
FROM AMERICAN JEWS
OPPRESSION
KISHINEFF
PROTEST AGAINST KISHINEFF MASSACRES
PROTEST
"PEACE" WITH HONOR
JEWISH $
LOANS $
Keppler

FIGURE. 5.2. After rejecting the Kishinev Petition, which lays scattered on the ground, a defeated czar is depicted as having to accept “Jewish loans” to compensate for the war’s cost. In reality, Jewish financiers had no desire to offer loans to Russia. *Source*: “Kishineff Must Be Paid For—with Interest,” *Puck*, September 6, 1905.

The members of the Jewish delegation were frustrated that the press frequently depicted their meeting with Witte as exactly what it was not: a trade of loans for Jewish rights.[76] In South Dakota, for instance, the *Aberdeen Daily News* erroneously reported, “The well-known ability of the Jews to drive a good bargain is demonstrated again in the proposition of American bankers of that race to loan the czar all the money he needs, provided he will grant reforms in Russia which will deliver the Jewish race from persecution.” The paper earnestly “hoped that the bankers will succeed in driving their bargain.”[77] Although intended as a compliment, this commentary reinforced tropes about Jews as cunning moneylenders.

Oscar Straus made sure to disabuse Roosevelt of any misinformation he might have picked up from the newspapers. “Contrary to press reports, the conference had nothing to do with finances,” he stressed. “The subject was not referred to."[78] Isaac Newton Seligman, too, took pains to assure the president that they never contemplated funding Russia's war efforts in exchange for Jewish emancipation. "The papers manufactured that matter out of whole cloth, and there is not a particle of truth in such published reports," he vented.[79] The Jewish leaders had already given statements to the press back in New Hampshire categorically refuting rumors of a quid pro quo.[80] Witte himself corroborated their claims, but the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* remained unconvinced that war loans had been off the table: "The numerous denials were cleverly calculated, both by M. Witte and these representatives of great banking houses, to befog the casual observance as to the real object of their visit."[81] Jews and Russians alike could not so easily escape stereotyping about duplicity.

With Russia bedeviled by ongoing turmoil at home and abroad, no one could be sure of Russian Jewry's imminent fate. A Jewish scholar in New York, Isidor Singer, published an open letter to Count Witte that reflected the moment's uncertainty. Singer posited that the Russian treatment of Jews would be a bellwether for the very survival of the czarist regime. If Russia applied "the principle of American life and American government" to itself, then perhaps the regime could endure in a reformed condition. But Singer held out the possibility that Russian backwardness was incorrigible under czarist rule, leaving revolution as the only alternative. In Singer's words, perhaps "the malady is rooted so deep, that the amputation of the empire is the only means of salvation." His letter also approvingly alluded to Roosevelt, suggesting that even if the peace talks with Japan failed, at least Witte "had the great advantage of making the personal acquaintance of the American people and [their] sturdy president."[82]

* * *

It looked as though the Russo-Japanese talks were, in fact, careening toward collapse but for the efforts of the sturdy president himself. The warring parties found themselves mired in an intractable standoff over land claims and indemnities, spurring Roosevelt to fire off a rapid succession of cables from Oyster Bay to Portsmouth, St. Petersburg, and Tokyo. A principal obstacle to peace was convincing the pride-wounded Russians to make concessions that offended their sense of honor, even though the proposed terms were reasonable given Russia's poor military showing. At first, Roosevelt appeared unable to finesse a compromise that both sides could stomach. But in the waning days of August, just as it seemed the diplomats would return home empty-handed, they agreed to terms.[83] "It's a mighty good thing for Russia and a mighty good thing for Japan," Roosevelt told a congressman, adding that it was "a mighty good thing for *me*, too!"[84]

Indeed. Heads of state and newspaper editorialists the world over lauded Roosevelt for his pivotal part in a conference he never actually attended.[85] After facing criticism earlier in his presidency that he pursued a reckless brand of "cowboy diplomacy," Roosevelt could justifiably claim the mantle of peacemaker in the wake of Portsmouth.[86] Oscar Straus gushed in a letter to the president that many people who "only a few months ago looked upon you as the scourge of war now praise you as the angel of peace."[87] For Roosevelt's role in the Russo-Japanese negotiations, he won the Nobel Peace Prize—the first American to receive a Nobel in any category. He resolved that the prize money be spent in pursuit of improved relations between capital and labor, tapping Straus as a steward of that endeavor.[88]

* * *

The signing ceremony of the peace treaty took place in early September in a brick building in the navy yard where the diplomats had spent weeks wrangling over terms. After three previous days of gloomy weather, the sun now appeared as if on cue. All of Portsmouth waited eagerly for the signal—a nineteen-gun salute from the navy yard battery—that would indicate the diplomats had affixed their names to the historic document. The salute was expected at three o'clock that afternoon, but at the appointed hour one agonizing minute after the next elapsed without any discharge from the battery's gunner. Finally, upon the last pen stroke in the conference room, a clerk ran outside to announce, "All signed at 3:47," prompting a navy seaman to wave a red flag at the gunner some fifty yards away.[89] "The opening shot of the salute rang out on the clear air of the soft September afternoon," recorded one journalist, "proclaiming peace between Russia and Japan."[90]

A cacophony ensued. Portsmouth's churches tolled their bells, ships in the harbor blew their whistles, and a marine band in the navy yard "burst out into a fanfare." Amid the noise, a State Department official phoned Oyster Bay to inform Roosevelt of the news. Champagne was opened for the diplomats back inside the conference room, where the American president was toasted even before the Russian czar or Japanese emperor—a testament to Roosevelt's centrality to the negotiations.[91]

At five o'clock, the Russian delegation journeyed across the Kittery Bridge into Portsmouth, which was densely packed with festive crowds. Witte was due to attend a special service at a local church but struggled to make his way through the crush of onlookers. They kept extending their hands to him—and understandably so, given that handshakes were "the usual expression of attention with Americans," he recalled. Finally, Witte entered the church, which was delightfully adorned with floral arrangements. A Russian Orthodox priest walked with rabbis in a procession behind a choir that was intoning a song of peace, a sign that the war's resolution might well hasten a fresh start for Jewish-Christian relations in Russia.[92]

* * *

Four days after the peace conference concluded, Witte was back at Oyster Bay as Roosevelt's dinner guest. The president had hosted the Japanese diplomats earlier that afternoon for lunch, and now he provided a final—perhaps inedible—meal to Count Witte. Following that supper, Roosevelt sent a letter to a retired British statesman, George Otto Trevelyan, that reflected his mixed feelings about Witte. "I suppose Witte is the best man that Russia could have at the head of her affairs at present," Roosevelt offered in Witte's favor before disclosing, "I cannot say that I liked him, for I thought his bragging and bluster not only foolish but shockingly vulgar."[93] Witte's diplomatic credentials aside, he wasn't known for his subtlety or tact.[94]

The president may have felt self-professed “contempt” for Witte, but Roosevelt was also encouraged by their discussion at Oyster Bay, which covered the oppression of Russian Jewry. Weeks earlier, TR had promised Straus that he would personally take up the cause with Witte after the peace negotiations, and Roosevelt appears to have stayed true to his word. Precisely what the president said to Witte remains unknown, but he did share with Trevelyan that he had aimed to “get a little alleviation of the condition of the Jews out of this peace conference, as what you might call a by-product.” And Roosevelt saw cause for hope, relaying to Trevelyan, “Witte also expressed his views about religious freedom and freedom of conscience in a way that would command hearty support from you or me.”[95]

The president felt sufficiently optimistic to send Witte a follow-up letter about an issue that the Jewish group in Portsmouth hadn’t broached: the Passport Question. Despite assurances the prior year that Russia would reassess its visa restrictions on Jews with U.S. citizenship, the prohibition of American Jews remained in effect. “In furtherance of our conversation of last evening, I beg you to consider the question of granting passports [i.e., visas] to reputable American citizens of Jewish faith,” Roosevelt pressed. He emphasized that the stakes weren’t confined to American Jewry but implicated the whole of Russian-American relations; reform on this front would “remove the last cause of irritation between the two nations” and ensure the perpetuity of their “historic friendship.” TR acknowledged Russia’s right to ban any given U.S. citizen from its territory, provided such a decision hinged on that citizen’s rectitude rather than religion.[96] The president’s letter came with a request that Witte forward it to the czar himself.[97] Roosevelt’s bid here for passport reform was, and would long remain, hidden from public view—in other words, he wasn’t posturing to score points with a domestic audience.[98]

On Witte’s final morning in New York City before returning to Russia, he and the Russian ambassador visited their Japanese counterparts at the Waldorf-Astoria for a farewell. Then, at the St. Regis, Witte reconvened with the Jewish representatives he had met in Portsmouth—or at least most of them. Three of the five were present for this second gathering: the banker, Isaac Newton Seligman; the diplomat, Oscar Straus; and the B’nai

B’rith president, Adolf Kraus.[99] The latter had traveled all the way from Chicago for what was a merely ceremonial send-off. Having already aired their views fully in New Hampshire, all parties were content to treat this latter occasion primarily as an exercise in politesse.[100]

Afterward, Seligman told the press that Witte had just now pledged “as far as he can personally assist, all will be done to give the Jews their full constitutional rights,” though Seligman noted that Witte had been speaking as an “individual” rather than in an “official” capacity.[101] To what was surely Seligman’s annoyance, he continued to fend off queries from reporters about whether Jewish-run banks would provide loans for Russia. “The matter of a loan was not even suggested,” he insisted. Meanwhile, Witte lunched at the ritzy Union Club on Fifth Avenue before beginning his long voyage home. From on board his steamer prior to sailing, Witte gave an ambivalent statement to the papers. He did express hope for a “new era” of religious equality but cautioned that “it takes time to change sentiment and work political reforms.” Witte then added with vague foreboding, “Regrettable things cannot always be foreseen or prevented.”[102] As he well understood, cessation of war beyond Russia’s borders would not necessarily forge peace within them. It remained to be seen whether ongoing domestic strife would ultimately improve or imperil life for the czar’s Jewish subjects.

⁂

Witte returned home to a Russia roiled by turmoil that was alarming even by the standards of 1905. A cascading series of strikes across different industries turned into a general strike by October that brought the nation’s cities to the brink of paralysis. Witte pleaded with the czar that only a transition to a constitutional monarchy would placate the revolutionary fervor sweeping the country. The reform-minded Witte drew up a memorandum for Czar Nicholas’s consideration that called for civil liberties, voting rights, and a Duma with real legislative powers; under this scheme, the czar would retain his status as emperor, and prospective laws would be subject to his veto. Nicholas did not thrill to the idea of significantly diminishing his autocratic control, but the dysfunction of Russian society was too plain for even an intransigent despot to ignore. At the month's end, the czar begrudgingly issued the October Manifesto, based on Witte's memorandum, in which "freedom of conscience" was affirmed as a core element of "genuine personal inviolability."[103] This was a remarkable concession for millions of Jews who had endured relentless subjugation.

Witte's promise to the American Jewish leaders that he would do all he could for their coreligionists in Russia was now improbably realized in an official decree bearing the czar's signature. Yet even as its ink was freshly drying, the manifesto became a dead letter. The day after its promulgation, thousands of Russians would greet the news of civic freedom for their Jewish neighbors with an explosion of antisemitic violence never before seen in the dark history of their empire.

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6

POGROMS

As word of the October Manifesto spread throughout Russia, some Jews and liberal Gentiles took to the streets in celebration. Their outburst of excitement was decidedly *not* an expression of gratitude to the czar for bestowing new rights. To the contrary, these reformers viewed the manifesto for what it was: an act of desperation from a flailing leader. The anti-czarist crowds sensed the regime's weakness and pressed their advantage in cities across Russia. They marched with banners to jails, police stations, and governors' homes where they called for political prisoners to be set free.[1] "Hurrah, freedom to all!" they chanted. "Down with the autocracy, down with the czar!"[2]

But these Jews and their like-minded compatriots were not the only ones in the streets that day. A loose collection of reactionary organizations—dubbed the "Black Hundreds" by their critics—began massacring Jews with abandon.[3] The assailants savagely beat Jews to death while berating them, "Here is your freedom, here is your constitution, here is your revolution."[4] In one community after the next, mobs torched local synagogues before moving on to Jewish homes and Jewish businesses.[5] That most of the Jewish victims were not actually liberal agitators was of little moment to the pogromists.[6]

On hand that day in Kyiv was the acclaimed Yiddish writer Sholem Aleichem (whose short stories about Tevye, the fictional milkman, formed the basis for *Fiddler on the Roof*). Aleichem gave a firsthand account for the press of a devastating pogrom there. He related how the city's Jews pleaded with Christian acquaintances to offer them refuge but were refused and left for slaughter. Pogromists had no inclination to spare even the most vulnerable. "Jewish girls were dishonored," wrote Alecheim, "children were rent in twain."[7] The very worst of the genocide took place in Odessa, where the streets were littered with Jewish corpses. One journalist described the "revolting barbarity" inflicted on Odessa's Jews. "Heads were battered with hammers, nails were driven into the bodies, eyes were gouged out, and ears severed," the report read. Some of the city's Jews were strangled to death, others burned alive.[8]

These blood-soaked scenes unfolded on a staggering scale throughout the Pale of Settlement and in some cases beyond it. Over the course of twelve days, pogroms erupted in well over six hundred cities, towns, and villages. The forty-nine Jewish deaths in Kishinev were now eclipsed by ghastly orders of magnitude. By some counts, more than three thousand Jewish souls lost their lives in the 1905 pogrom wave, with thousands more injured. Two hundred thousand Jews sustained property damage, entailing losses of 63 million rubles (over $1.1 billion U.S. dollars today). Russian Jewry was in abject ruin.[9]

The pogromists—waving Russian flags and singing nationalistic tunes—were self-professed patriots who viewed their butchery of Jews as an expression of loyalty to the czar. In one sense, their rationale was incoherent: they were violently raging against a manifesto that the czar himself had decreed.[10] But in another sense, the Black Hundreds and their ilk were supremely faithful czarists; after all, the October Manifesto was a begrudging concession that scarcely veiled Czar Nicholas's opposition to liberalization in general and to Jewry in particular.

The czar showed no compassion for the pogrom's victims and felt that they deserved their grisly fate. As he told his mother, "The people became enraged by the insolence and audacity of the revolutionaries and socialists; and because nine-tenths of them are Yids, the people's whole wrath has turned against them."[11] Nicholas here insinuated that the pogroms were spontaneous, which is not entirely accurate. Although some of the antisemitic attacks were indeed unplanned, in other places the Black Hundreds had been plotting and waiting for an opportune moment to savage the Jewish population.[12]

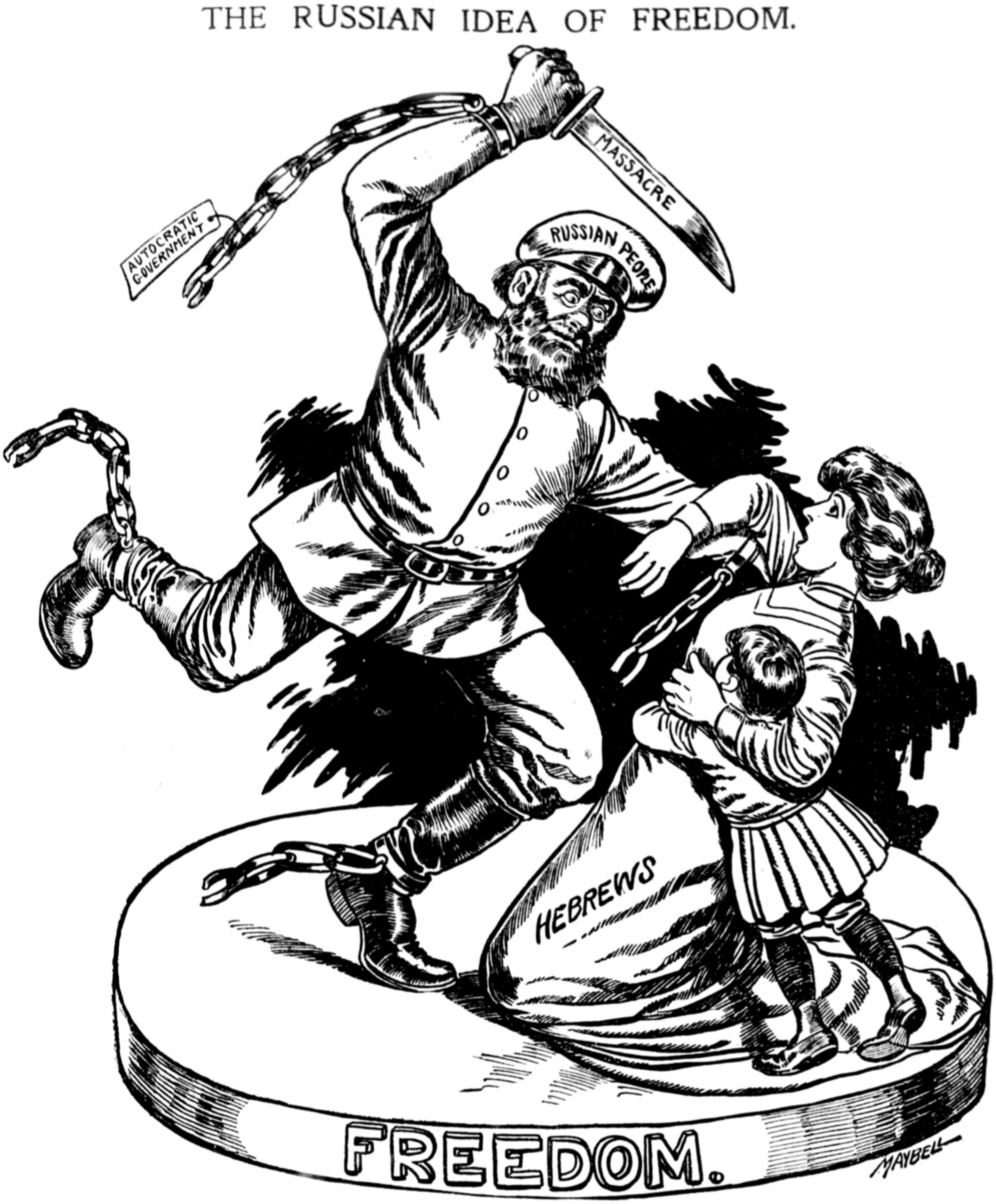
THE RUSSIAN IDEA OF FREEDOM.
MASSACRE
AUTOCRATIC GOVERNMENT
RUSSIAN PEOPLE
HEBREWS
FREEDOM.
MAYBELL

FIGURE. 6.1. The Russian people react to the October Manifesto and its promises of freedom by slaughtering Jews. *Source*: “The Russian Idea of Freedom,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, November 3, 1905.

The degree of government complicity varied by place. Some authorities on the ground tried to mollify the mobs, but many other officials passively consented to the brutalities or even partook in them.[13] When Odessa's governor was beseeched to intervene on behalf of Jews, he coldly responded, "You wanted freedom—here is the Yid's freedom."[14] The inconsistency among local authorities paralleled a divide at the highest echelons of the Russian state. On one side was Sergei Witte, whom Czar Nicholas had named the Russian premier—effectively, the prime minister—on the very day that Nicholas signed the October Manifesto.[15] On the other was Dmitri Trepov, the governor-general of St. Petersburg, who favored pogroms.[16] Each man appeased a different constituency: Witte, the reformers; Trepov, the reactionaries. As Lenin keenly observed, "Both Witte and Trepov are necessary: Witte to beguile some, Trepov to suppress others; Witte—for promises, Trepov—for deeds."[17] Trepov cultivated close ties to Nicholas and reinforced the czar's own inclination toward antisemitism. "The Emperor was surrounded by avowed Jew-haters such as Trepov," Witte would later recall in his memoirs.[18]

The atrocities visited upon Russia's Jews were part of a broader turbulence upending Russian society. Witte had hoped that the October Manifesto would soothe tensions, but the perilous situation on the ground seemed only to worsen. In the cities, laborers refused to work. In the countryside, peasants resorted to arson and theft. In the military, mutinies abounded. Railroads came to a standstill. Universities were hotbeds of dissent. Educated elites abstained from their professional obligations.[19]

The American ambassador's aide, H. Custis Vezey, sent a letter back to Washington that offered a revealing glimpse of the fear and furor gripping Russia. "Today a great many people in St. Petersburg were in dread of being murdered in their beds, and they are hardly to be blamed," Vezey shared. "There was a rush on the gun shops and nearly all their stock was sold out yesterday as everyone is arming for the expected riots, no one placing any confidence whatsoever in the police or the troops doing their duty." He further relayed reports that the czarist regime was actively spurring the Black Hundreds—made up of "hooligans, toughs, and the ignorant multitude"—to terrorize Jews and other reformist elements.[20]

While the instinct to kill Jews amid a crisis was familiar to many Russians, at this moment of particularly acute social rupture, Jewish blood flowed at an unprecedented pace.

* * *

After the horrors of Kishinev in 1903 and before the mass carnage of 1905, pogroms had periodically broken out in Russia. But the violence was comparatively limited in that timeframe. Kishinev had taught Russian Jews that they would need to mobilize in their own self-defense, and in a number of attacks predating the October Manifesto, Jews were able to partially defend themselves and mitigate casualties.[21] Pogroms, accordingly, became a secondary concern for most American Jews. To be sure, the American press did report on the sporadic assaults against Russian Jewry, and Jacob Schiff at times nudged Theodore Roosevelt on the issue.[22] Yet it was the Passport Question, rather than pogroms, that assumed prominence amid the 1904 presidential race. And the following year, when the Jewish delegation met with Sergei Witte in Portsmouth, they chose to focus their remonstrance on legal forms of discrimination against Russian Jews, not on extralegal violence.

But the bloodbath of fall 1905—whose sheer scale had overwhelmed Jewish bids at self-defense—once again made pogroms the galvanizing cause for American Jews and many of their Gentile compatriots. Major papers in the Jewish population centers, like the *New York Times* and *Philadelphia Inquirer*, dedicated their front pages to the pogroms.[23] And the news coverage reached communities with far fewer Jews too. From the Deep South and New England to the Great Plains and Pacific Northwest, local papers carried word of the macabre developments in Russia.[24] The *St. Albans Daily Messenger*, on the northern edge of Vermont, printed reports of the "wholesale plunder of Jews."[25] In Alabama, the *Montgomery Advertiser* described how Jews were "being hunted down in the streets."[26] And the *Evening World-Herald* in Omaha relayed, "The mobs swear they will not leave a single Jew alive."[27] The question for America—its Jews, its

Gentiles, and its government—was whether and how to mount a response to a calamity of unconscionable magnitude.

* * *

America's most outspoken Jewish leader, Jacob Schiff, concentrated his initial efforts at government authorities not in the United States but in Russia. He cabled Witte directly in early November: "The American people stand aghast at atrocities in Odessa and elsewhere." Schiff's cable blamed the Russian state for allowing the slaughter to persist and warned that Russia could never "expect the moral support of other nations" under such circumstances.[28] Witte's reply came two days later. He insisted, unconvincingly, that the Russian government was "horrified" by the "savage outbreaks." Witte was at least honest about the reigning unrest: "As long as the country is in such [an] excited state, the local authorities are often powerless."[29] So was Witte. He did admonish local authorities to stop the pogromists but to little avail.[30]

Witte's feebleness was a symptom of both a teetering regime and his own beleaguered position within that regime. Even before the October Manifesto, political circles in St. Petersburg erroneously suspected that Witte might be conspiring with Jews to engineer a coup. The October Manifesto itself, with its proclamation of religious liberty, could have only served to stoke fears of a Witte-Jewish alliance.[31] Against this fraught backdrop, Witte was reduced to little more than an impotent figurehead in his new role as premier. He later lamented, "I wielded little power and bore all the responsibility" while the antisemitic Trepov, who enjoyed the czar's fidelity, functioned in effect as "the irresponsible head of the government."[32]

Oscar Straus journeyed to the White House bearing in hand the text of Witte's unpromising cable to Schiff. Straus and Roosevelt discussed what steps, if any, TR might take on behalf of Russian Jewry. Afterward the president consulted with Elihu Root, who had succeeded John Hay as secretary of state and whose affinity for Jews was limited. Roosevelt resolved that he would not press the cause of Jewry with the Russian government. The White House released a statement to the newspapers explaining that Russia was far too anarchic to render diplomatic entreaties of any value. “In the conditions of social disorder which actually exist in Russia,” the statement read, “the president does not see that any action can be taken by this government at present which will be of any benefit to the unfortunate sufferers for whom we feel such keen sympathy.”[33]

Roosevelt’s reasoning here was probably genuine. After all, he had been willing to exert pressure, both publicly and privately, on the Russians at various points throughout his presidency. What made this juncture different was the shambolic state of affairs bedeviling the Russian Empire. The October Manifesto—the kind of reform that American Jewry had long sought—had resulted not in liberation but rather devastation for Russian Jews. In all likelihood, Roosevelt sincerely believed that speaking out now would be negligible or even counterproductive. Secretary Root’s counsel mattered, too. He almost certainly helped persuade Roosevelt that inaction was advisable. But most American Jews did not share that calculus; they wanted a robust response from their government. Whatever the president’s rationale, the goodwill he had earned from previously supporting Jewish causes would not insulate him from criticism moving forward.

* * *

With Russia devolving, Roosevelt fretted that his chief envoy to St. Petersburg was absent from his post. The president had appointed a new American ambassador to Russia, George Meyer, who had overlapped with Roosevelt at Harvard. But Meyer, at this crucial crossroads in Russian history, was back in his native Massachusetts visiting his wife and children. “I think you should be in St. Petersburg now and that you ought not to delay one day,” Roosevelt telegraphed.[34] Meyer proved reluctant to leave quite yet. He was a dedicated family man whose daughter was ailing from appendicitis and had just undergone an operation. Meyer told the president that he hoped to wait “until she is out of danger.”[35] In turn, Roosevelt expressed obligatory concern for the daughter’s well-being but reiterated the urgency in Russia. “I should have asked you to start for St. Petersburg three weeks ago," Roosevelt reflected regretfully. "During these three weeks, the one place where it was really very important that we should have an ambassador was St. Petersburg.… You should be there at the earliest possible moment."[36] But Meyer lingered as Russia imploded.

* * *

American Jewry—divided by class, religiosity, politics, and country of origin—united in the face of Russian butchery. Elements from New York City's diverse Jewish communities convened at Temple Emanu-El to establish a relief committee that would channel funds to victims in Russia. The initial contributions from that evening totaled an impressive $56,800 ($2 million today). Roosevelt's two most important Jewish advisors, Jacob Schiff and Oscar Straus, were featured speakers. Schiff recounted to the crowd his fruitless cable to Witte and relayed that he was coordinating relief efforts with prominent European Jews, including Lord Rothschild in Britain. When Schiff read aloud telegrams from Russian Jews pleading for assistance, the crowd cried out: "We will help!"[37]

Oscar Straus, in his own remarks at the gathering, tried to buffer the administration from possible complaints about its passivity. He recalled his recent trip to the White House where he had convened with Roosevelt. "I found our great president as shocked and horrified as we are, and with his heart full of sympathy for our stricken people," Straus assured the audience. He added, "I did not ask him to take any step" because presidential action might unwittingly prompt "greater catastrophes" and exacerbate the "unbearable burden" upon Russian Jewry. In an early indication that Straus's prestige in the Jewish community would not suffice to shield Roosevelt, a subsequent orator took the floor and called for thousands of "Hebrew defenders" to march on Washington in a bid to jolt the president into motion.[38]

The pressure on Roosevelt was only just beginning. Shortly after the Emanu-El fundraiser, newspapers throughout the country printed a plea sent to the president by Simon Wolf, the former head of B'nai B'rith. Wolf's message tried to appeal to Roosevelt as a decisive leader: "The man that sidetracked precedents by ending the coal strike, the man that conjured [peace] between Russia and Japan, and who has in a hundred ways shown marvelous versatility and courage—can he not take the initiative and bring about [a] concert of action to stem the cruelties in Russia?"[39] Wolf had long been an ardent Roosevelt supporter who worked hand-in-glove with the president on the Kishinev Petition, the administration's signature achievement for Jewry. It is thus striking that an ally like Wolf was now pushing Roosevelt so publicly.[40]

Not all voices in the Jewish community were inclined to resort to flattery in the hopes of cajoling the president. A Democratic-leaning paper, the *Hebrew Standard*, was underwhelmed by Roosevelt's claim that Russian disarray precluded American intervention. "It is said that there is no responsible government in Russia," the paper noted. "All the more reason that the rest of the 'civilized' world should step in." True, the president had voiced compassion for the Jewish victims in Russia, but the *Hebrew Standard* thought that such "honeyed phrases" rang hollow as the corpses piled high. The paper bemoaned, "President Roosevelt is sympathetic. We Jews are sick of sympathy.… We demand action." The *Hebrew Standard* also accused America of hypocrisy, recalling that the nation had gone beyond diplomatic protest and actually taken up arms for what was considered a humanitarian cause: Cuban rebellion against Spanish rule in 1898. It was little coincidence that the editorialist here alluded to a war with which Roosevelt himself was so closely associated.[41]

* * *

As the press printed graphic first-hand accounts of the carnage, donations from across the United States flooded into the relief committee's coffers.[42] Newspapers would announce in each successive issue the latest philanthropic totals, which tallied more than $500,000 (over $17 million today) after just nine days.[43] Some of the country's most renowned Gentiles, including Andrew Carnegie, gave substantial sums to the relief committee.[44] Jacob Schiff praised his Christian friends for their largesse, writing one of them, "It is encouraging to feel that in misfortune, at least the whole world is akin."[45] Although Schiff's comment about the "whole world" was overbroad—Western Europe, for example, wasn't quite so forthcoming with its commiseration—the vast outpouring of compassion from Americans was undeniable.

Meetings were organized throughout the United States, usually in synagogues, to pay respect to the dead and give succor to the living.[46] Many of these gatherings called on Roosevelt to abandon his passivity. At a packed synagogue in Pittsburgh, attendees passed resolutions that beseeched the president to intervene in Russia.[47] So did a group of Jewish veterans of the Spanish-American War based in Harlem.[48] Although Jews organized most demonstrations, many Gentiles participated and even hosted. The Warren Avenue Baptist Church in Boston, for instance, invited a local rabbi named Charles Fleischer to address the congregation. "We have been told that neither as president nor as man can Theodore Roosevelt say anything to Russia in the present crisis," Fleischer told the churchgoers, adding, "I do not believe it." Rabbi Fleischer acknowledged that an American entreaty to Russia would be "unconventional and undiplomatic" but urged Roosevelt to buck any "custom which makes such cowards of us all."[49]

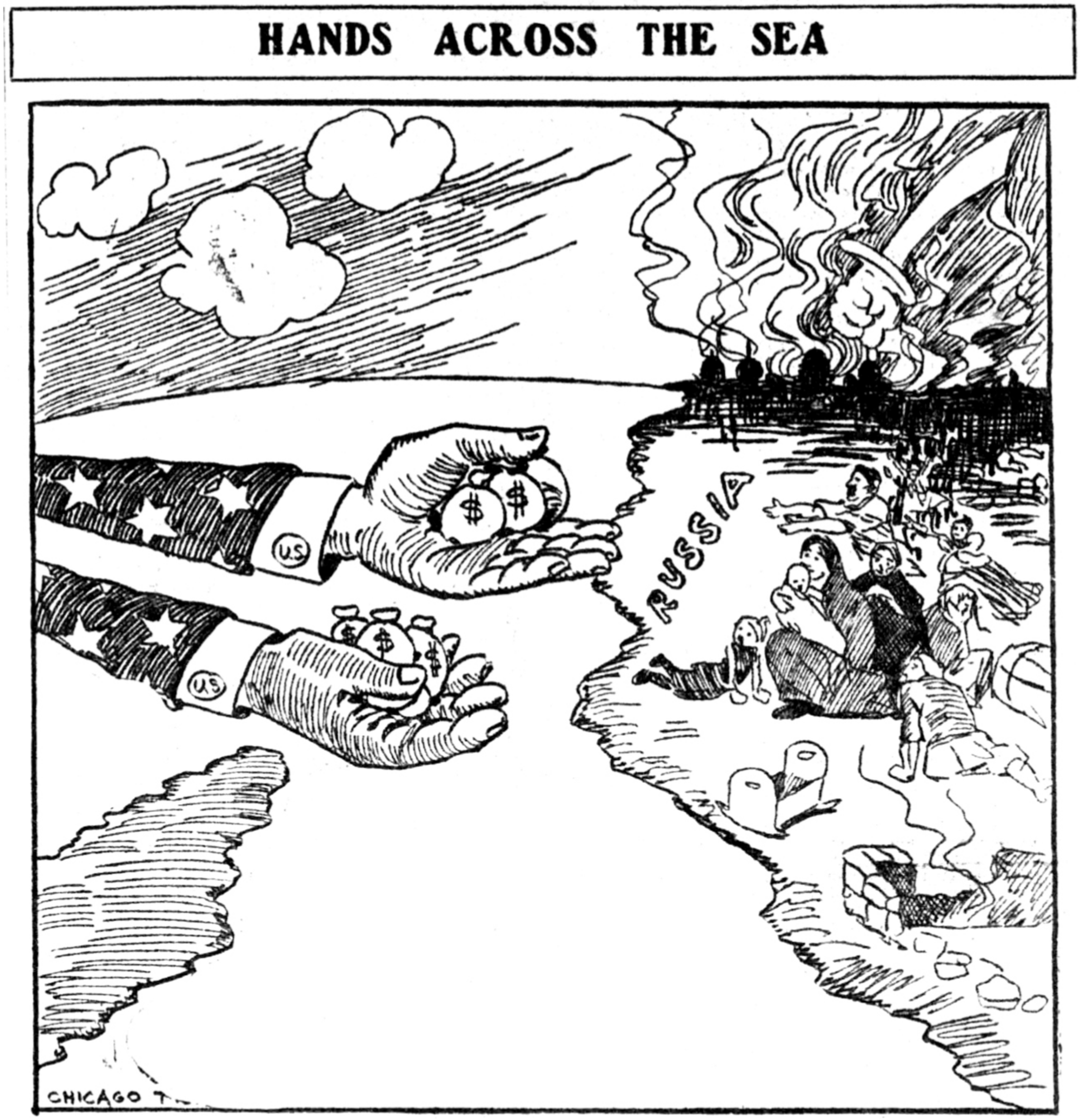

FIGURE. 6.2. Americans donate fulsomely to the pogrom survivors. *Source*: “Hands across the Sea,” *Chicago Tribune*, circa November 1905.

Christian clergymen joined in the admonitions. At a Baptist church in New York, an interfaith audience of Jews and Christians heard the pleas of a prominent preacher who suggested that Roosevelt—if constrained from speaking out on the nation’s behalf—should at least speak out on his own. “Perhaps our fearless president can do nothing as president, but I tell you that he can do almost anything simply as Theodore Roosevelt," the reverend declared, eliciting an enthusiastic reaction from the crowd.[50] A similar scene unfolded at Grand Central Palace in midtown Manhattan, where the famous Christian theologian Lyman Abbott announced to an assemblage of six thousand Jews, "It is time for the United States government to interfere in the cause of humanity."[51] Notably, Abbot enjoyed a warm relationship with TR; that even Abbott would conspicuously pressure the Roosevelt administration testifies to the depth of resistance facing the president.[52]

Public officials began turning up at mass meetings where crowds matched moral outrage with financial contributions. The mayor of St. Louis surfaced at one such interfaith gathering in a synagogue.[53] Baltimore hosted a bipartisan affair at its city hall with the Republican mayor and Democratic governor of Maryland.[54] Meanwhile, at the Atlantic City pier, the Republican governor of New Jersey rallied a crowd of thousands, and a local congressman, also a Republican, expressly appealed to Roosevelt for action.[55] The presence of elected officials at these demonstrations—many of whom belonged to Roosevelt's own party—could have only intensified the pressure on the administration.

* * *

Secretary of State Elihu Root was more concerned about subduing American Jewish fervor than in alleviating its cause. In mid-November, Root met in person with Ambassador Meyer, who had journeyed from Boston to Washington and would shortly sail for St. Petersburg. Meyer recorded in his diary that Root asked him to prod Witte for some kind of statement that would "reassure the Jewish element [in America] and quiet public sentiment." Root also derided Jewish protests in the United States as self-interested, telling Meyer that "certain Jews in America were merely striving for notoriety."[56] Root's comment here is deeply cynical given the desperate plight of Russian Jewry at that moment. Even an incorrigible antisemite like the British diplomat Cecil Spring Rice, a close friend of the president's, wrote to the first lady that he was aghast at the "inconceivable brutality" of the "savage attacks."[57]

Over the ensuing days—as mass meetings, fundraising drives, and press coverage continued apace—it must have become increasingly clear to Root that he could not idle his way through the crisis. He personally sent a sizable check to the relief committee along with a note, republished in the papers, that was partly an expression of sympathy and partly a defense of the administration's inactivity. Root conveyed his compassion for "the unfortunate Jews who have been subjected to such dreadful cruelties" while nonetheless insisting that "we have little power to help them." He hoped that the "present disorder" would yield in time to a "better day of security and freedom" in the Russian Empire.[58]

Around that same time, Root reached out to the embassy in St. Petersburg for more information. "Many influential Hebrews in this country are greatly distressed over reports of Jewish loss of life and suffering in recent outbreaks," he relayed. Root asked for numbers concerning the pogroms' victims—the deceased, the ailing, and the dispossessed.[59] With Ambassador Meyer on the long journey back to Russia, it fell to his deputy to notify Washington of whatever details could be confirmed about Jewish "destitution" across the empire.[60] The situation remained perilous for Russian Jews. Although the initial twelve-day killing spree of Jews had subsided, pogroms were still breaking out with some regularity. Survivors were left tending to their ravaged communities across the Pale. And Russian society more broadly continued to convulse with chaos.[61]

* * *

In late November, Roosevelt showed that he was willing to lobby on behalf of Jews overseas—albeit in the Arab world. The president was then helping organize the Algeciras Conference, set to take place the following year in Spain. There the great powers of Europe, together with the United States and Morocco, would convene to arbitrate tensions between France and Germany over their conflicting ambitions for Morocco's future. Just as the Russo-Japanese peace negotiations had presented America with an opportunity to press for concessions on Jewish rights, the Algeciras Conference held out the same promise that the United States might successfully shoehorn Jewish issues into an unrelated international event. Per usual, it was the ubiquitous Jacob Schiff who had brought up the matter with the Roosevelt administration, sharing with Elihu Root a report about conditions of Moroccan Jewry produced by the French-Jewish organization *Alliance Israélite Universelle*.[62]

That report—which turned out to be riddled with inaccuracies—outlined the putative degradations of Jewish life. Jews were confined to residences in ghettos that were locked in the evenings. Walking canes were forbidden for Jews, even for the elderly or infirm among them. Nor could Jews wear shoes; locals would toss hot coals and glass shards at Jewish feet as something of a hobby. Severe restrictions limited Jewish travel and emigration. Moroccan courts banned Jewish testimony. The government levied special taxes on Jews and tightly regulated Jewish commercial activity, even forcing Jews to work on Shabbat.[63]

The administration would find out two months later that these allegations of Moroccan prejudice were variously erroneous or misleading.[64] But Schiff, Root, and Roosevelt took them at face value for the time being and proceeded accordingly. At the president's behest, Root instructed Henry White—the American ambassador who would represent the United States at Algeciras—to inject the Jewish Question into the conference agenda. Perhaps America could rally the great powers to support religious liberty in Morocco.

Secretary Root conveyed to Ambassador White that Moroccan Jews "appear to suffer from painful and injurious restrictions" that would be "hard now to ignore." He enclosed the report from the *Alliance* and stressed that Roosevelt himself wanted White to prioritize the issue: "It is the president's wish that you give the subject your earnest attention and endeavor in all proper ways to impress its importance upon your colleagues in the conference."[65] Accompanying these formal instructions to White, Root included a private note underscoring the utility of standing up for Jews in Morocco in order to counterbalance the administration's policy of abstention in Russia. "It would be very opportune," Root explained, "because our immense Jewish population is now naturally much excited over the cruelties in Russia, and it is very difficult for many of them to understand why our government cannot interfere."[66] This pending diplomatic play regarding Morocco was not yet made public nor did it promise to yield results until the conference concluded in the spring of 1906. But, if successful, it might eventually reverse some of the present damage to Roosevelt's relationship with American Jews.

The president's amenability to American interference in Morocco, even as he remained motionless on Russia, offers an instructive comparison. Plainly, Roosevelt was still prepared to leverage his nation's influence for the benefit of Jewry abroad, provided he found the particular conditions favorable. His approach to the Algeciras Conference thus lends credibility to the idea that Roosevelt wasn't coldly seizing on Russian upheaval as a convenient pretext to pursue a do-nothing policy; rather, it appears he honestly believed that U.S. intervention on behalf of Russian Jews might only worsen their situation. It is otherwise difficult to comprehend why he resisted the politically popular option of capitulating to America's public uproar over the pogroms.

Given Roosevelt's restraint on Russia, Schiff resolved to make diplomatic moves of his own with St. Petersburg. He communicated directly to Witte his view that the Russian authorities had "instigated" the atrocities. Schiff well knew that the premier stood apart from the reactionary elements within the state apparatus, and he told Witte that he was praying for Witte's success. Recall that in Portsmouth, Witte had warned Schiff and his fellow Jewish leaders that a sweeping enactment of religious freedom in Russia would foment antisemitism. Schiff now acknowledged Witte's grisly prescience on that score but still argued against Russian appeasement of the antisemitic mobs, insisting that it was "doubly proper and important that no step backward be taken, and that the Jewish subjects of the czar be vouchsafed every civic right." Failure to do so, Schiff warned, would ensure that Russia remained a pariah state on the global stage.[67]

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Against the backdrop of untold Jewish suffering in Russia, synagogues across the United States took a brief respite from their sorrow to celebrate a landmark occasion at home: the 250th anniversary of communal Jewish life in America.[68] The most illustrious commemoration took place in New York's Carnegie Hall in late November. More than five thousand people squeezed into the famed venue, which was grandly decorated for the event. Coats of arms, representing each state in the Union, adorned the boxes on the lower tier. The mezzanine featured a series of golden shields, symbolizing the Holy City of Jerusalem. And American flags festooned the packed galleries above. Jacob Schiff presided, with notable speakers including the mayor and governor as well as former president Grover Cleveland. Among the evening's highlights was a performance by fifty cantors, clad in black and arranged in a semicircle, who sang the Jewish hymn "Adon Olam" in accompaniment with the New York Symphony Orchestra.[69]

Prior to the event, Schiff had asked that Roosevelt furnish a letter to be read aloud at Carnegie Hall. The president may have rebuffed Jewish pleas for the past month regarding Russia, but this much he could do. As TR's words were recited to the crowd by one of the evening's speakers, loud applause broke out every few sentences.[70] Roosevelt's letter explained that he didn't normally accede to such requests for various celebrations—the solicitations were unending and he had to avoid favoritism—but he would "make an exception in this case because [of] the lamentable and terrible suffering to which so many of the Jewish people in other lands have been subjected." The Jewish-American experience, the letter declared, demonstrated that Jews exhibit "fine qualities of citizenship" when they "enjoy the benefits of free institutions and equal treatment before the law." Although Roosevelt didn't mention Russia by name, few in Carnegie Hall could have missed his implication that Russia ought to look to America for the right answer to the Jewish Question.[71]

The remainder of the letter described the Jewish community in terms that seemed designed to implicitly counter antisemitic stereotypes. Whereas American nativists saw Jewish immigration as a threat to the country's founding character, Roosevelt trumpeted the historical truth that Jews had been central to American democracy from its inception. “During the Revolutionary period,” he recounted, “they aided the cause of liberty by serving in the Continental Army and by substantial contributions to the empty treasury of the infant republic.” Some in Roosevelt’s genteel circles engaged in a kind of moderate antisemitism wherein assimilated Jews of Central European origin passed social muster, while the indigent masses from Eastern Europe were met with contempt. Yet the president hailed both Jewish subgroups, lauding the work ethic and patriotism not just of established Jewish families but also the more recent Jewish “refugees reduced to the dire straits of penury and misery.”[72]

Roosevelt further insisted that Jews could be Jews *and* Americans; they needn’t shed their particular religious identity to lay claim to a common civic one. “While the Jews of the United States … have remained loyal to their faith and their race traditions, they have become indissolubly incorporated in the great army of American citizenship,” TR proclaimed. Many Gentiles would make homogenization the price of acceptance for Jews, but the president here advanced a decidedly pluralistic vision for Jewish-American life.[73] (Two years later, when a hotel in New York tried to exclude Jews, a judge ruled against the hotel and quoted Roosevelt’s foregoing letter in his legal opinion.[74])

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New York City resumed its role as the epicenter of Jewish protest the following week. Amid a mass demonstration whose size was surely unprecedented in American Jewish history, the usual bustle of activity on the Lower East Side came to a standstill. A mournful procession of some one hundred thousand Jews wound its way through the cramped streets of their neighborhood, culminating in Union Square. Along the route, the sounds of weeping mingled with funeral melodies and prayers.[75] Meanwhile, the relief committee announced, less than three weeks since its fundraising campaign began, that it had topped an astounding $1,000,000 in donations (over $35 million today).[76]

Jewish leaders decided to press the Roosevelt administration yet again in early December, undoubtedly hopeful that the unrelenting public agitation would soften the government's stance. When a relief committee member issued a plea to Elihu Root's deputy, the State Department line remained unbending: "I sincerely wish that this department had the power to relieve the unfortunate people with whom we sympathize so deeply." Simon Wolf—the former B'nai B'rith president who unsuccessfully pressured Roosevelt the month prior—now tried his luck with Secretary Root. But Root's view was fixed: so long as Russia was seized by acute instability, diplomatic overtures were ill-advised. Root's reply to Wolf, which was reprinted in the press, assured him that "the problem is one which strongly attracts the sympathetic attention of this government." Should the Russians adopt a "more liberal form of government," along with the resumption of law and order, then the Roosevelt administration might well attempt to "exert efficient and good influence toward the liberal treatment of all Jews in Russia."[77] Yet the set of preconditions that Root spelled out for American intervention looked increasingly elusive as Russia's nihilistic spiral showed few signs of slowing.

Back in St. Petersburg, Ambassador Meyer's aide, Vezey, conveyed a deep sense of distress in a letter to Meyer, who was making his way through Europe en route to Russia. "One has the feeling of living over a volcano," Vezey remarked. He anticipated the prospect of fresh violence on an alarming scale: "Now all are armed, and if it comes to a conflict, it will not be so easy to put down the rabble."[78]

When Meyer himself finally set foot back on Russian soil, his assessment of conditions on the ground was equally bleak. He told Senator Henry Cabot Lodge that the Russian "government is showing the same incompetency as to handling the internal situation as they did in the late war." By Meyer's lights, Witte was mired in a nigh impossible situation, bereft of support from any faction: "The reactionists are plotting against Witte, and the liberals do not believe in his integrity." Nor did Witte have the political instincts to navigate such treacherous terrain. "He is a financier, not a statesman or even a practical politician," Meyer sneered. Ambassador Meyer was also skeptical that the Russian populace could be pacified, relaying to Senator Lodge, “the people are all nearly crazy here and are not contented with any concessions.” Amid frighteningly volatile circumstances, no one could be sure what each new morning might bring. “One day we are told there will be a general strike, another that Witte is to resign and a military dictator to succeed him,” Meyer reported. “Everything in fact is rumored, from the flight of the czar down.”[79]

Even Jacob Schiff now conceded to Roosevelt that, at the present moment, diplomacy would be futile. With “Witte’s government tottering” and “not likely to last many days,” any protest from the Roosevelt administration would probably come to naught, Schiff acknowledged. For TR, that reality meant his only option was inaction. For Schiff, it meant justification for a far more audacious move: military invasion—or at least the threat of it. Schiff reminded Roosevelt of recent precedent for America’s resort to armed intervention on humanitarian grounds, precedent that the Rough Rider knew intimately. “You willingly took your own life into your hands to help to prevent the oppression of the Cuban people,” Schiff recalled. Surely the “horrors now occurring in Russia” would similarly warrant martial measures to preempt additional “slaughter,” which Russia’s own government “declares it is powerless to prevent.” More specifically, Schiff advised Roosevelt to solicit congressional authorization for a multilateral effort in tandem with the great powers of Europe. A mere signal of possible military operations would likely serve the intended purpose, Schiff predicted, thus sparing the United States from actually hazarding American lives. The specter of foreign troops on Russian soil would “rally national self-respect in Russia” and facilitate the ascension of a “proper party of law and order.” If Roosevelt took that kind of bold step—or, perhaps more accurately, that kind of bold bluff—the American people would stand firmly behind their president, Schiff insisted.[80]

Roosevelt balked. Although his replies to Schiff were typically prompt, in this instance TR uncharacteristically dithered for nearly a week before responding to the letter. “I did not answer it because, my dear Mr. Schiff, I must frankly say that it would be difficult to answer it without hurting your feelings,” Roosevelt confessed. The remainder of the president’s missive bordered on caustic. He derided Schiff’s proposal as “simply nonsense.” No pressure on Russia could possibly bear fruit when “there is revolt in every quarter of the empire among every class of people and the bonds of social order everywhere are relaxed.” Roosevelt would not turn the czar’s Winter Palace into the next San Juan Heights nor bluff as if he might. “We should act in accordance with the [Great] Plains adage when I was in the ranch business, ‘Never draw unless you mean to shoot,’ ” the cowboy-turned-president told Schiff. Hollow threats of military intervention would not only fail to benefit Russian Jewry but confine America to a “humiliating and ridiculous” position. And Roosevelt dismissed Schiff’s idea for a transatlantic coalition as “of course wholly chimerical.”[81]

Roosevelt’s retort to a loyal, and powerful, ally is striking for its barbed tone. The president himself apparently sensed as much, mustering a conciliatory word for the well-intentioned Schiff in a postscript. “I sympathize thoroughly with your feelings, wrought up as they are and ought to be by the dreadful outrages,” he offered, adding, “Anything I can do I will do, but I will not threaten aimlessly and thereby do harm.”[82] Roosevelt resolved to bide his time unless and until Russian affairs less starkly resembled a descent into anarchy.

At least the president could still count on the only Jew in America who rivaled Schiff in stature: Oscar Straus. Roosevelt divulged to Straus, “By the way, our good friend Jacob H. Schiff became hysterical over what I could do about the dreadful atrocities perpetrated upon the Jews in Russia. I enclose a copy of my letter to him.” TR was grateful that Straus wasn’t making comparable demands: “Thank Heaven, you kept your head, as you always do, my dear fellow!”[83] Straus replied that he had attempted to leverage his own credibility with American Jewry to “buffer” Roosevelt from critics. But those voices agitating for American action were unmoored from reality, lamented Straus, as “they crown you with a halo of international omnipotence” even though events in Russia lied beyond the president’s control. Straus concurred with Roosevelt that bids at external inference in a country lurching toward collapse would prove ineffective at best and inimical at worst. He further posited that Russia’s upheaval was on the same inescapable trajectory as the ill-fated French Revolution. “The logic of history, said Bismarck, is as exacting as Prussia’s accounting office," Straus quipped, borrowing language from the quotable German statesman.[84]

Having reassured Roosevelt of his personal loyalty, Oscar Straus did gently nudge the president on the question of immigration. Should the Jewish exodus from Russia to America intensify, Straus opined, it might behoove the president to make a statement embracing the newcomers. But then Straus tempered his proposal, anticipating that events would render such a statement unnecessary. He expected that Russian-Jewish immigration would actually diminish "as the hope for enlarged rights and ultimate freedom in Russia near realization." Given that Straus thought Witte's government was doomed to failure, these latter remarks imply his belief that, somehow, a liberal democracy in Russia would emerge from the bedlam.[85]

Witte himself shared in Roosevelt's belief that no progress could be made for Russian Jews under prevailing conditions. In the first lethal weeks following the October Manifesto, the embattled premier had clung to delusions that he might yet operationalize its liberal promises.[86] But by December, he came to concede that the outlook for Jewry was hopeless. Witte remarked to the Western press that no one could escape the manifesto's unwitting lesson: if the Russian state were to "proclaim equality of rights" for Jews, it would "provoke appalling bloodshed." Under that scenario, the only way for the authorities to protect Jews from pogromists would be for "the Russian government to shoot down the Russian people, and that is inconceivable." This was the unforgiving calculus of a society rotting with antisemitism—Russia's Jews could endure *either* the indignities of second-class citizenship and periodic carnage *or* nominal pretenses to first-class citizenship and mass carnage.[87]

A Jewish paper in San Francisco, *Emanu-El*, was exasperated that Roosevelt seemed content to leave Russia to its own barbarity. "Every country may slaughter its Jews to suit itself; that is the courteous rule of non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations," *Emanu-El* wrote with disdain. "President Roosevelt, Russia's great and good friend, finds it impossible to even lodge a protest on behalf of the American nation."[88] To be sure, the principle of noninterference had given the administration some hesitance in censuring Russia in prior episodes, but *Emanu-El* was off the mark at this particular juncture. Roosevelt was now citing a different rationale entirely—the havoc enveloping Russian society—to justify presidential passivity.

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Meanwhile, the fundraising drive for pogrom survivors continued to elicit the generosity of American donors and even some celebrities. A benefit performance at Broadway's Casino Theatre featured Sarah Bernhardt, a famous French actress of Jewish birth and Catholic upbringing who identified with both religious traditions. A number of other actresses were on hand in the lobby, selling flowers and playbills at prices that were benevolently inflated to boost the philanthropic total. "The prices, however, were no more objectionable than the smiles that went with them," the *New York Times* reported, "and this feminine lobbying proved a popular and profitable device." The one-act play was followed by a special appearance from the legendary Mark Twain, who regaled the packed audience with his masterful storytelling.[89]

Not long after the performance, a Russian revolutionary in exile asked Twain whether he was rightly proud of America's considerable philanthropy for pogrom victims. Twain was not. He claimed, inaccurately, that Jews alone contributed to the relief efforts, and Twain expressed embarrassment that his fellow Christians—whom he referred to as "Americans"—withheld their charity. "That money came not from Americans, it came from Jews," Twain alleged. "Suffering can always move a Jew's heart and tax his pocket to the limit. He will be at your mass meetings. But if you find any Americans there put them in a glass case and exhibit them. It will be worth fifty cents a head to go and look at that show." Twain's distinction between "Jews" and "Americans" implied that one could not belong to both groups; he was distancing Jews from American identity even as he was exalting Jews above Gentiles.[90] Sometimes Jews themselves in the United States used "Americans" in that same exclusionary sense. The most respected Jew in the country, Oscar Straus, employed "American" as a synonym for

Anglo-Saxon in a press interview where he was inveighing against antisemitic stereotypes.[91] Twain and Straus, then, both demonstrate a counterintuitive reality: the contemporary defense of Jews at times relied upon tropes that are recognizably prejudicial by modern lights.

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Two Democratic congressmen from New York City stepped into the yawning gap that separated America's public uproar from Roosevelt's strategic inertia. The first, Henry Goldfogle, submitted a resolution to the House decrying the butchery of Russian Jews. Goldfogle's resolution employed measured language with respect to the Roosevelt administration, asking "respectfully" that the president make diplomatic overtures to Russia "if he finds it not incompatible with the public interest."[92] His colleague, William "Plain Bill" Sulzer, was less temperate in a stemwinder from the House floor that drew applause from fellow representatives. He remarked with incredulity, "I know it is said by those who speak for the administration that our government can do nothing, that the president and secretary of state cannot act and have no power, according to international law, to intervene." But America hadn't been hamstrung in its condemnation of Armenian persecution in Turkey or its full-blown war on Cuban soil, he noted.[93] Sulzer's reasoning here was disingenuous—Roosevelt and Root had consistently pointed to Russian disarray, not international law, as the basis for their quietude.

A Jewish outlet of Democratic persuasion, the *Hebrew Standard*, was also unsympathetic to Roosevelt but at least willing to engage the debate on TR's own terms. "It has been remarked with diplomatic regrets that the president cannot intercede in view of the fact that there is no responsible government at present in Russia," the *Hebrew Standard* acknowledged. Skeptical that Roosevelt's hands were tied quite so tightly, the paper mused, "It certainly seems strange that the man who was able to bring some sort of pressure to bear upon Japan to accept Russia's terms is powerless to stop the carnival of bloodshed." The *Hebrew Standard* suggested that the president was inadvertently culpable for the pogroms because the peacemaking in Portsmouth—which with Roosevelt was so closely associated—prevented the Japanese from delivering a “smashing defeat” to their Russian adversaries. Had the czarist regime crumbled at Japan’s hands, then the ensuing pogrom wave wouldn’t have come to pass. Naturally a Democratic paper like the *Hebrew Standard* would be disposed to critique TR. More telling, perhaps, was the relative silence from pro-Roosevelt quarters that would normally have defended him on Jewish issues.[94]

Still, disturbing developments in Russia could have only reinforced the president’s inclination toward abstention. Ambassador Meyer reported to Roosevelt in late December that the czarist regime was making a fervent stand for its survival. “Reaction, during the last few days, has set in,” wrote Meyer—the Russian government was shutting down the press, imprisoning editors, and unleashing armed forces on labor unions. But the troops weren’t necessarily reliable. As Meyer disclosed, the army was plagued by “insubordination” in various cities throughout the empire, including the capital. His overall assessment was bleak: “Matters must soon come to a crisis.”[95] Indeed, that very day, a strike commenced in Moscow that immobilized the city and quickly turned violent. As the Moscow uprising spurred similar revolts elsewhere in Russia, the government responded with brute force.[96]

Meyer spoke with a shockingly relaxed czar during a New Year’s reception for diplomats at the imperial palace outside St. Petersburg. Czar Nicholas seemed obtuse to the turmoil upending his country. The American ambassador related the conversation in a cable to Roosevelt, scoffing at the czar’s naïveté: “He has a sublime faith in God … not at all appreciating that God prefers to help those who try to help themselves.”[97] In the face of deadly insurrection, Nicholas’s nonchalance could not have inspired Roosevelt’s confidence.

January, however, proved to be a good month for the czar. His government’s strategy of ruthlessly repressing the Russian people finally led to the restoration of order. Witte’s aspirations aside, it had not been liberal reform that earned the people’s respect but rather state violence that demanded it. Pogroms largely ceased as the government reestablished control. The authorities wouldn’t tolerate homicidal rioting of any kind, even when directed at a widely loathed target like Jews. Before the October Manifesto, pogroms were of real utility to the state; they deflected the people’s anger toward a vulnerable minority and away from the czarist kleptocracy that should have elicited their indignation. But the past several months had demonstrated that mob violence against Russian Jewry could coincide with broader anarchy that the regime might struggle to contain.[98]

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While Russia’s strife was subsiding, the commencement of the Algeciras Conference presented an opportunity for the president to score a palpable win on Jewish rights. America’s ambassador for the summit, Henry White, was under straightforward instructions: make the plight of Moroccan Jewry an actionable issue at the conference. In mid-January, delegates began descending on the amiable tourist town of Algeciras on Spain’s southern coast. Nested in a bay across from her more famous neighbor Gibraltar, Algeciras boasted an enviable supply of fresh oranges and bright homes befitting the Mediterranean scenery.[99] Ambassador White found that the Hotel de Ville, playing host to the conference proceedings, had been “handsomely arranged for the sittings.”[100]

In the conference’s opening days, White communicated to Secretary Root that the Roosevelt administration had been given flawed intelligence with respect to Moroccan Jewry. Recall that Jacob Schiff had forwarded to Root a study from a French-Jewish charity—the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*—enumerating the civil disabilities imposed on Moroccan Jews. White, in turn, had dispatched a Jewish-American diplomat, Lewis Einstein, to conduct a fact-finding mission. Einstein journeyed to Morocco before the conference and interviewed various Western experts on Morocco who were on hand for the negotiations in Algeciras. The results were in, and they largely undermined the claims by the *Alliance*.[101]

White relayed as much to Root and appended the text of Einstein’s report, which determined that anti-Jewish “restrictions have been abolished or else have fallen into abeyance.” Einstein continued, “Almost unknown to the outside world, a peaceful humanitarian reform has silently been accomplished, and the Jews of Morocco are well-nigh emancipated from the oppression which formerly burdened their lot." His report proceeded to debunk many of the specific allegations that the *Alliance* had made. Still, Moroccan-Jewish life was perhaps not quite as "enlightened" as Einstein's rosy portrait would have it. He tried to trivialize ongoing civil disabilities, writing for example, "That a Jew may not testify in court is more oppressive in theory than practice." For all Einstein's soft-pedaling, the fact remained that the *Alliance* had overstated the discrimination endured by Moroccan Jewry, giving Ambassador White pause about a formal remonstrance in Algeciras.[102]

White shared with Root yet another factor weighing against a censure of Morocco: Moroccan Jews themselves thought it ill-advised. They feared that the Moroccan sultan would take offense, given his relatively broad-minded attitude toward his Jewish subjects. "Anything in the nature of a complaint, they deem not only unjustified but prejudicial to their best interests," explained White. However, Moroccan Jews still wanted America to issue some kind of statement at the conference praising the sultan's liberality toward Jews while also prodding him to direct his state officials to act alike.[103]

To that end, two distinguished Moroccan Jews each proposed language that the U.S. government might adopt, which White forwarded to Root. The first Jew, Mr. Pimienta, advised that any declaration from the Roosevelt administration ought to credit the sultan for his "equity and goodwill" toward Jews. It should further convey America's hope that the sultan "see to it that his Jewish subjects may never be denied justice nor suffer violence" at the hands of his subordinates.[104] Pimienta reached out to the grand rabbi of Tangier, who sent his own substantially similar statement to Ambassador White. That these Moroccan Jews wanted the United States to promulgate a statement at all—one designed to preempt their maltreatment and even bloodshed—underscores that their condition wasn't as benign as Einstein's report insisted. The grand rabbi closed his message to White with an expression of gratitude: "I pray Almighty God to bestow His blessings on President Roosevelt."[105]

Ambassador White turned his attention to other conference matters in the subsequent weeks. In late March, with the conference still ongoing, White informed Secretary Root that he planned to submit the Moroccan-Jewish question to his fellow delegates in short order. But he was conflicted about how to proceed; Moroccan Jews desired a statement in language that might be too moderate to pass muster with their coreligionists back in America. "I fear the form suggested by [the] grand rabbi and others will be inadequate and unsatisfactory to our Jewish fellow citizens," White confessed, "and yet it would be unwise to say anything likely to be prejudicial to Jews in Morocco."[106] If true, it is highly ironic that American Jews—in a bid to support fellow Jews in Morocco—would be displeased with language that Moroccan Jews themselves preferred, language designed to ensure their good standing with the sultan. The Roosevelt administration had already suspected (in the case of Russia) that Jewish-American activism on behalf of Jews abroad might be ill-advised. Here was a striking indication that those suspicions had some merit.

Secretary Root replied to Ambassador White that, in light of the Einstein report, it was not "necessary or desirable" for America to seek from the conference any sort of sharp-elbowed protest regarding Morocco's treatment of its Jews. Whether to pursue even a tempered statement along the lines recommended by the grand rabbi, Root left to White's discretion. Root didn't address White's concerns about the potential dissatisfaction of American Jews with the kind of measured phrasing favored by their Moroccan coreligionists.[107]

Five days later, White formally solicited the conference delegates for mutual assent to a statement on Moroccan Jewry. The draft language from White was somewhat more pointed than that offered by Mr. Pimienta and the grand rabbi. While it did applaud the "equity and kindness" that the sultan extended to his Jewish subjects, the statement nonetheless contended that Moroccan officials "in the parts of the country far removed from the central power are not always sufficiently inspired with the feelings of tolerance and justice that animate their sovereign." Employing a French term, the statement affirmed the conference's "voeu" that the sultan would direct these errant authorities to emulate his own enlightened approach.[108]

(White later explained to Root that he chose “voeu” because it is “stronger than the English word ‘hope.’ ”[109]) Every delegate in succession spoke approvingly of White’s proposal—even Russia’s Count Cassini, who had peddled antisemitic fictions to the American press during his former stint as an ambassador in Washington.[110] The Moroccan delegation in Algeciras declared that the delegates’ collective sentiment would command the attention of the sultan, who could be counted upon to perpetuate his longstanding liberality.[111]

These developments garnered mainstream press coverage across the United States.[112] Ambassador White received a note of appreciation from the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, whose semi-inaccurate report had catalyzed his monthslong initiative. And the grand rabbi of Tangiers, on behalf of Moroccan Jewry at large, wrote a missive requesting that White “convey to President Roosevelt and the American government the expression of our grateful feelings for their noble and generous intervention.”[113] Both Jewish and mainstream papers throughout the United States published the grand rabbi’s letter.[114] The Algeciras Conference thus gave Roosevelt a public win for Jews, albeit a minor one given his strained relationship with American Jewry amid the Russian bloodbath.

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At the same time that White was raising the Jewish Question in Algeciras, the State Department learned that a fresh round of Russian pogroms might be in the offing. The prior two months had been relatively quiet ones for Russian Jewry after the devastation of last fall and early winter. But now Easter—a holiday that had coincided with anti-Jewish violence in the recent past—was imminent. American Jews with relatives in Russia were highly anxious that premeditated pogroms were afoot, and their fears came to the State Department’s attention. The deputy secretary of state cabled Ambassador Meyer in St. Petersburg, asking him for details about how Russian authorities planned to forestall Jewish deaths. Meyer was also instructed to discuss the issue with Britain’s ambassador to Russia; the British, compelled by their own Jewish community, were themselves soliciting information from the Russian government about possible pogroms.[115]

Two days later, Ambassador Meyer wrote Secretary Root, “Witte appears to be very sanguine that there will be no Jewish troubles.” Meyer relayed further that Russia’s provincial governors had been directed to hold police accountable for the preservation of peace. Still, Meyer didn’t expect an entirely nonviolent Easter. He warned Root, “I believe there is liability of some disturbances between Jews and subordinate authorities on account of the ill feeling which exists, but they should not be extensive if the governors of the various provinces act in good faith.” By Russia’s abysmal standards, this was promising news for Jewry.[116]

Meanwhile, Oscar Straus—apparently unaware of Meyer’s inquiry—raised concerns with Roosevelt directly about imminent carnage in Russia. “I know you have so many things upon your mind,” Straus began, “therefore pardon me if I take the liberty of reminding you of your intention to speak with Baron Rosen [i.e., the Russian ambassador in Washington] regarding the threatening Russian massacres on Easter.” Straus also shared with Roosevelt the anxieties of a British Jew and former MP, Sir Samuel Montagu, who was anticipating bloodshed.[117]

The president informed Straus that he had actually already met with Baron Rosen, who made “the positive statement that Russia was fully alive to the situation and was taking every step to prevent any trouble to the Jews.” TR divulged another detail from his meeting with the Russian ambassador: Rosen favorably remembered Straus’s even-keeled comportment in Portsmouth, where Rosen had been party to Witte’s conversation with the Jewish delegation the previous summer. But not everyone in New Hampshire had impressed Rosen. As the president now revealed, “I am bound to add that he stated that another prominent Jewish gentleman … had prejudiced Witte against the cause for which he was pleading, by his attitude”—a barely veiled reference to the outspoken Jacob Schiff.[118]

Between the inquiry that Ambassador Meyer made of Witte and the same that President Roosevelt made of Rosen, American diplomacy was once more at work for Russian Jewry. The Roosevelt administration had publicly announced throughout Russia’s turbulent period months earlier that future entreaties to the Russian state about Jewish safety would hinge upon the return of law and order. With the tumult now subsided, Roosevelt and his State Department were making good on their word.

Still, Roosevelt hardly relished being pushed to intervene in other countries’ affairs, especially since such requests were so common. In the foregoing letter to Straus, the president was candid about his frustration with frequent calls for him to speak out not just for Jews but also for the persecuted Armenians in Turkey and the innocent civilians of the Congo Free State, which was then under the brutal reign of the Belgian king. Roosevelt lamented, “It is a literal physical impossibility to interfere in any of these cases, save in the most guarded manner.” Given that America would never levy war against Russia because of the pogroms, TR maintained that it would be “futile, undignified, and mischievous” to overplay his hand. He resented that some Jewish advocates were obtuse to such difficulties. “All of this it is needless to write as far as you are concerned,” the president assured Straus, “but there are some of your friends who need to have these considerations ever clearly before their eyes.”[119] Jacob Schiff was unquestionably on Roosevelt’s mind with this latter comment. The president did not here specify what his professed reluctance meant for the future of his foreign policy vis-à-vis Jewish issues. Whether he would stay the course of periodically pressing Russia or retreat from that approach remained unclear.

Straus cabled his British counterpart, Montagu, relaying that Roosevelt had raised concerns about anti-Jewish violence with the Russian ambassador in Washington. Montagu, in turn, asked Straus for permission to publicize that information, an idea that Straus forwarded to the White House. But Straus caveated Montagu’s message with his own recommendation—the Roosevelt administration should take the initiative of trumpeting its measures for Russian Jewry. The benefits of publicity, Straus believed, were twofold: it would prevent the president from being subjected to additional requests for action from those who were unaware of his current efforts, and if Easter pogroms did take place, the public would know that the American government had at least tried to take preemptive steps.[120]

Roosevelt felt some misgivings about irking Russia with publicity. “She might readily be made sensitive by having it published that we are bringing pressure upon her,” the president explained to Straus. But TR ultimately put those worries aside, greenlighting Straus to disseminate a short statement about the recent American inquiry. Roosevelt provided Straus with language setting forth that the Russian government had offered the United States “the most positive assurances” that it was taking due care to avert anti-Jewish violence. The president’s draft statement continued, “The strictest orders have been given to local officials, who understand that they will be held responsible for any disturbance.”[121] American newspapers published that revelation a few days later just after Easter, which turned out to be a mercifully uneventful one for Russia’s Jews.[122]

Perhaps the Russian directive that local authorities were to keep the peace reflected the czarist regime’s own desire for law and order, regardless of Roosevelt’s preferences. Or maybe Russia was indeed spurred by the knowledge that it was under American scrutiny. Both factors were likely implicated to some degree. In either case, the fear of an Easter slaughter remained unrealized, and Straus credited the president. “He prevented the massacres,” Straus wrote matter-of-factly to a White House aide.[123] The aide replied the next day, “It is very gratifying to know that the president’s action was effective.”[124]

* * *

The absence of atrocities against Jews on Easter didn’t signal a diminution in Russian antisemitism. One indication that Judeophobia still had traction was Witte’s marginalization within the state apparatus. He found himself sidelined by Czar Nicholas in part because Witte didn’t share the czar’s inveterate hatred for Jews. Witte was still technically premier, but his title grew increasingly nominal. Nicholas told his mother that Witte was “absolutely discredited with everybody, except perhaps the Jews abroad.” When Witte asked the czar to lift Jewish quotas at Russian universities, Nicholas bluntly replied, “The Jewish question should be considered in its entirety only when I consider it appropriate”—which was to say, never.[125]

Shortly after Easter, Witte resigned his post. He was uninterested in serving as liberal cover for reactionaries any longer. Reflecting on his departure from office, Witte explained, “I did not wish to be a cat’s-paw for General Trepov … and a shield for the Black Hundreds.”[126] Russia’s regime was now rid of its most prominent advocate for Jewish rights.

Although Witte no longer offered the czar a facade of reformism, Nicholas could begrudgingly rely upon the newly convened Duma to that end. Ambassador Meyer showed little confidence in this incremental step toward democracy. He reported to Roosevelt, “Russia is entering upon a great experiment, ill prepared and really uneducated.” The tension between the czar and the legislature was palpable—and likely unsustainable. Meyer elaborated, “I do not mean to imply that a crash is coming at once, but that sooner or later a struggle … between the Crown and the Duma, unless all signs fail, is more than probable.”[127] If Russian Jews thought that the establishment of the Duma was a hopeful harbinger for their future, they would be disabused of their illusions before long.

* * *

Situated near the Pale of Settlement’s western edge, Bialystok was predominantly Jewish—fully three-fourths of the city’s residents were Jews. They thought their majority status offered them a buffer against the kind of violence exacted upon their coreligionists elsewhere in the empire. But their sizable population only served to make the city a target-rich environment for pogromists. Two months after a calm Easter, the feast day of Corpus Christi in mid-June quickly turned into mass murder on the streets of Bialystok.[128]

The three-day massacre entailed unconscionable cruelty. Jews were ruthlessly battered to death, with some assailants continuing to bludgeon the victims’ bodies long after their final breaths. “The faces of the dead have lost all human semblance,” observed a newspaper correspondent, “and the corpses simply are crushed masses of flesh and bone soaking in blood.”[129] Even by Russian standards, the extent of government complicity was damning. Troops and police alike were active in the barbarity, firing at defenseless Jews and sometimes bayonetting them. When the governor was informed of the deadly havoc, he bogusly blamed the Jews for provoking it with their revolutionary violence.[130] Some Jews managed to flee the city, but no safe haven awaited them. As one journalist reported, "Jews who escaped from Bialystok are wandering, starving, in the fields and woods."[131] The final death count placed the loss of life at upwards of seventy Jews, with about as many injured, and large numbers of Jewish homes and stores were left ransacked.[132]

Bialystok's butchery made front-page headlines across the United States—in large cities with many Jews and small towns with very few. Jacob Schiff expressed to Roosevelt his concerns about "the devilish proceedings at Bialystok" and forwarded "heartrending cablegrams from Russia" in the hopes that TR might initiate some kind of intervention. Schiff fully appreciated that the president had grown weary of such diplomatic endeavors, but the atrocities in Bialystok prompted Schiff to spend whatever capital he might have left. "I do know in advance that unfortunately nothing can be done by our government," Schiff conceded, anticipating Roosevelt's resistance. Still he expressed "the faint hope" that the administration might press the "Russian government, such as it is, to abstain from instigating the low populace to bloodshed." Schiff confessed his displeasure at leaning on Roosevelt anew—"I feel mortified that I have again to address you on this depressing subject"—but asked TR to consider the recent carnage to be sufficient "excuse."[133] It is highly likely that Oscar Straus advised Schiff to proceed cautiously here given that the president had vented to Straus before Easter about certain "friends" in the Jewish community whose repeated solicitations were becoming nettlesome.[134]

Roosevelt's response to Schiff was restrained, indicating he would discuss the matter with his secretary of state but commit to nothing more. "You know how deeply we sympathize with your feelings and how shocked and horrified we are at what has occurred in Russia," he offered, "but you know also how well-nigh impossible it is to accomplish anything but harm by interference."[135] Two days later, Simon Wolf visited the White House to discuss Bialystok with the president. Wolf had been a dependable Roosevelt ally until the horrific events of the prior fall, when he publicly and unsuccessfully tried to prod the president into action. Now Wolf was attempting the same, this time in person. Although Russia was no longer in a state of mass upheaval, Roosevelt's answer remained unchanged: American involvement was untenable.[136]

There was some plausibility in the president's prediction that American interference might backfire. It would have come as little surprise to Roosevelt that his name had been invoked as a means of whipping up anti-Jewish sentiment just before the Bialystok pogrom. A circular distributed to troops in Bialystok falsely asserted that Russian Jewry was agitating against the motherland at the behest of President Roosevelt and King Edward of England. This Anglo-American duo had allegedly operated through Jews in an unsuccessful bid to coax Russian soldiers to break ranks in the late war against Japan. Then, the American president and English king purportedly turned their sights on sabotaging the czar's regime by abetting Jewish revolutionaries in Russia. The circular claimed that this "fierce foreign foe sets his snares through his friends, always the Jews" in a bid to "seize altogether the land of our fathers." The *Quarterly Review*, a British periodical, would later report that the Russian military had not merely consumed but actually printed this propaganda.[137] With the government having regained control of the country for several months now, apparently the authorities deemed it safe to once more permit and even promote mob violence against Jews without fear that broader chaos might ensue. And any public criticism that Roosevelt made of Russia could provide grist for antisemitic conspiracy theories fueling such violence.

* * *

Mourners gathered on the Lower East Side at the oldest Russian synagogue in America to grieve for Bialystok's fallen Jews. The crowd was so immense that it spilled out the building's doors onto Norfolk Street. Although the synagogue was Orthodox, the principal speaker was a reform rabbi, Joseph Silverman—an indication that Russian antisemitism was yet again uniting an American Jewish community that otherwise had numerous schisms. The rabbi read aloud the recent message from Roosevelt to Jacob

Schiff about the hazards of intervention, and Silverman encouraged Jewry's deference to the president's discretion. "We must abide by the dictate of our own chief magistrate," insisted the rabbi. "If he thinks that the time is not ripe, then there shall be no diplomatic interference."[138]

But as it turned out, Roosevelt wasn't confining himself to diplomatic silence. Rather, he was maintaining the public illusion of nonintervention. TR wagered that covert solicitation, not overt censure, would elicit a more constructive reaction from the prideful Russians. He disclosed to Schiff, "I do not wish to say to anyone as yet what was done. The efficacy of anything that is done depends largely upon their being no symptom of offense to the Russian authorities." The president here intimated that a quiet appeal had already been made to St. Petersburg; in reality the administration was still finalizing how to proceed.[139]

Roosevelt then asked Schiff, if possible, to impress upon Jews in the United States that their conventional reliance on well-publicized clamor to support Russian Jewry would only undercut the administration's clandestine efforts to that same end. "Every public expression on their part looking to the interference of our government with Russia tends to defeat its own purpose and to make it more difficult for the [American] government to act," the president complained. "They simply hamper us in the effort to do whatever is possible and if they arouse antagonism in Russia, foredoom any such effort to failure." Roosevelt doubted that the leaders of American protests were even well-intentioned, contending, "There are demagogues engaged in these meetings whose purpose is not to do good to the poor sufferers in Russia, but to strengthen themselves with their people at home"—by this, he meant Democrats trying to gin up Jewish votes.[140]

Roosevelt's foregoing comment about "these meetings" wasn't an allusion to ongoing public demonstrations in America, as there simply hadn't been an eruption of mass meetings in the week since the Bialystok pogrom. Instead, it appears that Roosevelt was referencing the protests of the prior fall, and he anxiously anticipated that American Jewry might soon revive its public pressure campaign. The president warned Schiff that if his administration did push Russia publicly, it would inflict the dual harm of worsening Jewish life there and relegating the United States to an "undignified position" on the world stage.[141] Meanwhile, down the street from the White House, Congress was passing a joint resolution that expressed "hearty sympathy" for Bialystok's victims but notably avoided any criticism of the Russian government or any call for American intercession.[142]

The following day Secretary Root shared with Roosevelt draft language for a cable to St. Petersburg. That proposed cable directed Ambassador Meyer to "ascertain informally" from the Russians whether local officials in Bialystok were responsible for the pogroms, as was widely reported in the American press. Meyer was to convey the administration's belief that any local complicity surely ran counter to the central state's "true attitude," which Russia could reaffirm by holding "inculpated local officials" to account. Of course, the Roosevelt administration actually had little faith in the "true attitude" of the czar's regime; the State Department would be offering up a fiction and hoping that the Russian government might go along with it. Strikingly, the draft cable was candid that the administration's aim was to mollify popular uproar in the United States: Meyer was supposed to inquire whether the Russian government planned to "show its condemnation" and thereby "do away with the present unfortunate effect upon American public opinion."[143]

In forwarding this suggested language to the president, Root added his own ambivalent assessment of the draft cable. "I think it may do some good, though I do not feel sure of it," he confessed. "I do not know how it will be received. It may merely give offense. I am sure that to go further would do harm." And Root emphasized that even if Roosevelt did approve the cable for transmission to Meyer, it ought not be released to the press. After all, Russia wouldn't want to look like Roosevelt's puppet. An inquiry from Meyer to the Russian foreign minister—if kept discreet—might help induce Russia to bring local authorities in Bialystok to justice because Russia could prosecute them without appearing to have acted at America's behest. Roosevelt surely appreciated better than anyone that Root's insistence on "absolutely confidential communication" between America and Russia meant that the president wouldn't reap the political benefits at home of publicly stretching himself abroad. But Root was certain that staying sub rosa was necessary to avert further losses of Jewish life.[144] Roosevelt deferred to Root's discretion, agreeing to send the cable but keeping its existence from the newspapers.

The U.S. embassy in St. Petersburg received the cable the next morning. It was Ambassador Meyer's birthday, but he didn't take the day off. Instead, Meyer promptly requested a meeting with Count Izvolsky, the newly appointed Russian foreign minister, and was granted one for 4:30 that afternoon. Although the cable from Root to Meyer was written in cipher, the Russians had cracked the American code, so Izvolsky would have already seen Root's instructions prior to their conversation. Meyer himself was well aware that the Russians were in the habit of intercepting his cables from Washington. At their afternoon meeting, both statesmen partook in a bit of diplomatic fiction: Meyer told Izvolsky that he wanted to share with him a cable from Root, acting as if the cable would be unexpected news to the foreign minister; Izvolsky, in turn, pretended to be learning of the cable for the first time. Apparently, Izvolsky wasn't a very good performer. Meyer later wrote in his diary that Izvolsky's feigned ignorance was "unnatural."[145]

Having gotten through this rigmarole, Izvolsky informed Meyer of Russia's hard-line position: it would not entertain discussion of its internal affairs with a foreign power. Even though the cable from Washington was framed as merely a covert request for facts—and thus designed to avoid accusations that America was engaging in external interference—it was plainly a form of prodding. And the Russians saw it in exactly those terms, treating this bid at finesse as improper meddling. Izvolsky fell back on Russia's tried tactic of pointing out that the Roosevelt administration would not readily welcome Russian denunciation of American lynchings. As a modest concession, Izvolsky referred Meyer to a decree from the interior minister, promulgated after the Bialystok pogrom, declaring that "disorders of any kind, whether agrarian or anti-Jewish … must be suppressed in the most decisive manner." But the foreign minister would go no further. Ambassador Meyer found out the next day that his British counterpart in St. Petersburg, who had made similar inquiries of Izvolsky, met with comparable treatment. Meyer promptly communicated the whole of it to Root and later relayed the same in a letter to Roosevelt.[146]

TR aimed to placate Schiff, indicating that *something* had been done but withholding specific details. “I want to tell you that we have gone up to the very verge of receiving a rebuff that would put us in a very undignified and unpleasant position, in the effort to do what you suggested,” the president divulged. “I do not wish to give you the particulars in writing, and I do not want you to quote what I am saying to you.”[147] In turn, Schiff assured Roosevelt that this information would be held in “strict confidence.” Still, Schiff was eager to learn more and shared that he would soon be visiting his son, whose new summer home was conveniently located in Oyster Bay near the president’s own. “Perhaps you may then be willing to say something further to me,” Schiff wrote nudgingly. For the time being, though, he promised not to “burden” the president anymore and closed his letter with a word of gratitude for the administration’s recent effort.[148] Of course, Schiff stayed his hand for only so long before indulging the instinct to write Roosevelt again, this time to propose using American warships to ferry Russian Jews out of the czar’s empire. TR replied with a token word of sympathy—“I quite appreciate the horror which all people must feel at what has gone on in Russia”—before giving his candid appraisal that Schiff’s warship idea was “a spectacular bit of folly.”[149]

Although Roosevelt’s diplomatic play remained confidential, there was one public display of sympathy from the president: he signed the congressional resolution expressing condolences to Bialystok’s Jews.[150] The English Jew Sir Samuel Montagu was optimistic that even this kind of exercise from the Americans, while not policymaking per se, had the potential to impact the Russian regime. He told the British press, “We are much gratified that President Roosevelt approved the resolution passed by Congress expressing horror over the massacres. Official declarations, such as this, have great influence in persuading the St. Petersburg authorities to stop Jew-baiting.”[151] The weight of foreign opinion would prompt a response from Russia, though not the kind that Montagu wanted.

* * *

Early July saw the Russian interior minister circulate his own report on the pogrom—riddled with antisemitic falsehoods—to various embassies in St. Petersburg for transmission to their home governments. It depicted the violence in Bialystok as effectively a pitched battle between local authorities and Jewish "terrorists" engaged in revolutionary assaults. Although the report did concede that there were blameless Jewish victims, it nevertheless insisted that their radical coreligionists had fomented conditions ripe for the loss of innocent life. Among the most egregious untruths was the denial of state culpability. In the report's words, "The government indignantly denies the rumors spread abroad that the anti-Jewish riots at Bialystok took place with the knowledge and connivance of the local administration and of the troops."[152] Of course, these were not rumors but facts, and they emanated not from foreign lands but from Bialystok itself.

That the Russian state took the extraordinary measure of disseminating a report at all to the international community was a concession of sorts—plainly, St. Petersburg felt compelled to respond amid the global revulsion at Russian barbarism. The *New York Times* noted that even though the report certainly did not countenance the propriety of foreign inquiries about internal affairs, still this "unprecedented action" amounted to a "distinct recognition of the power of public opinion abroad."[153] Public opinion abroad had power indeed: the power to elicit from Russia defensive posturing. The report reflected precisely the kind of reactionary impulse that Roosevelt had been wary of provoking.

But the czar's administrative apparatus was no longer the only voice of Russian governance. For the first time in the country's history, a pogrom had transpired with a legislative body, and not just the autocracy, exercising authority. And that body even included twelve Jews. The members of the Duma, known as "deputies," took decisive action when word of the atrocities reached St. Petersburg. A three-person committee set off for Bialystok to engage in an extensive investigation. When they returned, a dramatic session of the Duma convened to hear their findings at the very moment that the interior ministry was readying its sham report.[154]

A deputy representing the investigatory committee, M. P. Arakantzeff, took the floor before densely packed galleries. For two hours, he read aloud an unsanitized rendition of Bialystok’s brutalities. Arakantzeff rejected the baseless allegation that Jewish revolutionaries were to blame and instead fingered local authorities for premeditating the attack. According to one account, the deputy spoke “in quiet, sober language and in a low voice, which only heightened the thrilling horror of the recital.” Arakantzeff concluded his remarks by asking the Duma to pay its respects to Bialystok’s dead. The entire body stood up in homage to those slain.[155]

Several days later, another deputy told the Associated Press that the central state itself was implicated in planning the pogrom.[156] In truth, it remains unclear even today whether the national government in St. Petersburg bore direct responsibility for the slaughter in Bialystok. That uncertainty holds for the pogroms at large—historians debate the extent to which the central authorities actively advanced pogroms versus passively tolerated them.[157] But the evidence is strong that at least some officials in high command relied on pogroms as a tool of statecraft. As Witte remarked of his rival, “Trepov did not love the art of pogrom-making for its own sake. He merely did not hesitate to resort to pogroms whenever he considered them necessary for the protection of the vital interests of the state.” A number of Trepov’s ilk were even more callous. Witte knew of “many other high officials to whom the bloody game of pogrom-making was a mere political amusement.” Antisemitism had as much purchase on the upper echelons of the capital as it did the lower classes of the Pale.[158]

* * *

Back in the United States, Roosevelt grew annoyed when a Jewish paper called for more robust American intervention. In a letter to Nathan Bijur—a steadfast Jewish Republican ally—the president confessed his frustration: “We have gone to the very verge, perhaps beyond the very verge, of doing what as a government we could do in this matter, consistently with our own self-respect and with the advantage of the Russian Jews.” He felt that pushing harder could only backfire so long as czarist Russia was hostile to

American entreaties. An exasperated Roosevelt vented, “Surely it seems to me that the most foolish and hysterical person should realize that, under conditions as they actually are, it is impossible for us to do more than we have done in this matter.” In what was becoming a recurring refrain in TR’s correspondence, he grouped the cause of Jews in Russia together with Armenians in Turkey and Congolese under Belgian rule—this unholy trinity of humanitarian catastrophes elicited repeated requests for the president’s intercession, but he maintained that America could not police the world.[159]

Roosevelt’s letter to Bijur also reprised a cynical grievance that TR had shared with Schiff: those disposed to call on his administration for diplomatic protest were engaged in a self-serving ploy for political power. The president alleged to Bijur that public agitation “represents not an effective purpose to do good to those who are suffering in Russia, but to exploit, in the interest of entirely selfish individuals, the Jewish vote in America.”[160] Roosevelt himself may not have been on the ballot, but 1906 was an election year for Congress and New York state alike; November clearly loomed large in his mind amid a difficult stretch with his Jewish constituents.

Of course, Democrats would prove eager in the fall campaign to condemn the pogroms and call for action by the U.S. government. But Roosevelt was too cynical by half. Most appeals for his intervention came not from politicians but from ordinary people, as testified by the one thousand Jewish immigrants, all from Bialystok, who came together in an anguished meeting at a Lower East Side synagogue. They mourned the dead, donated to the living, and petitioned the president. Their resolution called on TR to beseech the czar, pleading with Roosevelt, “In civilization and humanity’s name, bring this universal protest, and the other powers will certainly follow.” Many of those present still had family in Bialystok and feared that fresh outbreaks of violence might threaten the survivors.[161]

That gathering aside, Roosevelt was under less intense pressure to act than he had faced the prior fall. Bialystok, gruesome though it was, did not spark a tidal wave of antisemitic violence engulfing the whole Pale of Settlement, as happened eight months earlier. The scale of suffering was thus far more limited, and the response of American Jewry accordingly proportional. To be sure, June and July saw some Jewish demonstrations and donations in the United States, but nothing on par with the mass mobilization of the previous November and December. Schiff even suggested with striking optimism to a playwright that Bialystok "represented only the last outburst of impotent rage on the part of the old Russian governmental system in its final breakdown."[162] And Jews in America could take some comfort in knowing that Russia now had a Duma, one determined to surface the truth about Bialystok. "The Duma to the Rescue," read a headline in a Jewish weekly from California.[163]

Indeed, in the third week of July, the Duma's deputies passed a damning resolution. It pinned culpability for the massacre not just on local officials but on the central state as well, which purportedly approved "extensive propaganda for the organization of an attack." The resolution fulminated against the autocracy's "official reports [that] concealed the truth and clearly sought to justify the murder of peaceful citizens." Duma deputies also demanded in their resolution widespread punishment for all guilty parties, no matter how lofty their stations.[164] The next day, when Duma members arrived at their legislative hall, they found the doors bolted shut. On a nearby column hung a decree from the czar: the Duma was officially dissolved.[165] Nicholas would not stomach one day more of a legislature committed to justice for Jewish victims.[166]

With the threat of legislative oversight now vanquished, Russian troops instigated a pogrom in the town of Sedlits, some sixty miles from Warsaw, in early September. The American consul in Warsaw concisely captured the devastation in a five-word wire to the U.S. embassy in St. Petersburg: "Sedlits exact repetition of Bialystok."[167] And then quiet. Sedlits was the last pogrom of the appalling wave that had begun with Kishinev in 1903. Survivors across the Pale were left to rebuild their lives amid the blood-stained rubble of three terrifying years. If there was now peace, Schiff remarked, "it is the peace of the graveyard."[168]

* * *

Theodore Roosevelt's relationship with American Jewry had suffered its greatest strains over the preceding ten months. His generic expressions of sympathy, decoupled from public pressure on Russia, left even his traditional supporters disappointed in his apparent inertia. Unlike his Jewish-American compatriots, TR believed that the widespread chaos following the October Manifesto precluded his solicitations of a Russian state that seemed to be careening toward collapse. Once the czar's government regained control, the president resumed his willingness—with some reluctance—to make use of diplomatic channels, first before Easter and again after Bialystok. Roosevelt was concerned, in part, about the embarrassment of a rebuff from Russia, which was always ready to invoke the principle of noninterference in domestic affairs and to remind Americans that the scourge of lynching made hypocrites of them. TR also worried that American overreach on the diplomatic front might actually worsen conditions for Russian Jews—indeed, there was plausible reason to think it could alienate the czar and incite popular resentment among Russian Gentiles.

Roosevelt therefore shielded his efforts from public view, lest the exposure undermine their efficacy. Unlike earlier episodes—the Romanian Note, the Kishinev Petition, the Passport Question—the past year left him bereft of any major win on Jewish causes that he, and his fellow Republicans, could trumpet. True, the Algeciras Conference allowed Roosevelt to score some points with the American Jewish community. But that was a trifling victory against the backdrop of mass murder in the Pale. Soon Jewish voters would head to the polls for the 1906 elections; their recent memory of seeming inaction by the president might well override their longer memory of prior instances when the Republican administration manifestly stood up for their coreligionists in Eastern Europe.

But Roosevelt wasn't going to passively watch Jews drift to the Democratic Party. He told a leading Republican official to consult with Jacob Schiff about the Jewish vote. The president then added, with deliberate ambiguity, "He knows of something which I am going to do."[169] For more than a year, Roosevelt had been quietly plotting a major move—

whose significance to American Jewry would be unprecedented—and the opportune moment for his historic reveal was almost at hand.

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7

APPOINTMENTS & IMMIGRANTS

Theodore Roosevelt's name may not have been on the ballot in the 1906 midterm elections, but Republicans well understood that the party's fate that fall would be inseparable from the president's stature. In places with large Jewish constituencies, Republicans wagered that Roosevelt's reputation was still favorable enough to bolster support for their candidates. A Yiddish daily in New York, the *Jewish Morning Journal*, published a letter in English from the RNC chairman insisting that "Theodore Roosevelt's personality must be a central figure and his achievements a central thought in the campaign."[1] The Republican calculus with Jewish voters would certainly not mean running away from the president and his record.

Still, the plight of Russian Jewry remained a vulnerability for Roosevelt and thus for the GOP. The Democratic *Hebrew Standard* suggested that his reticence to advocate for Russian Jewry was hypocritical. After all, the president had showed a strong willingness to insinuate himself into other nations' affairs in Latin America, especially when U.S. businesses stood to profit thereby. "If Russia were only a little nearer home and this country had some interest—financial if possible—in her affairs, how quickly President Roosevelt would intervene," the paper sneered.[2]

In New York state, which claimed more Jews than all other states combined, the local party conventions in late September betokened the importance of Russian Jewry to the campaign.[3] The Democrats, gathering in Buffalo, included a platform plank calling on the national government to protect Russia's Jews from any further "atrocities" that have "shocked the conscience of civilization."[4] Meanwhile, the Republicans adopted a platform in Saratoga that expressed "sincerest sympathy" for the pogrom's victims but notably made no comparable demand for action.[5] Although both sides nodded to the state's considerable Jewish electorate, only Democrats had something to gain from pressuring the Roosevelt administration.

Among the most eager observers of New York's campaign season that fall was TR himself. He felt deeply attached to New York—both city and state—and was personally invested in ensuring Republican success there. Roosevelt's wide portfolio of international and domestic challenges as president did not preclude him from stressing about such granular details as the absence of a sufficiently religious Jewish candidate on a slate of nominees for the county bench covering Manhattan. In early October, a Republican congressman from New York City named Herbert Parsons, a non-Jew, brought the issue to Roosevelt's attention. Parsons argued that the GOP should not endorse a judicial ticket put forward by a group of self-styled nonpartisan lawyers and should instead furnish its own slate of judges. The reason: "There is not an Orthodox Jew on their ticket."[6] He conveyed that the nonpartisan ticket did include a Jew, but that Jew wasn't traditionally devout. The ticket regrettably overlooked Otto Rosalsky, a young Orthodox judge who had received an interim vacancy appointment to the county bench and was now hoping for election to a full term. From the GOP perspective, the thirty-three-year-old Rosalsky was the ideal candidate: not only was he Orthodox and Republican, but he was so steeped in the Lower East Side that he still lived with his parents on Rivington Street.[7] "There is nobody from the East Side," Parsons lamented.[8]

Roosevelt was incensed by the snub to the Orthodox community. "It was an outrage to leave off Rosalsky," the president fumed to Parsons. "You must have the East Side represented."[9] TR also took up the matter with the Republican nominee for governor, Charles Evans Hughes. "They had no business to leave an excellent East Side Jew, Judge Rosalsky, off of it," the president griped as he implored Hughes to throw his weight behind the Orthodox jurist.[10] Several days later, Rosalsky indeed earned a slot on the Republican judicial slate, no doubt thanks to Roosevelt's intervention.[11]

As a former resident of the governor's mansion, TR was particularly interested in Hughes's own race. Hughes was a lawyer (and future chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court) who had earned a reputation for fighting corruption after undertaking state investigations into the utility and insurance industries. He was now facing off in the gubernatorial contest against William Randolph Hearst, a Democratic congressman who doubled as a newspaper tycoon. "The situation is certainly very serious in New York," Roosevelt cautioned Hughes. "Hearst will of course use money like water and with shameless corruption wherever he gets a chance." TR fully appreciated the importance of the state's Jewish vote, particularly in New York City, where one in five residents was Jewish. He advised Hughes to consult the state attorney general, himself a Jew who "ought to know the East Side." Roosevelt warned Hughes in a postscript, "I hear the Jews on the East Side are enthusiastic for Hearst."[12] Despite Republican victories in four consecutive governor's races, the president would take nothing for granted.

Roosevelt soon reached out to Timothy Woodruff—chairman of the state Republican committee—to share his worries about "the Jews, who I understand are inclined to go for Hearst in a mass."[13] Woodruff, however, was more sanguine about Hughes's Jewish prospects, informing Roosevelt, "The *Daily News* and the *Morning Journal* and the *Abend-Post*, all printed in Yiddish, which have an aggregate circulation of over a hundred thousand, are already supporting Hughes in their news columns." Lest the president wonder how an Anglo-Saxon blue blood like Woodruff kept abreast of the Yiddish papers, the state chairman explained, "I know because I have had the Yiddish translated for me."[14]

Roosevelt wasn't content to rest on this promising bit of intelligence, so he tapped his closest Jewish aide, Oscar Straus, for help. "See if there is not some way you could be of assistance in preventing the East Side vote—notably among the Jews—from going for Hearst," TR urged Straus. "He has completely misled those poor people over there. I earnestly hope you can do this."[15] Straus tried to allay the president's concerns. "Bijur and I have our hands on the pulses on the East Side," he wrote, referring to the Jewish Republican and longtime Roosevelt confidant Nathan Bijur. "I think you need have no fear that Hearst will mislead your constituents over there." Straus encouraged TR to have faith in the Jewish electorate: "Our East Side friends, I am sure, will show a wise discrimination. There is much more wisdom over there than one would imagine." Oscar Straus also reiterated what Woodruff had already communicated to the president: the Jewish papers were standing behind Hughes. And Straus further assured TR that he was personally prepared to stump on the East Side.[16] The president's response was consummately Rooseveltian: "Bully for you!"[17]

Although Hearst may not have been as dominant with Jewish voters as Roosevelt fretted, the Democratic nominee for governor was nevertheless making considerable efforts to woo them. He pushed Tammany Hall to include the consummate East Sider Otto Rosalsky on the Democratic judicial slate, even though Rosalsky was a Republican (apparently, no rule prohibited both parties from putting the same nominee on their respective tickets).[18] Hearst also held a packed rally on the East Side where a surrogate touted the candidate as a longtime friend of the Jews.[19] A few days later, Hearst took a highly unusual step that only a press mogul would devise: he started his own Jewish newspaper for distribution on the Lower East Side to make his case to voters.[20] And then Hearst lined up an endorsement from a prominent Jewish philanthropist.[21]

But Roosevelt was the sitting president, and as such, there were tools at his disposal that even a newspaper magnate couldn't boast. Since at least the spring of 1905, TR had contemplated taking an unprecedented step forward for American Jewry.[22] The president disclosed his plan to a small circle but insisted on confidentiality; he wanted to maximize the impact of its publicity at the optimal moment. "Of course, see that under no circumstances any hint gets out, save from me," Roosevelt told Timothy Woodruff as the campaign season intensified in October. He added, "I wish to prevent its getting out until a week from today, Sunday, at the earliest, and then only with my authority."[23] Woodruff responded that he would, of course, defer to Roosevelt’s discretion on timing but nonetheless felt “the quicker the better, from the standpoint of the best interests of the campaign.”[24] Soon thereafter, with election day just two weeks away, voters learned of the president’s seminal initiative: Oscar Straus would become the first Jew in American history to sit in the cabinet.[25]

* * *

Nine months earlier, Straus enjoyed an informal lunch at the White House with the president and a collection of guests. Roosevelt asked Straus to stay behind in the Red Room for a private discussion. “I don’t know whether you know it or not, but I want you to become a member of my cabinet,” TR divulged. Straus did indeed already know it; Jacob Schiff had tipped him off. Two earlier presidents—Ulysses S. Grant and Grover Cleveland—had offered a cabinet post to a Jew, but in both instances the prospective candidate declined the opportunity. Straus would be the first to accept. It was yet to be finalized which department Straus would head, but the president told him that “your character, your judgment, and your ability” all commended him to a cabinet appointment.[26]

The promotion wasn’t just a reflection of Roosevelt’s esteem for Straus; TR also considered it a move in global diplomacy. “I want to show Russia and some other countries what we think of the Jews in this country,” the president informed Straus in their Red Room meeting. At that moment, in January of 1906, the spike in pogroms precipitated by the October Manifesto hadn’t fully subsided. Roosevelt expressed to Straus his fear that denouncing Russian pogroms would play well at home but exacerbate Jewish conditions abroad. Far better to signal the United States’ commitment to religious equality by example, TR reasoned. Jewish representation in the cabinet of the American president would offer a sharp contrast to the blood-drenched bigotry then prevailing in the Russian Empire.[27]

Over the summer, with the pending appointment still under wraps, Roosevelt indicated to Straus that his imminent placement and performance in the cabinet would offer a powerful rebuttal to antisemitic stereotypes in general. Straus had just given an interview to the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* in which he repudiated the pernicious myth that Jews were materialistic, prompting Roosevelt to compliment Straus: “Your article in answer to the attacks upon the Jews was excellent.” The president added, “I think the best answer, after all, my dear fellow, will be your appointment to the cabinet and the service you are certain to render thereunder.”[28] Straus would later tell the president he understood that his promotion was intended to combat antisemitism within *and* beyond America’s borders. “Your calling me to your cabinet … I well know had a meaning which far transcended my personality,” he recognized. “You desired to rebuke, not only in this country but also in others, that spirit of intolerance which is repugnant to the fundamental principles of our democratic institutions.”[29]

The appointment was designed to send a message to Jews as well. As Roosevelt conveyed to the Christian theologian Lyman Abbott, Straus’s elevation to the cabinet demonstrated to America’s Jews that “they have in this country just the same rights and opportunities as everyone else.” And it provided an exemplar for the upcoming generation of Jewish Americans. “I want the Jewish young man who is born in this country to feel that Straus stands for his ideal of the successful man rather than some crooked Jew money-maker,” the president explained to Abbott.[30] We see once again Roosevelt’s capacity for framing his defense of Jews in the trappings of prejudicial tropes.

In sum, Straus’s identity as a *Jewish* cabinet member mattered. It showcased American inclusivity to audiences at home and abroad. It gave younger Jews in the United States a model to emulate. And it mattered electorally, too, or else TR wouldn’t have waited until the eve of an election to reveal the nomination. Roosevelt unambiguously acknowledged to the social reformer and political ally Jacob Riis, “I did all I could to help out the campaign by announcing the selection of Oscar Straus for my cabinet.”[31] Straus capitalized on that announcement by courting Jewish voters on behalf of Charles Evans Hughes, Republican nominee for the New York governorship.[32] For all the resources and reportage at his Democratic opponent’s disposal, it was Hughes who emerged victorious on election day.

This is not to say that the Straus pick was purely about optics. To the contrary, the president had deeply valued Straus's advice for years, and not just on Jewish issues. Straus counseled Roosevelt on topics as varied as Indian affairs, labor conflicts, and Caribbean relations.[33] But Straus's unquestioned competence aside, the ascendance of a Jew to the presidential cabinet was of no small moment. Diplomatically, culturally, and politically, TR understood as keenly as anyone its significance.

* * *

Roosevelt had long been dogged by a philosophical tension in his hiring. He wanted to actively ensure that his recruits and appointees reflected America's heterogeneity while also resisting the idea that any factor beyond merit influenced his selection process. Whether as police commissioner, Rough Rider colonel, or chief executive of the nation, TR often championed religious diversity in employment. For instance, Roosevelt told Lyman Abbott that he had aimed to ensure that his cabinet—wherein Protestant, Jew, and Catholic served alongside one another—had "an absolutely representative character." But Roosevelt was also enamored of a countervailing concept: American civic life as an identity-neutral sphere where merit alone mattered.[34]

The result was a Roosevelt divided against himself. He routinely stressed the importance of involving Jews in government *and* routinely denied that their Jewish backgrounds in any way informed his hiring or promotion decisions. In the very letter to Abbott where he acknowledged his conscious effort to make the cabinet reflect the nation's diversity, Roosevelt disavowed that self-same goal: "It is not considered whether any member of my cabinet is of English, or Scotch, or Dutch, or German, or Irish descent; whether he is Protestant, Catholic or Jew."[35] He could never bring himself to definitively choose between the identity-driven ideal of pluralism and the identity-free ideal of merit. In theory, Roosevelt might have reconciled the two by suggesting that true meritocracy would organically engender diversity. But he never made any such claim.

In fact, Roosevelt confessed in moments of candor that he appointed Jews in part *because* they were Jews. For example, he received word in 1904 that a Jewish federal marshal in New York City, William Henkel, had allegedly cultivated ties to Tammany Hall and ought to be relieved of his post. If Henkel were dispensed with, the president preferred that another Jew take his place. “We could substitute for him some first-class Jew,” Roosevelt told a senator. “I would not want the Jews to feel that we had turned out one of their number when he is the only representative of the race at present holding a federal position in New York.” The president also contemplated the possibility that the accusations against Henkel had been leveled “unjustly.” In the end, Henkel retained his post.[36]

A similar episode arose the following year. Roosevelt received a letter from a congressman expressing concerns about a particular Jewish office-seeker whom the president planned to make the customs surveyor in Indianapolis. Despite the congressman’s doubts, Roosevelt was determined to stay the course, admitting, “One reason, which I do not like to have spoken of much, is that I like when I can to appoint a Jew for the very reason that it is often so difficult to find just the right Jew to appoint.”[37] It is unsurprising that Roosevelt did not like to speak much of it; he took pains to ensure religious diversity in the government workforce at the same time that he wanted to espouse merit as the only rightful qualification. The president neatly summed up these dueling imperatives when he put his hand on Straus’s knee and remarked, “I don’t appoint you because you are a Jew, but I am mighty glad you are one.”[38]

* * *

For Straus to join the cabinet at all was consequential, but it became doubly so because he was tapped to lead the Department of Commerce and Labor, which housed the Bureau of Immigration. In other words, a foreign-born Jew would preside over American immigration policy. Some extended commentary here on the larger context of immigration is warranted because it throws into high relief the extraordinary nature of Straus’s appointment.

The Rooseveltian age was a fraught one for immigrants, as a tidal wave of newcomers stoked nativist anxieties. Since the country's founding, American borders had been open to nearly anyone who sought to forge a life in the New World. Most of the immigrants for the first hundred years of the republic were Northern and Western European: British, Irish, French, German, Dutch, Swiss, and Scandinavian. But beginning in the late nineteenth century, these "old immigrants" were overtaken in number by "new immigrants" hailing from Southern and Eastern Europe: Italian, Greek, Slavic, Balkan, Turkish, and Jewish.[39] To be sure, there were immigrants from other continents, but more than 90 percent of foreign arrivals could claim European provenance.[40]

Russian Jews formed a sizable slice of the influx at American ports. Although some Jews fleeing the Russian Empire settled elsewhere—Western Europe, South America, Palestine—the bulk landed stateside. Jews constituted little more than 4 percent of the Russian population but almost 80 percent of Russia's emigrants. In fact, a Russian Jew was thirty times more likely than a Russian Gentile to expatriate. The horrific pogrom wave of 1903–1906 prompted an unprecedented Jewish exodus from Russia in those years, sevenfold the number who had left amid the pogroms of the 1880s. With the United States claiming more of these Russian-Jewish refugees than all other countries combined, Roosevelt's tenure at the White House aligned with a peak in Jewish immigration never before seen in American history.[41] It had previously taken more than two centuries for the Jewish-American population to reach its first million. TR's two terms in office saw that number almost double.[42]

And there were many more Jews yet to come. In 1906, the U.S. ambassador in St. Petersburg recounted to Roosevelt that he had recently inquired with a Russian official about a group of local Jews who were scheduled to embark for America, and the official "smiled and replied that they had seven million in Russia that we were welcome to."[43] The real number was closer to six million, but it was still the largest number of Jews in the world, even with the ever-quickening Jewish flight from czarist territory.[44] Other antisemitic countries, such as Romania and Austria-Hungary, also contributed to the Jewish migration stateside.[45]

Although the old immigrants in the United States hadn’t always enjoyed the warmest welcome, the new immigrants—both Jew and Gentile—fomented particularly acute anxiety among the native-born. New immigrants spoke in strange tongues, practiced curious customs, and packed into ethnic enclaves in overcrowded cities. Many nativists feared that the essential character of the country was under siege.[46]

It had long been fashionable among some faction of Anglo-Saxon elites to imagine themselves as members of a superior race upon whose leadership rested the nation’s fate. In response to the perceived threat posed by new immigrants, Anglo-Saxons became more accepting of old immigrants who had been previously marginalized. Anglo-Saxon nativists increasingly claimed a common “old stock” identity with others deriving from Northern and Western Europe. These nativists feared that American greatness could not withstand the unrelenting infusion of alien blood from Southern and Eastern Europeans.[47]

Madison Grant, the most prolific xenophobe of the day, fulminated against the “hordes of immigrants of inferior racial value” in his popular publication *The Passing of the Great Race*.[48] As a favor to a mutual friend, Roosevelt endorsed Grant’s book, only to immediately rue that decision.[49] Grant’s ilk hardly saw themselves as part of a shared white race that encompassed all European ancestries. For them, Jews ranked among those who fell outside the boundaries of whiteness.[50] Nativist angst reveals how antisemitism had ethnic, and not merely religious, dimensions. If the problem with Jews was solely their religion, conversion could remedy that much. But the nativists saw Jews as a congenitally flawed race; immigration restriction alone could protect the old stock.

Recall that in 1894 three young Harvard alumni of Anglo-Saxon lineage established the Immigration Restriction League, the most conspicuous organization seeking to reduce the inflow of Jews, Italians, and other stigmatized groups. The reactionary elitists who comprised the league formed an unlikely alliance with some portion of the laboring classes—blue collar workers who were concerned that impoverished immigrants, willing to toil for low wages in hazardous conditions, were jeopardizing their own earnings and job security.[51]

Even before the league's founding, anxieties about immigration had become sufficiently widespread by the early 1880s that Congress began implementing some novel regulations. In 1882, Congress passed a law refusing immigrants who were liable to become dependent on the state, and three years later, a new statute somewhat limited employers' ability to import labor. The following decade, another law created new categories of excludable immigrants, including polygamists, convicted felons, and the contagiously diseased. After William McKinley was felled by an anarchist's bullet, political extremism became another legally sanctioned reason for turning back fresh arrivals, as a 1903 statute barred anarchists and seditionists.[52]

Still, the borders remained relatively open. The emerging legal architecture of immigration didn't actually result in many deportations. What's more, not all Mayflower descendants or factory workers opposed the new immigrants. The nativist movement was underdeveloped and wouldn't achieve its restrictionist goals in earnest until the 1920s. Legislation before the xenophobic heyday of the 1920s didn't target immigrants on the basis of national origin or ethnicity (with the notable exception of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882). For Southern and Eastern Europeans in Roosevelt's age, cultural stigma more than legal prohibition presented the primary challenge to their belonging in American society.[53] That stigma was particularly severe for Jewish immigrants.[54]

The nationally renowned sociology professor Edward A. Ross gave voice to widely held misgivings about Jewish newcomers. In the popular periodical *Century Magazine*, he published a deeply antisemitic article entitled "The Hebrews of Eastern Europe in America." Ross's piece recycled well-worn stereotypes about Jewry as a plague on American society. He accused Jews of corrupting professional ethics—from law and medicine to newspapers and theaters—with their unscrupulous quest for wealth. From Ross's viewpoint, Jews had only themselves to blame for their exclusion from patrician social clubs and summer resorts. "Bigotry has little or nothing to do with it," Ross maintained. He explained that the Gentile doesn't want to fraternize with the Jew because "the Gentile resents being obliged to engage in a humiliating and undignified scramble in order to keep his trade or his clients against the Jewish invader.” Drawing on yet another common trope about Jews, Ross alleged they were sexually unscrupulous. “Pleasure-loving Jewish businessmen spare Jewesses, but pursue Gentile girls,” he warned Christian fathers.[55]

Jews not only degraded the marketplace and womanly virtue; according to Ross, they were outright lawbreakers. “The Eastern European Hebrews feel no reverence for law as such,” he reported, “and are willing to break any ordinance they find in their way.” Although official statistics showed that Jews were substantially *underrepresented* among convicted criminals, Professor Ross was not so easily dissuaded by data. He contended that the comparatively low percentage of Jewish inmates was itself damning—it demonstrated the Jews’ success at evading detection of their illicit schemes. “The fewness of the Hebrews in prison has been used to spread the impression that they are uncommonly law-abiding,” he noted, but “it is harder to catch and convict criminals of cunning.”[56] By arguing that the favorable crime statistics for Jews actually offered all the more evidence of Jewish illegality, Ross exemplified the kind of circular reasoning that so often shielded antisemitism from factual refutation. Antisemitic thought, unburdened by the demands of evidence and logic, contented itself with the unproven premise of Jewish degeneracy.

At times, Ross’s article tempered its indictment of Jews with kinder observations. But even these compliments were in service of his broader criticisms. For example, he credited Jews for their “intellectuality” and recounted their considerable ability in a range of cognitively challenging endeavors. Yet that very same mental prowess was, purportedly, the most effective Jewish weapon against Gentiles. Ross depicted Jews as shrewd operators who relied on their “subtle Hebrew brains” to convince American Gentiles of “the blessings of immigration.” He similarly groused that “keen-witted Hebrews” were taking over key positions in local and national government.[57] Toward the end of his piece, Ross warned in summation that “there will be trouble” if America continued to admit large numbers of Jewish immigrants.[58] That Ross enjoyed considerable stature suggests much about the resonance of his anti-Judaic biases among elites.

In response to contemporary antisemitism in America, the president of a B’nai B’rith local chapter expressed concern about “the low ebb of the public’s favorable opinion of the Jew.” He decried how “our petty vices have been magnified and our slightest errors exaggerated.”[59] Although prejudicial stereotyping was the most common form of anti-Jewish bigotry, violence against American Jews was not unheard of. Sometimes assaults were perpetrated by other ethnic groups, other times by the police. And in one notorious case, a Jew named Leo Frank from New York met his mortal fate at the hands of a Georgia lynch mob after he was wrongly accused of murdering a Christian girl.[60]

To be sure, America wasn’t categorically antisemitic. Jews and Gentiles alike partook in mass protests against the Russian pogroms and donated fulsomely to the survivors. Then again, the public’s condemnation of Russian oppression wasn’t always an indication of unalloyed sympathy for Jews. Some American Gentiles resented the mass migration of Jews to the United States and hoped that liberalization in Russia would curb the impetus for Jews to flee the Pale.[61] Conversely, a seemingly anti-Jewish position could obscure humanitarian motivations. Many Gentiles who were warmhearted toward immigrants counterintuitively favored immigration restriction, for example. They lamented the impoverished condition of immigrant life in American cities and—in a bid to improve the lot of those struggling souls—wanted to limit the influx of new arrivals, whose presence would further burden already congested urban slums.[62]

American attitudes toward Jews, then, defy facile description. The voices of tolerance and those of nativism sometimes diverged and other times dovetailed. Jews in the United States had to navigate a complex social terrain indeed—and in Theodore Roosevelt, they found a president whose approach to immigration was just as conflicted as the country he led.

* * *

Historians debate the extent to which Roosevelt embraced immigrants throughout his career and the role that race played in his perspective on them. A comprehensive exploration of that topic could fill several books and lies beyond the scope of this one. However, a few key points merit consideration here. For one, minimal effort suffices to find Roosevelt contradicting himself in his thoughts on race. Even within a single paragraph he could endorse two distinct positions. His inconsistency goes some way toward explaining why scholars have differed when describing his appraisal of various racial groups. We ought not project coherence onto him, lest we paper over those contradictions. An honest accounting requires acknowledging Roosevelt's incongruity.

Complicating the issue further is that Roosevelt employed the term *race* to denote a number of discrete concepts. While he sometimes did use *race* to refer to ethnicity, frequently he meant *race* as a synonym of nationality. In Roosevelt's racial cosmology, therefore, Jews could constitute a "Jewish race" unto themselves in an ethnic sense and yet still be part of the "American race" based on a shared civic identity with American Gentiles. He also used *race* to indicate bonds that connected similar peoples across national boundaries, such as a "French race" that tied together France and French Canada. Finally, Roosevelt adopted *race* to signify geographic subdivisions of people within a given country, using terms like the "Texas race" or "Kentucky race."[63]

A failure to distinguish between Roosevelt's numerous meanings of *race* (and of synonyms like *stock*) has generated misunderstanding about his take on race and immigration. Many scholars, for instance, characterize Roosevelt's fear of "race suicide" as the principal example of his racism. They suggest that he defined "race suicide" as the declining birth rates among old-stock Americans, which would supposedly lead to societal decay.[64] His varying notions of race, however, complicate this conventional wisdom.

Undeniably, Roosevelt in the 1890s did express anxiety about population deflation among the traditional elite. "Most certainly there are evil forces at work among us in America," he fretted to a British friend. "The diminishing birth rate among the old native American stock, especially in the Northeast, with all that that implies, I should consider the worst."[65] Here, *stock* certainly does signify ethnicity, as Roosevelt revealed a xenophobic strain in his worldview. During his presidency, however, Roosevelt explicitly recast his concerns about race suicide in national, rather than ethnic, terms. He was troubled by the prospect of low birth rates among native-born and immigrant families alike. Roosevelt told the press that some other countries ought to be cautioned about the perils of population decline, but happily "the ordinary American, whether of the old native stock or the self-respecting son or daughter of immigrants, needs no such warning."[66] After his tenure at the White House, Roosevelt would continue to sound the alarm about race suicide among the "native stock" while defining that phrase in an ethnically inclusive manner. He took pains to clarify, "I use the term with elasticity to include all children of mothers and fathers who were born on this side of the water."[67] The ancestry of those mothers and fathers was immaterial.

As members of the "American race," Jews in the United States understood themselves to count among those whom Roosevelt wanted to procreate prolifically. A Jewish newspaper in San Francisco affirmed shortly after his tenure in office, "We are only too glad to commend and applaud our former president for his strenuous efforts against race suicide."[68] Another Jewish periodical reported that "the strenuous Colonel" had been invited to the Jewish Maternity Hospital on the Lower East Side "in order to convince him by the many triplets there that the fear of race suicide is considerably exaggerated, in our metropolitan ghetto at least."[69] Ultimately, Roosevelt's angst about race suicide demonstrates the importance of discerning his varied usages of both *race* and *stock*, and it also highlights the need to differentiate TR's changing positions across the decades of his career.[70]

Like many of his contemporaries, Roosevelt placed immigrant groups in a pecking order of desirability. Yet his hierarchies didn't map precisely onto popular nativist conceptions. American patricians, disproportionately of English ancestry, often saw Anglo-Saxons as the superior race. But Roosevelt did not. That he himself wasn't primarily Anglo-Saxon surely accounts, at least partially, for his immunity to that common belief.[71] "I have not got a drop of that kind of blood in me," he once remarked.[72] In fact, Roosevelt did have some English blood—as well as Scottish, French, and Irish—but the predominant strain was Dutch.[73] He was proud to descend from what he called "old Dutch knickerbocker stock."[74] In an indication that Roosevelt was untethered from Anglo-Saxon elitism, he ranked German immigrants above the vaunted Puritan settlers.[75] His departure from Anglo-Saxon supremacy notwithstanding, TR still thought old-stock immigrants on the whole were more desirable than Southern and Eastern Europeans.

Roosevelt's hierarchies sometimes came with caveats; a given group might rank high on one measure and low on another. Using the term "American" in an ethnic sense to denote descendants of the old stock, Roosevelt once commented to a writer, "In the schools we find that the Jewish children are very much brighter than the American, or than any other foreigner, the American tending to come next and the Irish rather low down; yet in the Police Department in point of efficiency and usefulness, I should have said that on the average this was reversed." He then quickly hedged, "We must be very cautious about hasty generalization or dogmatization in this matter."[76] Even though Roosevelt had a penchant for group rankings, he routinely stressed the need to treat people according to their individual merits. As he once proclaimed in a speech, if a fellow citizen "has the right stuff in him, I care not a snap of my fingers whether he is Jew or Gentile."[77]

His views about ethnic hierarchies were deeply influenced by a particular variant of evolutionary theory known as Lamarckism. The French biologist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck had argued in the early nineteenth century that organisms acquire traits based on their environment and then pass on those traits to their offspring. During Roosevelt's lifetime, many American academics applied Lamarck's ideas to the comparative study of societies. They held that whole races could develop new characteristics because of their social context and then biologically bequeath those characteristics to the next generation. Lamarckians provoked plenty of criticism, but Roosevelt threw his lot in with them nonetheless. He believed that some races were at more advanced stages of development than others but that any race could—through Lamarckian evolution—better itself by cultivating traits favorable to its environment. Roosevelt's Lamarckian convictions undergirded his racially inflected imperialism, which saw "civilized" white nations as the proper custodians of “savage” non-white lands until the given indigenous population was, by his estimation, ready for self-government.[78]

But Roosevelt diverged somewhat from other Lamarckians because he didn’t deem European and European-descended peoples to be necessarily of higher quality than those of other continents. Even as he held the Chinese, Filipinos, and Latin Americans in low regard, the Japanese regularly earned Roosevelt’s praise.[79] He marveled at their success against the Russians in battle, writing to a friend, “What wonderful people the Japanese are!” They were on pace to become “a great civilized power.”[80] But Japan wasn’t merely better than benighted Russia—it rivaled even what Roosevelt considered the best countries of the West. As he maintained in his autobiography, “The Japanese are one of the great nations of the world, entitled to stand, and standing, on a footing of full equality with any nation of Europe or America.” Far from inferior, “their civilization is in some respects higher than our own.” However, his affinity for Japan did not mean that he encouraged immigration from there, warning, “It is eminently undesirable that Japanese and Americans should attempt to live together in masses.… But this is not because either nation is inferior to the other; it is because they are different.”[81] Roosevelt thus saw the Japanese in a distinct light from the Jews, who may have emerged from inferior conditions but—he believed—were perfectly capable of thriving in an American context.

* * *

Roosevelt repeatedly promoted the notion of American identity as a melting pot.[82] The metaphor of the melting pot implies homogenization; differences dissolve into an unvariegated stew of national identity. Consistent with that conceit, Roosevelt called on newcomers to shed their past ways and adopt a universal Americanism. He espoused such views in 1894, for example, in a magazine called *The Forum*. There Roosevelt inveighed against “immigrants or the sons of immigrants [who] do not heartily and in good faith throw in their lot with us, but cling to the speech, the customs, the ways of life, and the habits of thought of the Old World.” It was “necessary to Americanize the immigrants of foreign birth who settle among us.” His melting pot had its egalitarian aspects. He rejected the nativist premise that the old stock ranked above the new in their authenticity as Americans, but only if the new immigrants' assimilation was absolute. In Roosevelt's words, "An immense number of them have become completely Americanized, and these stand on exactly the same plane as the descendants of any Puritan, Cavalier, or Knickerbocker among us"—here he was referring to the colonial settlers of, respectively, Massachusetts, Virginia, and New York.[83]

Roosevelt's embrace of an iconic play, *The Melting Pot*, offers the most pronounced example of his enthusiasm for a crucible where different ethnicities and nationalities merge into a superior phenotype: the American. Created by the famed British-Jewish playwright Israel Zangwill, *The Melting Pot* debuted in the latter days of Roosevelt's presidency. TR and his wife, Edith, were in attendance for the world premiere at the Columbia Theater, just a few blocks from the White House. Other luminaries on hand that evening included Oscar Straus and Zangwill himself.[84]

The play revolves around two young Russian immigrants in New York: David and Vera. David is a Jew who narrowly escaped the Kishinev pogrom even as the rest of his family was massacred; Vera is a Christian whose father served as an officer in the Russian military. Even the play's macabre twist—it turns out that Vera's father was responsible for the murder of David's family—does not derail their unlikely love story. In Zangwill's vision of the United States, the likes of David and Vera could cast off Old World antipathies and fuse their bloodlines into a purified American one.[85] The final scene features David gazing out into a sunset and musing, "There she lies, the great Melting Pot.… Celt and Latin, Slav and Teuton, Greek and Syrian, black and yellow." Vera affectionately leans into David, adding, "Jew and Gentile." He then continues, "Yes, East and West, and North and South, the palm and the pine, the pole and the equator, the crescent and the cross—how the great Alchemist melts and fuses them with his purging flame!"[86] Zangwill's sympathetic rendering of interfaith romance was probably informed by his own marriage five years earlier to a non-Jew.[87]

After its run in Washington, the play toured the American West and then headed to Broadway.[88] Jews nationwide condemned *The Melting Pot* for appearing to extol self-eradication via intermarriage. On the Upper West Side, immense crowds packed into the Free Synagogue to hear a visiting rabbi, Leon Harrison, deliver a repudiation of Zangwill's play.[89] The rabbi cautioned that if Zangwill's vision were to materialize, "the little Jewish race would be diluted to extinction." An impassioned Harrison further castigated Zangwill for "sacrificing the ancient sanctities of his people's faith on the altar of sentimental claptrap."[90] Numerous Jewish papers throughout the country reported on Harrison's rousing sermon.[91]

On the other side of Central Park, at the iconic Temple Beth-El, Rabbi Judas Magnes delivered an equally scathing denunciation of Zangwill's "pernicious" production. "The melting process glorifies disloyalty to one's inheritance," Magnes warned. He glimpsed in *The Melting Pot* the specter of self-induced annihilation. Magnes scoffed, "We cannot be thankful to anyone for preaching suicide to us." Although Zangwill applied his assimilative logic to all ethnicities, Magnes pointed out that its threat was uniquely grave to Jews. Gentile newcomers originated in homelands where their people would continue to propagate, but for the stateless Jew, "America spells his great hope for the preservation of Judaism." Rabbi Magnes offered an alternative metaphor to the melting pot: the symphony. In the symphony, harmony results not from a "vast monotone" but rather from a "variety of distinct sounds blending into music under the artist's hand."[92] Each subgroup within the United States could contribute its individual note to the collective orchestra of American life.

The Jewish press joined in the repudiation of Zangwill's play. In New York, the *Hebrew Standard* deemed the melting pot a menace to Jewish perpetuity, no less than the pogroms themselves: "If others slay us, it is ruin … but that we should thrust the knife within our very self is adding slaughter unto slaughter."[93] Meanwhile, a Jewish paper in Missouri addressed its defiant rebuke to Zangwill directly: "With a single stroke of the pen, you cannot obliterate an existence of four thousand years."[94] Jewish voices defending *The Melting Pot* were so rare that a Boston rabbi jokingly described himself as a "heathen" for endorsing the play.[95]

Unlike American Jewry at large, Roosevelt delighted in Zangwill's assimilative message. The president shouted down from his theater box to

Zangwill, “A great play! A great play!” after the final scene on opening night.[96] TR may not have boasted credentials as a dramaturge, but that didn’t stop him from proffering a suggestion to the playwright a couple days later. One character in *The Melting Pot* had a line making light of divorce’s commonality in the United States, which sat poorly with a president for whom the decline of marriage and child-rearing was a foremost concern. Roosevelt hosted Zangwill for lunch at the White House so that TR could urge him to remove the offending dialogue.[97]

Soon thereafter Zangwill wrote Roosevelt, “I have changed the line to which you took exception.” And Zangwill had a request of his own: the play’s script would be printed as a book, and he wanted permission to dedicate it to TR.[98] The president responded that he would be “very much pleased” to have his name attached to *The Melting Pot*. “Let me again most heartily congratulate you upon your play,” Roosevelt added. “I do not know when I have seen a play that stirred me as much.”[99] Years later, Zangwill wrote him a letter making reference to “the play of mine (‘The Melting Pot’) which you have doubtless forgotten is dedicated to you.”[100] Roosevelt responded effusively. “My dear sir, the idea of supposing that I have forgotten the ‘Melting Pot,’ and its dedication to me!” he exclaimed. “Now as a matter of fact, that particular play I shall always count among the very strong and real influences upon my thought and my life. It has been in my mind continually, and on my lips very often.”[101] Although many Jewish people deemed Zangwill’s purifying crucible an existential threat, Roosevelt saw in *The Melting Pot* the possibilities for American liberation from the Old World’s stubborn hatreds. Indeed, TR was so enticed by the melting pot ideal that when an American humorist jokingly spelled his name in a seemingly Judaized way—*Tiddy Rosenfelt*—Roosevelt told him, “I wish I had a little Jew in me.”[102]

Roosevelt’s support for the notion of a melting pot serves to obscure the presence of a competing strain in his thought, one more inclusive than even the most expansive melting pot: pluralism. At times Roosevelt advanced a decidedly pluralistic vision of national life wherein members of different ethnicities need not choose between their particular group identity and a common civic one. Rather than abandon longstanding customs, they could harmonize their singular subcultures with a shared status as "Americans." Recall that a commemoration of the 250th anniversary of Jewish communal life—held in Carnegie Hall in 1905—featured the recitation of a letter from the president that applauded Jews for staying "loyal to their faith and their race traditions" while still becoming "indissolubly incorporated in the great army of American citizenship."[103]

Roosevelt sounded a similarly pluralistic note later in his presidency when he wrote to a group of Jewish children in advance of a Hannukah celebration at Jacob Riis's settlement house. "The fine loyalty and valiant achievements of the Maccabees have always made them favorite heroes of mine," he offered in a reprise of his days as police commissioner when he had routinely lauded American Jews who emulated their Maccabean forebearers. The president's letter continued, "It is a good thing that the Jewish boys and girls should keep their pride in and admiration for their own heroes of early days, and such pride and admiration, instead of hindering them, will help them to the friendliest and most brotherly relations with all their fellow Americans."[104] Jews could integrate into the United States by honoring, not disowning, their heritage.

* * *

Given Roosevelt's inconsistent views on immigrants, it unsurprising that his policy preferences reflected those inconsistencies. He felt torn throughout his career between his instinct to restrict immigration for the benefit of those already in the United States and his desire for America to serve as a refuge for the world's oppressed. Among Roosevelt's contemporaries who endorsed restriction, some did so out of a concern for protecting domestic labor from an influx of competition; others were driven by anxieties that foreign arrivals were racially incompatible with the native-born population. Roosevelt sometimes belonged to both camps simultaneously. In a magazine article published shortly before his appointment as police commissioner, he asserted, "It is urgently necessary to check and regulate our immigration, by much more drastic laws than now exist; and this should be done both to keep out laborers who tend to depress the labor market, and to keep out races which do not assimilate readily with our own." Yet Roosevelt decried xenophobia as "utterly un-American" in the very same article.[105] His position, in effect, was that immigrants deserved a warm welcome, but only if they posed no undue threat to laborers and were prepared to embrace American culture.

Roosevelt articulated a similarly conflicted attitude in another magazine, the *Review of Reviews*, three years later. That piece excoriated nativists for their self-perceived superiority. "I have no sympathy with mere dislike of immigrants," he announced. "There are classes and even nationalities of them which stand at least on an equality with the citizens of native birth." But in the next sentence, Roosevelt called for immigration restriction, fusing together concern for American labor with the prevailing racial biases of the day: "In the interest of our workingmen we must in the end keep out laborers who are ignorant, vicious, and with low standards of life and comfort, just as we have shut out the Chinese."[106] TR would carry these warring instincts about immigration into the White House.

During his presidency, Roosevelt's compassion for immigrants was evident in his oversight of William Williams, the commissioner of Ellis Island. Williams was a restrictionist with limited affinity for Southern and Eastern Europeans, and his stringent application of immigration laws reflected as much. Unsurprisingly, Jews weren't enamored of Williams.[107]

A group of Jewish leaders—headed by Roosevelt's old college classmate and congressional ally, Lucius Littauer—met with the president to voice their concerns that many Jewish immigrants were unfairly subjected to deportation. Afterward, TR told Williams about that visit, stressing that these Jewish leaders were "men of very high character" and "valued friends of mine." Roosevelt admonished Williams that it was "doubly incumbent scrupulously to avoid any appearance of unnecessary harshness" in deportation cases. The president conceded that immigrants who "tend to the physical or moral deterioration of our people" must be repatriated to their country of origin. But even so, Williams was to remain ever mindful in the case of any given candidate for deportation that "to send him back is often to inflict a punishment upon him only less severe than death itself, and in such cases we must be sure not merely that we are acting aright but that we are able to show to others that we are acting aright." Substance and optics both mattered. To those ends, the president instructed Williams to allow potential deportees of Jewish background to be accompanied by "a reputable representative of the United Hebrew Societies" to ensure the actuality of due process and its appearance. Roosevelt added that the same practice should hold for non-Jewish immigrants—like the Italians and Irish—who would find comparable support from their own local aid societies as their deportation cases were adjudicated.[108]

In the same letter, TR pressed Williams to generally stay in "close touch" with charitable organizations that assisted immigrants. It behooved Williams to persuade them "that your aim is not to do anything to discriminate against the immigrant, especially the immigrant of any particular race or creed." To soften his message, Roosevelt assured Williams that the Jewish leaders who had conveyed their misgivings nevertheless praised the Ellis Island commissioner's integrity.[109] It is dubious that Williams actually believed they were terribly delighted with him.[110]

Later that year, TR made his first presidential visit to Ellis Island, and in Rooseveltian fashion, the whole affair was a string of sensational moments. He departed Oyster Bay on a government-owned yacht with an entourage that included his wife, his son Kermit, and America's most famous immigrant, Jacob Riis. The yacht forged its way through a tempest that roiled the Long Island Sound with ferocious winds and frightful waves. Officials back on Ellis Island were skeptical that Roosevelt would hazard the trip under such volatile conditions. But around two o'clock that afternoon, amid the fog and rain, the president's yacht improbably came into view. The party anchored some distance off Ellis Island, and a tug boat—due to deliver Roosevelt the final leg of the trip—defied the "howling gale" and attempted the "ticklish job" of aligning itself next to the president's yacht, as the *New York Times* detailed. He embarked on the tug and braved the last stretch of his journey on the deck, cheerfully waving his signature slouch hat as the precipitation drenched him. Once docked, Roosevelt raced across a wobbly plank onto the iconic isle where each day thousands of aspiring Americans first set foot.[111]

The president was then joined by a pair of U.S. senators and his longtime Jewish ally Nathan Bijur, among others. Roosevelt's first order of business: declaring the appointment of a special committee to uncover any discrimination on Ellis Island. The *New York Tribune* reported that the committee had been initiated at Williams's own request to investigate and debunk accusations of his malfeasance. Conversely, the *New York Times* contended that Williams had been deprived of "the slightest intimation" ahead of time about the committee and that this unexpected announcement "came like a thunderclap out of a clear sky." In either case, Williams was an unpopular figure with immigrant communities, and the creation of the special committee reflected Roosevelt's keen interest in cultivating a reputation for fair play. The remainder of the president's tour of the island, spanning nearly five hours, involved various gestures of courtesy to the foreign newcomers. He shook hands and exchanged words with those waiting to be processed. And in one remarkable instance, Roosevelt took it upon himself to personally adjudicate a detention case where he summarily decided to free a woman pleading for release.[112]

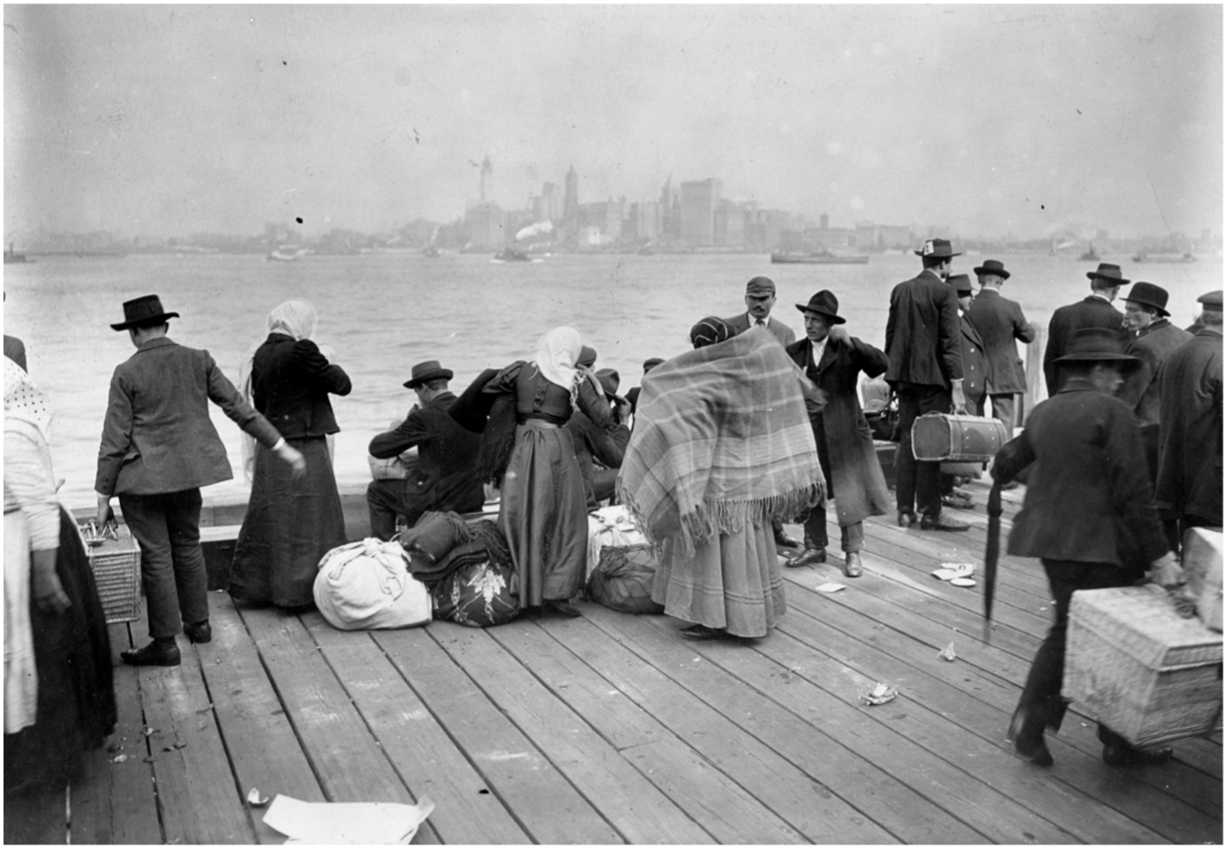

FIGURE. 7.1. Immigrants at Ellis Island, with the Manhattan skyline in the distance. *Source*: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

His diverse appointees for the investigatory committee nodded to the immigrant communities whose unease he hoped to assuage. An unsympathetic newspaperman chided the president for choosing “two Germans, two Irishmen and a Jew—not a single native American [i.e., Anglo-Saxon].” In turn, Roosevelt boasted to one of the committee members, “Evidently, that writer did not regard me as a ‘nativist!’ ”[113] The committee’s final report, while offering suggestions for improvement, exonerated Williams of any misconduct.[114] Still, it is notable that when Williams resigned his post toward the end of Roosevelt’s first term, the president replaced him with a more moderate successor who was himself an immigrant.[115]

★★★

Notwithstanding a dramatic voyage to Ellis Island and his establishment of an investigatory committee, the president sided with the restrictionists on a key issue: the literacy test. In his second term, Congress considered making literacy in any language a prerequisite for admission into the country. The proposed law—although neutral on its face—would disproportionately exclude new-stock immigrants in practice. Illiteracy rates among them were high: one in four Jews, nearly two in five Russian Gentiles, and a majority of southern Italians. Conversely, immigrants from old-stock countries such as the England, Ireland, and Germany could boast literacy rates of 95 percent or better.[116] Like immigration restriction generally, the literacy test created some unlikely alliances. Proponents of the test included nativists, who were suspicious of alien blood, and laborers seeking to insulate themselves from competition. The opposition encompassed certain industrial interests, which wanted a steady influx of inexpensive workers, and people with genuine sympathy for new immigrants.

Back in 1896, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge successfully shepherded the literacy test through Congress, but President Grover Cleveland deemed it prejudicial and vetoed the bill. Roosevelt proved more sympathetic, endorsing the idea as early as 1901 in his first State of the Union message. By the spring of 1906, the Immigration Restriction League, working in tandem with the American Federation of Labor, made considerable headway in rallying lawmakers behind the literacy test. It looked as though Congress might well be poised to codify the measure, with the Senate approving it in late May. If the restrictionists could prevail in the House of Representatives as well and keep Roosevelt to his word to sign the bill, the literacy test would become the law of the land.[117]

The literacy test was distinct from passports and pogroms in that it wasn’t a specifically Jewish issue. But Jewish interests were certainly implicated. Oscar Straus—still months away from his cabinet nomination at this point—fretted that a literacy requirement would preclude 10 percent of Jewish foreigners from entry into America, a number far too high for his comfort. Had he known that illiteracy among Jewish arrivals was actually 26 percent, Straus’s angst would have been that much more acute. Still, he felt hesitant to lobby the president on the matter, telling a fellow Jewish leader, “We should not trouble him unless it becomes absolutely necessary.”[118] Straus was understandably reticent to overspend his political capital with TR at that particular moment; only a month prior, he had solicited a wary Roosevelt to address Russia about the specter of renewed pogroms as the Easter holiday approached. However, Straus’s misgivings about the literacy test soon outran his reluctance to pester the president. He pressed his case against the measure to TR with a letter in late May and then again in person in early June.[119] But Roosevelt was immovable, telling Straus that he felt bound by previous statements in which he publicly backed such a test.[120]

Fortunately for Oscar Straus, other forces joined him in opposing the restrictionists. He found a willing partner in America’s most prominent Catholic, Cardinal James Gibbons, whose flock included many immigrants.[121] The cardinal took up the cause and beseeched Roosevelt to “prevent the passage of such an obnoxious bill.”[122] Meanwhile, industries like shipping, railroad, and steel were all active in their resistance to the literacy test.[123] And there was public protest as well. At a mass meeting on the Lower East Side, the Federation of Jewish Organizations fulminated against the literacy test. Prominent attendees included a pair of New York congressmen—one a Democrat, the other a Republican. The meeting’s chairman, Edward Lauterbach, addressed a packed throng of two thousand onlookers, proclaiming, “While the Russian government not long ago and even now is murdering and prosecuting the Jews … we should open our arms and say to them, ‘Come to us. Come to our country, where you will have freedom, liberty, and work, even if you do not know how to read and write.’ ”[124] For thousands of Russia’s Jews hoping to flee stateside, the stakes of the literacy test were existential.

Lauterbach organized a deputation to meet with Roosevelt the following week in the hopes of dislodging the president from his position on the bill. That group included leaders from various immigrant societies. Pro-immigration American Southerners were also present; they wanted to see new arrivals redirected from crowded coastal cities to the underdeveloped parts of their own region. Roosevelt expressed sympathy with his visitors’ collective aims but made plain that his perspective remained unshaken.[125]

Although the test enjoyed widespread support among lawmakers, the domineering Speaker of the House—Joseph "Uncle Joe" Cannon—wouldn't necessarily throw his all-important weight behind the measure. Cannon maintained a studied silence, abstaining from any stance on the issue before debate opened on the House floor.[126] Roosevelt leaned on Cannon to pass the bill. In a letter, the president explained to the Speaker his own, somewhat begrudging, endorsement of the literacy test. TR admitted that he would prefer a more holistic approach to screening immigrants: in an ideal world, American consuls overseas would vet prospective newcomers to ensure they were "physically, morally, and intellectually of a good type." But that plan wasn't "at present practicable," and so Roosevelt was willing to settle for the literacy test—and he hoped Cannon would, too. The test would prevent "immense masses of cheap labor" from flooding the domestic marketplace. Roosevelt's letter also criticized certain business interests for fighting the literacy test in their self-serving bid to suppress wages for American workers, native-born and foreign-born alike.[127]

Two weeks later, the president sent another letter to Speaker Cannon, acknowledging that he was under pressure from Jews and Catholics. "I have had frank talks with very good and staunch friends of mine representing the Jewish and Italian elements in our population," Roosevelt informed Cannon. The president went on to recount the substance of those conversations: he had told those friends that he lacked "a particle of prejudice against any man because of creed or birthplace" and that his chief interest lay in protecting "manual laborers," a category that included countless recent immigrants. Whereas nativists were championing the literacy test because it promised to favor old-stock immigrants over the new, Roosevelt proceeded from a different logic: overcrowded tenements and meager earnings precluded new immigrants from achieving a better life. Those new immigrants stood only to benefit from an attenuated flow of human capital into the labor market, TR reasoned.[128]

In his foregoing letter to Cannon, the president expressly collapsed the distinction between old and new immigrants. "Like the Germans, the Scandinavians, the English, Irish, Dutch, French, and Swiss, so I believe that ultimately Jew and Italian, Mongol and Slav will, if given the chance, become, and see their children become, just as good citizens as anyone else," Roosevelt affirmed. "But I do not think that under the present laws they get this proper chance, and the effect is bad for them and bad for the rest of the country."[129] TR was surely genuine in his conviction that the literacy test would elevate rather than exacerbate conditions for new-stock immigrants. After all, he had shown a consistent willingness to embrace Southern and Eastern Europeans since his days as police commissioner, and his letter to Cannon reflects that longstanding commitment. The president's advocacy of the literacy test may have placed him on the same side of this policy debate as the nativists, but it wasn't because he shared their anxieties about Jews and other new-stock Europeans.

Roosevelt's appeals to Cannon fell on deaf ears. As the House members prepared to vote on the literacy test in late June, the Speaker announced his opposition and browbeat his caucus into defeating the provision. His imperious tactics on the House floor included seizing members by their collars and wrenching them from their chairs.[130] Despite his animosity to the test, Cannon didn't bother to disclose his motivations at the time. Years later he would clarify that he quashed the literacy test because relatively open immigration thus far had served the United States well and he saw no reason to change course.[131] Cannon was also undoubtedly informed by his laissez-faire economic philosophy, which saw immigration restriction as a form of government interference in the market that unduly boosted labor at the expense of capital.[132] And there were campaign considerations as well—his congressional district was home to a sizable immigrant vote.[133]

Although Cannon killed the literacy test at this juncture, its proponents hoped they might soon revive it in Congress. Roosevelt, however, became increasingly uninterested. He had never been as enthused about the test as were the xenophobic restrictionists. And Roosevelt grew concerned over the summer that Republican support for the literacy test might play poorly in the upcoming midterm elections. By October, he was voicing doubts about the test's efficacy to an advisor. The vice president of the Immigration Restriction League grumbled to one of the league's founders that TR was now taking a "more the merrier" approach to foreign transplants.[134]

Roosevelt’s State of the Union that fall made a vigorous case for an inclusive nation. The president’s earlier annual messages had hewed to a middle course that honored immigrants as valuable additions to American society while nonetheless objecting to their unfettered admission.[135] But now Roosevelt emphasized only the theme of acceptance. He maintained that the determination whether to admit a given immigrant must rest upon a principled blindness to both religious background and national origin. “Whether they are Catholic or Protestant, Jew or Gentile; whether they come from England or Germany, Russia, Japan, or Italy, matters nothing,” stressed Roosevelt. “All we have a right to question is the man’s conduct.” The president declared that once immigrants secure entry into the country, they deserve respect. Drawing language from the Book of Exodus, he admonished his fellow citizens, “Especially do we need to remember our duty to the stranger within our gates.” TR also confronted the xenophobic currents in American culture, asserting, “It is the sure mark of a low civilization, a low morality, to abuse or discriminate against or in any way humiliate such stranger who has come here lawfully and who is conducting himself properly.”[136] On the very day that Roosevelt submitted this message to Congress, he sent his nomination of Oscar Straus to the Senate for confirmation as the cabinet secretary in charge of immigration. Entrusting a foreign-born Jew with the immigration portfolio was the most prominent indication yet that the president had abandoned his alliance with the restrictionists.

* * *

As the public learned that Oscar Straus would become the first Jew in the cabinet, contemporaries immediately recognized the multilayered significance of his appointment. The *Trenton Evening Times* marveled at the historic measure: “Never before in American history has a Jew held office in the president’s cabinet.”[137] Naturally, the Jewish press celebrated this milestone. The *Reform Advocate* gushed that the news “cannot fail to fill the heart of every American Jew with joy”—the Roosevelt administration was “epoch-making.” That paper further suggested that Roosevelt’s choice for the role was a clarion signal: surely, the president now opposed restrictionist legislation and preferred lenient interpretation of existing immigration statutes.[138]

Newspapers saw that the stakes were international. As the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* reported of Straus's nomination, "Abroad it is expected to give notice that this government is animated by the most friendly feelings toward the Jews."[139] Meanwhile, the *Reform Advocate* discerned a message to Jew-haters at home, contending that the appointment was intended as "a rebuke to possible antisemitic know-nothingism."[140] (The term "know-nothingism" derived from the "Know-Nothing Party," a xenophobic movement in America that had died out decades earlier but whose peculiar name endured in the national lexicon as a shorthand for nativism.) Some papers underscored the electoral consequences of Straus's ascendancy. Not only would Straus endear Jews all the more to the GOP, but he was also a Democrat whose willingness to break partisan ranks might well lure Gentile members of his party to do the same at the polls.[141]

As an undergraduate at Columbia in the 1860s, Straus had been denied membership in a campus literary society on account of his Jewish identity; now he was conferred membership in the cabinet of an American president.[142] Straus's gratitude to Roosevelt ran deep. "You have made me famous," he exclaimed, as congratulatory telegrams poured in from all corners of the globe. Straus knew that he carried the weight not just of the department he would lead but of the precedent he would set for American Jewry. As he told Roosevelt, "I appreciate the honor and its significance."[143] Straus further expressed the hope that he would live up to Roosevelt's expectations, prompting a warm reply from the president: "I only wish that I had as little cause for anxiety about the result of all my actions, great and small, as about the action in your case. Good luck to you!"[144]

* * *

Oscar Straus was a tireless cabinet member whose typical work week stretched seventy hours with no days off. Much of that time was spent advancing the cause of immigrants. Despite the department's diverse portfolio—which ranged from labor relations to lighthouses—Straus recalled that “no subject in the department occupied my daily attention to the extent that immigration did.” He felt compassion for refugees fleeing persecution abroad, but this did not mean he saw the admission of foreigners as a mere act of charity by the United States. Rather, argued Straus, migration to America produced manifold benefits for the country. Immigrants spurred economic growth by furnishing fresh sources of human capital. And an inclusive immigration policy also strengthened American ties to other nations and thereby expanded trade opportunities. That the United States spanned a vast continent with space aplenty for settlement made the case all the stronger for a hearty embrace of aspiring citizens, Straus insisted.[145]

He personally visited immigration processing sites and directed officials to treat the recent arrivals with dignity. Straus even gave money from his own pocket to the Ellis Island commissioner for distribution to the neediest newcomers. Immigrants sometimes faced deportation on the grounds that they were prone to become a burden to the state, but they could appeal their pending expulsions; Straus took it upon himself to personally decide all such cases and showed great sensitivity to their plight. He was instinctively reluctant to condemn Russian Jews to a horrid fate back in the czar’s empire. To be sure, Straus always operated within the confines of the law, but statutes could be applied with greater or lesser severity, and he unapologetically opted for a merciful approach. “I would be less than human if I failed to interpret the law as humanely as possible,” he told his brother. Straus added, “I propose to remain on the side of the angels, come what will, and I shall defy hostile criticisms—to do less would be cowardly.”[146] With a foreign-born Jew championing immigration, the criticism was destined to be hostile indeed.

The most conspicuous of objections to Straus came from the most predictable of sources: Prescott Hall, founding member of the Immigration Restriction League.[147] Hall’s general xenophobia was of a piece with his particular antisemitism. Relying on well-worn stereotypes about Jewish connivery, he claimed that Jewish immigrants were “trying to gain some monetary advantage by craft and deceit.”[148] Unsurprisingly, Hall did not thrill to Straus's appointment, deriding him as a "bitter opponent of immigration restriction."[149] Hall tried to persuade Roosevelt that the Jewish cabinet secretary was disregarding immigration laws in order to admit undesirable foreigners. The president was skeptical of Hall's accusations. "I have a very high regard for Secretary Straus," Roosevelt informed Hall, "and it is exceedingly difficult for me to believe that there has been the slightest conscious failure on his part to enforce the immigration law." His faith in Straus notwithstanding, TR was willing to submit the matter to the Immigration Commission—an investigatory body comprising three experts plus six lawmakers. Among the lawmakers was Henry Cabot Lodge, who had been the Senate's foremost proponent of the literacy test. Roosevelt assured Hall, "Lodge is very anxious that [immigration law] should be enforced with the utmost strictness."[150]

The commission simply could not find any evidence of malfeasance on Straus's part. Lodge reported to the president that Prescott Hall's allegations were left unsubstantiated: "[Hall] is extreme and does not understand that it is one thing to make general charges on hearsay and another to sustain them by proof." Senator Lodge had heartfelt sympathy for Hall and shared his restrictionist goals, but the commission's inquiry into Straus had been a fool's errand. "There was no escape from the facts," Lodge conceded.[151]

Still, Senator Lodge's letter to Roosevelt managed to convey doubts about Oscar Straus. Lodge speculated—without evidence, by his own admission—that Straus perhaps failed to adequately apply immigration laws when they disproportionately burdened indigent Jews. One such law excluded immigrants with "physical and mental defects" who would struggle to secure employment and were thus liable to become wards of the state. Pursuant to that statute, immigration officers employed a "poor physique" standard to assess new arrivals; many malnourished Jews who had just fled destitution were unlikely to fare well under such a precondition. Lodge told Roosevelt, "That Mr. Straus is adverse to the laws which affect the entry of poor Jews, and especially to the poor physique clause, I believe to be true, and if true it is unfortunate in the head of that Department. How far his influence is exerted to procure slackness in exclusions, I do not know. I can only say we found no proof." According to

Lodge's antisemitic logic, even a complete lack of evidence that Straus had been malfeasant was insufficient to merit his exoneration.[152] Roosevelt, for his part, was unwilling to indulge Lodge's aspersions and instead deemed the commission's findings to be "conclusive" vindication of Straus.[153]

Given nativist anxieties around Jewish newcomers, the president must not have been terribly surprised that Straus's role irked the likes of the Immigration Restriction League. The elevation of Straus to the cabinet in any capacity would have been historic; the decision to place a Jew of foreign birth in charge of American immigration was arguably audacious. The president, after a tepid response to the 1905 pogrom surge, had reclaimed some goodwill with American Jewry thanks to the Straus appointment. But Roosevelt would soon find an unexpected threat to those warm relations. At the twilight of his presidency, a disturbing revelation surfaced, one that suggested his administration itself was becoming an active tool of Russian antisemitism.

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8

ELECTION YEAR

As an election year dawned in 1908, a British-Jewish journalist named Maurice Low intimated in the London *Morning Post* that Theodore Roosevelt would break his promise not to seek a third term. The American president, in turn, sneered to an English friend, “Maurice Low is a circumcised skunk.”[1] It was a rare, if not altogether unprecedented, antisemitic slur from Roosevelt. In any event, Low’s reporting proved erroneous. TR was indeed determined to step down and bequeath the White House to his preferred heir-apparent: William Howard Taft, the secretary of war.[2]

Roosevelt was never one to take the Jewish vote for granted, and 1908 would prove no exception. He had always been keen—especially in election years—to solidify a favorable record on Jewish causes, one that fellow Republicans could tout in their own bids for office. But in the early weeks of 1908, the Passport Question suddenly reemerged as a major vulnerability for the Roosevelt administration, which found itself fending off accusations that it had become a willing accomplice in Russia’s anti-Jewish agenda.

Recall that back in October 1904, Russia had given indication to the Roosevelt administration that it intended to repeal its passport restrictions on American Jews. The mere signal of reform had been a public win for the president, all the more valuable for its timing amid his reelection campaign. But in the years that followed, it became clear that passport revision was just another empty promise about Jewish rights that Russia had made for strategic reasons. Jews bearing American passports, with a handful of exceptions, continued to face exclusion from Russian borders.

For most of Roosevelt’s second term, more urgent matters overshadowed the Passport Question. The scourge of pogroms abroad and the specter of a literacy test at home preoccupied American Jewry. But late in Roosevelt’s presidency, Secretary of State Elihu Root promulgated a circular about passports that alarmed Jewish leaders. The circular announced that the State Department—consistent with Russia’s own policy of excluding Jews—would decline to issue passports to U.S. citizens of Jewish faith who were intent on entering Russia.[3]

This circular diverged markedly from an earlier version in 1901, produced just before Roosevelt became president. The 1901 circular did warn American Jews about Russian restrictions on them, but the State Department at that time hardly shaped its own policies to accord with Russian prejudice. Jews with U.S. citizenship remained free to seek passports from their government. The State Department itself took no cognizance of any American’s religious identity, even as Russian consulates on U.S. soil interrogated visa applicants to winnow out Jews. That status quo was now upended by the appearance of this new circular by Secretary Root, who appeared to be doing Russia’s bidding. He officially divided Americans into two classes: Jews and Gentiles. The former were refused the right to a passport enjoyed by the latter—all to accommodate the bigotry of a foreign power, no less. Never before in the nation’s history had its Jewish citizens been subject to a religious test by their government.[4]

The newly constituted American Jewish Committee (AJC) mobilized to combat this latest affront to Jewish dignity. The AJC had been formed just two years earlier, in 1906, in response to the mass violence visited on Russian Jewry. Before then, temporary Jewish committees had sprung up to collect donations and press the federal government for action as circumstances merited. But those ad hoc measures had their limitations—advocacy in Washington proved only as effective as the personal connections that Jewish grandees happened to share with political figures at a given moment. Jewry required a more institutionalized approach, a permanent body that could robustly address Jewish issues whenever they arose. The AJC promised to fill that need.[5]

True, there already *was* a longstanding institution with a history of lobbying American civic leaders on Jewish causes: B’nai B’rith. But B’nai B’rith principally emphasized humanitarian relief, not political persuasion. In theory, B’nai B’rith’s top brass might have put ego aside and welcomed the creation of the AJC as a valuable complement to their own important role. In reality, they felt threatened by the idea of the AJC; the very prospect of the new organization felt like an indictment of B’nai B’rith’s past efforts.[6] Proponents of the AJC pushed ahead, and their ranks included key German-American Jews such as Jacob Schiff and Oscar Straus (though Straus stepped aside after accepting his cabinet appointment). The AJC thus continued the custom whereby affluent Central European Jews served as the principal spokesmen for their impoverished Russian coreligionists.[7]

When the AJC learned of the State Department’s prejudicial circular, a pair of AJC officials—Louis Marshall and Edward Lauterbach—took action. The two had much in common: both were Germans by descent, lawyers by profession, and New Yorkers by residence. They were also Republicans, so their criticism of the Roosevelt administration wasn’t attributable to partisan politics. In a letter to Root sent in early February 1908, Marshall and Lauterbach inveighed against the State Department for conferring second-class citizenship on Jews. The right of American Jews to a passport had become conditional, whereas “all other citizens, of whatever race or creed, are assured an unlimited passport and are guaranteed the absolute protection of our flag.” This kind of antisemitic discrimination was unprecedented in the annals of the republic, lamented Marshall and Lauterbach: “An American citizen applying to the State Department for a passport, who is suspected of being a Jew, is for the first time in our history obliged to disclose his faith.” They referenced the Treaty of 1832, whereby Russian and American nationals were supposed to enjoy freedom of travel between the two countries. Root’s circular was “practically justifying Russia in the violation of her treaty obligations and condoning her contemptuous disregard of the American passport.” It had been degrading enough that Russian consulates in the United States interrogated visa applicants about their religion, but now—the AJC leaders fumed—America's own government "seeks to indulge in these inquisitorial practices and to apply an unconstitutional religious test." Marshall and Lauterbach closed their missive with a request that Root rescind the circular.[8]

As it turned out, Oscar Straus had already been working toward that end from within the administration. Straus brought the circular to Roosevelt's attention, and the president promptly ordered Root to eliminate the discriminatory language.[9] Unbeknownst to the AJC, Root had produced a new circular just days before he received the exasperated letter from Marshall and Lauterbach. This revised circular avoided any mention of Jews and forwent any provision for denying passports. It merely relayed that Russia considered it a crime for a Russian to assume citizenship in another country (unless the expatriate in question received the prior consent of the Russian authorities), and therefore Russian-born Americans who managed to return to their native land were liable to suffer imprisonment.[10]

But news of the amended circular did not fully insulate the administration from reproach. On the House floor, a Democratic congressman from New York, Francis Harrison, denounced the rescinded circular as a national embarrassment and a breach of the Treaty of 1832—a treaty in which the rights of American Jews weren't supposed to hinge "upon the whims and fancies of an unhappy autocrat," Harrison insisted. He endorsed a proposed resolution that would call on Secretary Root to provide the House with details about any efforts by the State Department to extract concessions from Russia on the Passport Question. Root had thus far been disinclined to divulge such details to Congress, probably because he had done very little. A Republican representative from Illinois who opposed the resolution came to Root's defense, declaring, "We have confidence enough in the secretary of state to believe that his judgment should be supreme on this question." To what was surely Root's relief, the resolution failed 118 to 97. Still, the prejudicial circular, even if no longer operative, had plainly created an opening for Democrats to agitate against the Roosevelt administration.[11]

That same day, Root submitted his revised circular to the AJC leaders and asked if they saw anything amiss with its phrasing. They did. Marshall and Lauterbach took issue with a specific line that read: “An American citizen, formerly a subject of Russia, who returns to that country places himself within the jurisdiction of Russian law and cannot expect immunity from its operations.” They argued that this language contravened a congressional statute requiring the president to defend the rights of Americans abroad. The State Department was effectively signaling to Russia that the U.S. government would not enforce its own statute, Marshall and Lauterbach cautioned. In their words, the circular was tantamount to “an implied invitation … to violate the rights of American citizenship.”[12] Root’s deputy quickly informed the AJC that the State Department would dispense with the problematic wording.[13]

* * *

The State Department had now rectified its terminology twice, but the Passport Question continued to fester. Russia’s longstanding ban on Jewish visitors showed no signs of abating, and Root’s ill-advised circular inadvertently helped revive the Passport Question as a central concern for American Jewry. Rarely did Jews in the United States, whether Russian-born or not, harbor any desire to actually visit the czar’s empire. But Jewish Americans on principle rejected the notion that a foreign nation could impose upon them a religious test on their own soil. And they were also alive to the implications of the Passport Question for Russia’s Jews—observers in the United States had long believed that the admission of American Jews to Russia would create a chain reaction, culminating in the end of Russia’s restrictions on her own Jewish subjects. This line of reasoning began with a provision in the Treaty of 1832 that afforded U.S. nationals in Russia the same rights as natives. Were Russia to open its gates to American Jews, then two classes of Jews would be found within the empire: domestic Jews, enduring a perilous struggle for life and livelihood; and foreign Jews, enjoying the very same liberties exercised by Russian Gentiles. Russia’s regime of persecution would supposedly implode under the crushing weight of that contradiction.[14]

As early as 1881, the secretary of state conveyed to a State Department official that the sitting president, Chester Arthur, subscribed to this domino theory of Jewish emancipation. Arthur reportedly anticipated "that an amelioration of the treatment of the American Israelites in Russia could only result [in] a very decided betterment of the condition of the native Hebrews—that any steps taken toward the relief of one would necessarily react in favor of the other."[15] Recall that Jacob Schiff made a similar prediction in 1904. "When foreign Jews are equally entitled to cross the Russian border with other foreigners," he surmised, "then the Russian government will not long be able to insist on maintaining the scandalous restrictive laws against her own Jews."[16] Russia, too, recognized a necessary relationship between banning Jews from abroad and discriminating against Jews at home. In a letter to Roosevelt, Schiff recounted how a Russian official had candidly revealed to him that the czar's regime "would not grant to foreign Israelites the privilege to freely move about its domain, while its laws denied the same right to its own Jewish subjects."[17] American Jewry and the Russian government proved unyielding on the Passport Question precisely because each side understood its vast ramifications. The real stakes were not the very few Jews trying to enter Russia but the many millions of Jews with no means to escape it.

In May of 1908, the AJC decided to call for a radical move from the Roosevelt administration. This time the message came from AJC president Mayer Sulzberger, a state court judge in Pennsylvania, and it was addressed to Roosevelt directly. Sulzberger suggested that the United States should now force Russia's hand with "direct and emphatic" action: the unilateral withdrawal from the Treaty of 1832. Roosevelt could thereby coerce Russia to the bargaining table for a new treaty, one that would affirm the right to mutual travel while providing enforcement mechanisms to ensure Russia's fulfillment of its obligations. Drawing on his judicial background, Sulzberger argued that the U.S. Constitution guaranteed equal justice to all citizens, and therefore any treaties brokered under the Constitution's authority must accord with that paramount principle of equality. He acknowledged it was difficult to correct "wrongs encrusted with age" but nevertheless insisted that "the dignity of our own country" was on the line.[18]

Judge Sulzberger also encouraged Roosevelt to void another American treaty with Russia—an 1887 agreement providing for the reciprocal extradition of criminals. He explained that Russia, with its warped view of criminality, ruthlessly condemned political dissidents as lawbreakers. If such dissidents reached American shores, the treaty obliged the United States to forsake its rightful role as an asylum and ship these alleged “criminals” back to Russia’s corrupt empire.[19] Extradition was something of a sidelight that American Jews hadn’t previously emphasized in their lobbying of the administration. Even Sulzberger would have been surprised when unforeseeable events late in the campaign season would make extradition an explosive issue.

Roosevelt passed along the foregoing missive to Secretary Root, who in turn assured Judge Sulzberger, “The letter will receive attentive consideration.”[20] But neither Roosevelt nor Root was inclined to take the drastic step of unilaterally dissolving Russo-American treaties. The administration let the matter rest, at least for the time being.[21]

Shortly thereafter, TR wrote Root, “The Jews always want to embroil us with Russia, and therefore feel very friendly with England” because England periodically launched its own diplomatic bids against Russian antisemitism. Roosevelt wasn’t actually complaining here. Indeed, he saw American Jewry’s aversion to Russia as beneficial to his foreign policy; it counterbalanced the Irish-American opposition to England. The president’s letter ticked through a number of other immigrant communities—Poles, Danes, Norwegians, Swedes, Germans, French, Greeks, Armenians—each wanting him to adopt some particular position in global affairs, each offset by some other group. As Roosevelt mused, “It is a good thing from the standpoint of the Americans of this country that we have many different race elements coming, instead of simply one.” Pluralism had created a diplomatic equilibrium that Anglo-Saxonism alone could not.[22]

As spring turned to summer, the campaign heated up along with the weather. Republicans were eager to court the Jewish vote and remained alive to the Passport Question. Their convention, as it had four years earlier, approved a platform calling for the protection of U.S. citizens abroad. The Democrats followed suit at their own convention two weeks later. But neither party went so far as to adopt AJC’s hard-line position of unilateral treaty abrogation.[23]

With William Howard Taft poised to become the GOP standard-bearer, he came under pressure from the AJC to foreground the Passport Question. Judge Sulzberger urged Taft to address the issue in his speech accepting the Republican nomination. Taft obliged. Standing before a boisterous throng in his native Cincinnati, Taft decried as “repugnant” any foreign power that classified American citizens by religion. He pledged to advance Roosevelt’s efforts by taking “every proper endeavor to secure the abolition of such distinctions.” Yet Taft avoided specificity about what those endeavors would look like.[24]

* * *

The following month, Roosevelt was delighted by a flattering revelation from an improbable source—Russia’s most esteemed sociologist. Professor Maksim Kovalevsky, from the University of St. Petersburg, had gained access to classified documents about the Portsmouth Peace Conference of 1905 and produced a report on the negotiations that proved highly laudatory of Roosevelt’s contributions. Kovalevsky’s study praised TR for keeping alive peace talks that might have easily unraveled. The professor also brought to light a previously unpublicized detail: in the days following the treaty signing, the American president had beseeched Count Witte to lift Russia’s invidious ban on foreign Jews. This disclosure first appeared in a Russian outlet before reaching the American press; the *New York Times* dedicated nearly two full pages to its digest of the Kovalevsky report.[25]

The news came at an auspicious moment for Roosevelt. After the embarrassment of Root’s discriminatory circular earlier that year, TR now scored a notable public relations win with Jewry just as the campaign season was ramping up. *Leslie’s Weekly*, a well-regarded magazine, crowed in its coverage of the Kovalevsky report, “The Jewish people in the United States have every reason to entertain profound respect for the president.”[26] Naturally, Roosevelt was “mighty interested” when the magazine’s editor forwarded him a copy of that article. “I had never felt at liberty myself to speak of the fact that I interceded as strongly as I know how with Witte in the matter of passports for American citizens of Jewish faith," the president explained. "But I am very glad that someone has brought it out." He then recollected how he had "with the utmost emphasis" admonished Witte that as long as Russia persisted in its prejudice, so would the "constant bitterness" between their two countries.[27]

A month later, *Leslie's Weekly* continued to trumpet Roosevelt's advocacy for Jews, this time in a piece entitled, "What the Jew Owes to the Republican Party," by the partisan journalist Charles Harvey. His article was breathlessly loose in its fidelity to the facts. Harvey claimed about the Roosevelt-Witte meeting in 1905, "It is certain that the improvement in Russia's attitude toward the Jews dates from that affair, and Mr. Roosevelt had a decisive influence in bringing it about." Harvey's specific examples of such "improvement" were divorced from reality. He erroneously contended, "There have been no repetitions of the Kishinev massacre of the Jews." In reality, the bloodiest wave of pogroms began just *after* Roosevelt's meeting with Witte. The article also falsely asserted that the Passport Question was resolved: "In the attitude of Russia toward the American Jews who visit her, no line is drawn between them and the Christians." Harvey further credited Roosevelt with the establishment of "elections with the successive Dumas," neglecting to mention that the czar had dissolved the first two Dumas to preserve his autocratic agenda. Of course, the article's ultimate aim was to extend Roosevelt's popularity with Jews to Taft. "The Jews have known, too, that Secretary Taft was in hearty sympathy with the president," Harvey assured his vote-casting readers.[28]

That article's abundant inaccuracies aside, Roosevelt was pleased with the piece, alerting Taft to "an article by Harvey, which I think may help us among the Jews," and enclosing a copy for Taft's perusal. Roosevelt's missive also came with a cautionary note about campaign optics. "About your playing golf … I have received literally hundreds of letters from the West protesting about it," the president wrote. He advised Taft to delay his next eighteen holes until after election day.[29]

After the editor of *Leslie's Weekly* suggested to Roosevelt that Jewish support for the GOP was tepid, the president anxiously replied, "I am concerned at what you tell me as to the attitude of the Jews. My own information was that they were favorable.” TR speculated that Harvey’s “excellent” article had failed to reach a sufficient audience owing to a “lack of funds”—presumably from the Republican Party—that would have otherwise ensured its wide distribution.[30]

* * *

The battle for Jewish voters unexpectedly expanded to novel terrain in August: extradition. Previously, the topic hadn’t preoccupied American Jewry; the AJC’s request in May that Roosevelt void the extradition treaty with Russia was anomalous. Pogroms, passports, and literacy tests had been the focal points of Jewish activism. But in late summer 1908, extradition suddenly became a rallying cry.

The precipitating event was the extradition case of Jan Janoff Pouren. Hailing from the Latvian region of the Russian Empire, Pouren was a Gentile revolutionary who had agitated against the Russian authorities in 1906 before absconding to New York City. Russia requested his extradition in early 1908, and the State Department initiated the hearings that would decide Pouren’s fate. According to Russia, Pouren was a criminal guilty of theft, arson, and homicide. According to Pouren’s supporters, he was a humble peasant who had been forced to take up arms and defend his village against an unjust assault by Russian soldiers. His entire case turned on the distinction between these two perspectives. The governing treaty between Russia and America stipulated that criminals were subject to extradition but political refugees were not. If Pouren could demonstrate that his violent acts supported the revolutionary cause, then the U.S. government would have a legal basis to grant him asylum.[31]

Pouren’s case had been obscure until mid-August, when an American extradition commissioner ruled against him. The commissioner found that Pouren failed to furnish evidence that his activities had been related to political upheaval in Latvia. That ruling was not akin to a majority opinion on the Supreme Court, which binds the executive branch. Rather, the Roosevelt administration had discretion to accept or annul the commissioner’s decision.[32] As Pouren awaited an uncertain future, he remained locked up in a lower Manhattan prison nicknamed “The Tombs,” where he had resided since the extradition proceedings began seven months earlier.[33]

Pouren’s pending exile to Russia made national headlines. From Alaska to Alabama, newspapers decried Russia’s bid to wield the extradition treaty as a weapon of counterrevolution. One journalist explained that the ramifications of Pouren’s case were hardly limited to the “mild looking, fair-haired little peasant” facing the dismal prospect of czarist justice back home. The case instead raised the gravest of questions: “When fugitive militants … reach our shores and seek refuge in our cities, shall we act as sleuth and police for the czar and chase down these unfortunates?” At stake was America’s cherished status as a haven for political dissidents.[34]

Pouren wasn’t Jewish, but the implications for Jews were immense. Even as most Russian Jews weren’t revolutionaries, a number of Russian revolutionaries *were* Jews. Untold numbers of them who had fled Russian repression for American freedom might soon find themselves surrendered in shackles to their erstwhile oppressor. Unsurprisingly, then, American Jews were overrepresented in the movement to secure Pouren’s release. A call for a petition quickly circulated throughout the Lower East Side, announcing, “Our only hope is in President Roosevelt.”[35] Jews joined with Gentiles to form the Pouren Defense Conference, an ad hoc organization designed to orchestrate the campaign for his release. Its members hoped to exert pressure on the administration with a combination of grassroots activism and press coverage.[36]

Reputable outlets from the *New York Times* to *The Nation* proved eager to promote his cause. *The Outlook*—a popular weekly based in New York—asked pointedly, “Shall we return the fugitive to the torture chamber?”[37] That same day, Roosevelt alerted Secretary Root that the Pouren case was no ordinary matter. “*The Outlook* and all kinds of philanthropic bodies, not to speak of socialists and others, are very much interested,” Roosevelt relayed to Root. By “socialists” he meant Jews, at least partly; many Russian-Jewish émigrés had seen socialism as an answer to czarism in the Old World, and they retained their socialist leanings after immigrating to

America. The president’s letter further stressed that Root himself should personally review the facts. “It is not a matter that should be handled … in a perfunctory way,” warned Roosevelt. “You should go over it carefully yourself” rather than rely on underlings in the State Department. TR was keen to “forestall action being taken without you or me knowing anything about it.” Roosevelt also divulged that a congressional ally, Herbert Parsons, had solicited him about the matter—not incidentally, as Parsons was serving as Pouren’s lead counsel.[38]

The following week, a boisterous crowd descended on Cooper Union, the celebrated East Side venue, at the initiative of the Pouren Defense Conference. “The great hall was packed in every nook and corner,” the *New York Times* observed, adding, “A good portion of those present were Jews.” One speaker elicited a notable reaction when he suggested that the czar wanted to replace the Statue of Liberty with a statue of a Russian soldier. When Congressman Parsons took the stage, he spelled out the collective consequences of Pouren’s individual fate: “The matter is of tremendous importance. It is a test case. If Pouren is extradited, there are thousands of men in this country who stand in Pouren’s shoes. The question is, ‘Are they safe here or not?’ I have an abiding faith that they are safe, and that Pouren is safe.” With this, the audience erupted into a proper frenzy.[39]

It took a few minutes for the crowd to calm itself before Rabbi David Blaustein, a Harvard-educated settlement house leader, could begin his remarks. Blaustein read aloud letters of support from preeminent Jews—like Jacob Schiff and Justice Greenbaum of the New York Supreme Court—and from an eclectic mix of Gentiles, including a trio of Christian clergymen, a socialist writer, and the president of City College. Resolutions against Pouren’s extradition, for submission to Roosevelt and the State Department, were offered for the throng’s approval. Well-nigh two thousand “ayes” rang out in unison. In one indicator of the robust Jewish presence that evening, two speeches were delivered in Yiddish.[40] Pouren, meanwhile, bided his time in a prison cell just a mile away.

Letters poured into the White House on his behalf, some signed by notable names of the era. The head of the American Federation of Labor, for instance, beseeched Roosevelt to intervene. So did the celebrated poet and octogenarian Julia Ward Howe, whose legendary lyrics “mine eyes have seen the glory” had been immortalized during the Civil War as an unofficial anthem by Union troops.[41] Roosevelt’s old college friend Lucius Littauer—a recently retired Jewish congressman—also penned a note to the president about Pouren’s cause.[42]

The celebrated Jewish reformer Lillian Wald was granted a personal audience with Roosevelt at the White House to discuss the matter. Recall that Wald had known Roosevelt since the 1890s, when he was the young police commissioner of New York and she the even younger founder of the Henry Street Settlement on the Lower East Side. Having dedicated her life to serving immigrants, Wald was a natural vessel for the anti-extradition message. She shared with Roosevelt a letter that she received from some of Pouren’s fellow revolutionaries who had fought alongside him and themselves relocated to America. They begged, “Do not let him fall into the hands of the bloodthirsty vampire.” To save Pouren’s neck, these refugees were willing to risk their own—they offered to give affidavits in his defense even though that would risk alerting Russia to their own “crimes” against the czar’s regime and thereby prompt extradition requests against them. Roosevelt assured Wald that any new affidavits would be duly considered.[43]

Happily for Pouren, his cause célèbre coincided with the height of a presidential campaign, a time when any administration is most likely to privilege electoral exigency over diplomatic delicacy.[44] A Republican paper in Massachusetts fretted about the party’s prospects at the ballot box should the Roosevelt administration fail to spare Pouren. His extradition would “raise such a tempest among the Jews and Russians of New York and Chicago that the Republican Party in November would be crushed beyond recognition.”[45] It required no great powers of prophecy to foresee the political blunder of permitting Russia to wage its reactionary war on American soil.

* * *

By late September, Roosevelt was pressing Root in his most vehement terms yet. TR wanted the commissioner’s ruling against Pouren overturned

—immediately and publicly. “My judgment is very strong that we ought to refuse to deliver this man and that we ought to make [an] announcement now,” he implored Root. The president bemoaned that treaty obligations had put his administration in this difficult position, venting, “We never should have had an extradition treaty with Russia. Its conduct toward so-called political criminals is so inconceivably brutal and foolish.” Given that Russia was inveterately “indifferent to the truth,” Roosevelt felt that “we have no business to treat it as we do the average civilized nation.” He also drew a connection between passports and extradition: since Russia wouldn’t admit Jews, America shouldn’t relinquish Pouren. In the president’s words, Russia’s “consistent attitude in the matter of the passports is such as to justify us on that ground alone in refusing to perform such an act of mere international comity.”[46] The truth or falsehood of Russia’s allegations against Pouren was immaterial by that reasoning.

Roosevelt’s letter all but ordered Root to reverse the ruling. “Do go over the papers in this Pouren case carefully, and I will take it up with you,” he wrote. “I feel that it would be a good thing from every standpoint if we could at once announce that we do not intend to permit the man to be extradited.” Root surely understood that “every standpoint” included Taft’s ongoing race for the presidency. Roosevelt closed his letter with an affirmation of his own authority over the State Department: “I am informed that under the uniform practice of the Department, the whole matter, both as to law and facts, as to extradition cases of this kind, is vested in the president.” Root could not have missed the heavy-handed implication: if he failed to act, Roosevelt would.[47]

The argument against Pouren’s extradition soon received a boost. New affidavits from other revolutionaries—probably the self-same whom Lillian Wald had discussed with Roosevelt—swore to the political character of Pouren’s actions back in Latvia. His lawyers explained to Secretary Root that they had deliberately withheld testimony from these witnesses during their client’s extradition hearing for fear of placing them in danger of their own extraditions.[48] The president seized upon this favorable development to pressure Root yet again. “I enclose herewith a number of affidavits in the Pouren case,” Roosevelt wrote him in early October. “Unless controverted, these affidavits seem to establish clearly the fact that Pouren was a revolutionist and took an active part in the revolutionary troubles.” Pouren’s alleged acts were technically crimes, but they were in service of “the revolutionary proceedings and therefore political crimes,” reasoned Roosevelt. Given the president’s desire to rebuff Russia’s extradition request even before this evidence had surfaced, Root could now scarcely have been surprised by Roosevelt’s overdetermined conclusion: “Pouren’s case is one that comes directly under the clause of the treaty which forbids the extradition of political offenders.”[49]

Root forwarded the affidavits to the Russian embassy in Washington and invited a response.[50] As he waited, Jacob Schiff told Root that extradition would be a “terrible mistake.” Schiff alluded to electoral considerations in positing, “Public opinion will never approve the surrender of Pouren to Russia, but to the contrary will condemn such an act most harshly.” That same day, Roosevelt sent Root a trunk whose contents seemed to corroborate Schiff’s take. Inside were some seventy-thousand signatures—“a monster petition,” as the *New York Times* described it—that Congressman Parsons had passed along to the president.[51]

The Jewish community continued to call for the prisoner’s release. Sounding much like Roosevelt, the *Hebrew Standard* insisted, “If Pouren committed a crime it was executed in the name and because of humanity. He is neither more or less than a political prisoner; as such his right to asylum here should not be invaded.” The paper reflected the Jewish community at large in appreciating the broad stakes, acknowledging that Pouren’s removal from U.S. soil would mean “no Russian immigrant of recent arrival here is safe.” But the *Hebrew Standard* was optimistic: “America, we are sure, will not permit the czar’s myrmidons [i.e., unscrupulous subordinates] to capture their unfortunate quarry in this land of freedom.”[52] Notably, this vote of confidence came from a Democratic organ.

Two days later, Root heard from an official at the Russian embassy, Basile Kroupensky, who scoffed at the prospect of rebutting these new affidavits. “The embassy does not feel called upon to furnish any proof in addition to that already adduced before the [extradition] commissioner,” Kroupensky related. He noted that the legal process culminating in the commissioner’s ruling took eight months, more than enough time for Pouren’s lawyers to have produced the testimony. Kroupensky further emphasized that the prisoner’s legal team comprised “several experienced counsel” including a congressman; in other words, Pouren’s attorneys were sufficiently versed in the law to know that these new witnesses should have testified *before* the ruling. That the affidavits were forthcoming only afterward—argued Kroupensky—not only violated established legal norms but also weighed heavily against their credibility. He asserted that “universally accepted principles of law” ought to preclude Root from considering the affidavits at all in his review of the case.[53]

Under intense pressure from the public and the president alike, Secretary Root disregarded Kroupensky’s remonstrance and ordered the extradition commissioner to revisit the case in light of the new evidence. Root explained to the commissioner that although Pouren’s lawyers had wrongly withheld witness testimony during the hearings, the prisoner shouldn’t effectively “be punished for his counsel’s mistake.” The affidavits in question spoke directly to the potentially *political* nature of Pouren’s actions, and so “the plain intent of the treaty would fail if this evidence were now altogether excluded from consideration,” Root concluded.[54]

Roosevelt, meanwhile, searched for a means to free Pouren while the case was pending. “Why can’t we admit Pouren to bail?” the president asked Root. “Is it possible to do this? It would help a great deal if this could be done.” Indeed it would—the election was less than three weeks away. Apparently, Root proved unresponsive, as five days later Roosevelt wrote him again in emphatic terms, “Cannot we arrange at once to release Pouren on bail? Cannot this be done today or tomorrow? If he were an American citizen this would be done. Why discriminate against him because he is a political refugee from Russia?” An exasperated Roosevelt added for emphasis, “Oh, Lord!!”[55]

After several more days, Root finally acted. He superseded his earlier order for the extradition commissioner to reopen the case, announcing instead that the entire proceeding against Pouren was now dismissed “without prejudice”—meaning that Pouren’s case was no longer active, but

Russia remained free to submit a new extradition request, which would restart the hearing process from scratch.[56] Russia filed its new request immediately.[57] The practical consequence of these maneuvers was that, in late October, Pouren was released on the dismissal of his first case and rearrested moments later on the initiation of his second. "Free for a Minute," ran the headline in the *Grand Rapids Press*.[58] Contrary to Roosevelt's wishes, Pouren would remain confined to a prison cell. But Pouren did not face any immediate risk of being surrendered to the Russians, and he was poised to derive the benefit of exculpatory affidavits in the forthcoming proceedings. (Pouren's case would ultimately resolve shortly after Roosevelt's presidency, when the defendant was at last set free.[59])

If the provision of a new hearing for Pouren wasn't a *total* victory for the Republican administration, it was a victory nonetheless—and favorably situated on the calendar. The *Fort Worth Telegram* noted the auspicious timing: "On the eve of the presidential election, it is announced that Secretary Root has taken cognizance of the petition … to refuse the demand of Jan Janoff Pouren."[60] Meanwhile, the *Hebrew Standard* celebrated that Pouren thus far had evaded the vengeful claws of the bear. "We see signs which show that Russia's erstwhile dominance in this country is indeed a thing of the past," the paper remarked.[61] This reference to "signs" plural was well merited, for Pouren's chance at redemption was not the only recent indication of American resistance to Russian illiberalism.

* * *

In the latter half of October, as Pouren remained in legal limbo, Secretary Root curried favorable publicity on a different cause dear to Jewish voters. He sent a letter to Jacob Schiff—designed for circulation to the press and undoubtedly written at Roosevelt's behest—announcing a bolder stance from the administration on the Passport Question. Russia had long maintained that the Treaty of 1832 did not extend to Jews; America had long maintained that it did. Rather than endlessly recycle this decades-old dispute, the Roosevelt administration was now changing course. It had recently requested of the Russians “complete revision and amendment of the treaty,” Root informed Schiff. The United States would insist upon treaty terms that left no ambiguity about the “reciprocal rights of residence and travel” for American passport holders—be they Jew or Gentile, native or naturalized. Granted, this approach did not go as far as the AJC suggested, wherein America would unilaterally void the existing treaty to jolt Russia into concessions. Root explained that the AJC’s more aggressive tactic was ill-advised because it could result in a problematic interregnum between treaties during which all Americans and Russians lacked any rights whatsoever in the other nation. He closed the letter by assuring Schiff that “the administration is in full and sympathetic agreement with you” about passports.[62] After the letter’s expeditious dissemination to the papers, the *Idaho Daily Statesman* gave the story front-page coverage. The *Dallas Morning News* trumpeted, “New Treaty Is Favored to Protect Americans.” And the *New York Times* reprinted Root’s missive to Schiff in full.[63]

William Howard Taft aimed to build on this momentum when he barnstormed through Brooklyn in the waning days of the campaign. At a packed rally in Saenger Hall, Taft’s speech to a predominantly Jewish audience was preceded by an appearance from, of course, Oscar Straus. The first-ever Jewish cabinet member sparked an enthusiastic reception. With a portrait of Theodore Roosevelt in a Rough Riders hat hanging overhead, Straus lauded Taft as the man whom TR personally selected as his political heir. One journalist observed, “His first mention of the name of Roosevelt brought down the house.” Straus cast the matter of succession in Biblical terms: just as Elijah ascended to Heaven in a chariot of fire and Elisha picked up Elijah’s fallen mantle, so too would Taft carry on Roosevelt’s mission. When Taft finally took the stage, he declared to the throng—in a voice hoarse from overuse—that he would labor diligently to protect the authority of the U.S. passport the world over. The Republican nominee also cautioned with candor that he couldn’t promise results, but he vowed nonetheless “I shall give my very best energies” to the cause.[64]

Two days later, Taft was again courting New York Jewry, this time before a capacity crowd at the Thalia Theatre on Bowery Street in lower Manhattan. The venue housed a “typical East Side audience,” in the words of one reporter. Taft told the assemblage, “I almost think that an audience made up of people newly come to this country is more patriotic than the descendants of the Puritans [who] take so much for granted.”[65] He also reaffirmed his pledge to pressure Russia on passports. In Taft’s words, “Our passports certifying our citizenship should secure to every man, without regard to creed or race, the same treatment, the same equality of opportunity, in every nation on the globe.” And he once again demonstrated a keen awareness that his candidacy rested on Roosevelt’s presidency, calling on voters to “commend the administration of Theodore Roosevelt” by choosing himself to perpetuate the passport fight.[66]

This bid for the Jewish vote was hotly contested. The Democratic platform featured a plank on the Passport Question. Moreover, William Jennings Bryan—in his third stint as the Democratic nominee for the presidency—also earned good press by proposing that a rabbi serve among the chaplains at his party’s convention.[67] And late in the campaign, Bryan submitted a letter for publication to Cleveland’s *Jewish Independent* that insisted on the equal treatment of American citizens abroad. “I need hardly add that Russia is no exception,” he wrote, “and that an American Jew ought to have as full protection as Americans of any other race or religion.” That letter commanded attention beyond Ohio, eliciting coverage from St. Louis’s *Jewish Voice* and prompting a favorable headline in the *New York Times*: “Bryan Would Protect Jews.”[68]

But Bryan had longstanding vulnerabilities with Jewish voters. His 1896 race for the presidency left him on the defensive over accusations of antisemitism. In that campaign, which was animated by economic populism, Bryan delivered a stemwinder from the floor of the Democratic National Convention in which he railed against the gold standard for the U.S. dollar. “You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns,” he thundered. “You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.” These two phenomena—the Crucifixion and the gold standard—were often blamed on Jews, and Bryan here managed to conflate them in a single memorable breath.[69]

The *New York Sun* claimed that Bryan’s followers crossed the line into overt antisemitism. They reportedly yelled at that 1896 convention, “Down with gold! Down with the hook-nosed Shylocks of Wall Street! Down with the Christ-killing goldbugs!"[70] The *Sun* was a Republican paper and thus may have been exaggerating for political gain; either way, this news coverage could not have helped Bryan in Jewish precincts.[71]

Bryan's troubles in the 1896 cycle were exacerbated when he received—quite likely to his dismay—an enthusiastic endorsement from Hermann Ahlwardt, the invidious German Jew-hater whom Roosevelt as police commissioner had adroitly assigned thirty Jewish officers to protect in New York.[72] Bryan also found himself fending off accusations that his well-known criticism of the Rothschilds, a prominent Jewish banking family, meant that he harbored anti-Jewish bias.[73] There was, overall, much in his campaign that commended it to antisemites.

In his play for Jewish voters in 1908, Bryan could only do so much to reverse the damage of 1896. Moreover, his Christian fundamentalism surely held less appeal for many Jews than did Taft's liberal-minded Unitarianism. And Bryan lacked Taft's greatest asset: the incumbent president on his side. None of Bryan's backers were empowered to, say, coax the secretary of state to reverse an extradition ruling. Nor could any Bryan supporters initiate efforts to negotiate a new treaty with Russia that would honor Jewish-American rights. Roosevelt alone enjoyed the powers of the presidency, and in the waning weeks of the campaign he did not hesitate to wield them with Jewish voters in mind.

* * *

Election night for Taft—if not the once-in-a-century showing that Roosevelt had registered four years earlier—was a towering triumph in its own right. Taft won the popular vote by more than eight percentage points and racked up a nearly two-to-one margin in the Electoral College. His sweeping success across the North and West more than offset losses in Southern states, an echo of TR's own regional variations in 1904. Expressing "deep gratitude" to Roosevelt, the president-elect credited his nomination and victory to the current occupant of the Oval Office: "My selection and election are chiefly your work."[74]

Taft nearly matched Roosevelt’s 1904 results for the Empire State at large, but he vastly underperformed TR on the traditionally Democratic Lower East Side. Whereas Roosevelt had narrowly won East Siders, Taft lost them by fourteen points. That neighborhood’s sixteenth assembly district, which Roosevelt had carried by a handful of votes, now went to William Jennings Bryan by a twenty-five-point differential.[75] Comparing 1904 with 1908 demonstrates that Roosevelt’s historic success with East Side Jews had not marked the beginning of an enduring shift by Jewish immigrants to the GOP. Instead, it underscores that TR’s appeal on the Lower East Side was strikingly singular.

* * *

Roosevelt commenced the lame-duck stretch of his presidency with a public rebuke of religious bigotry. Large numbers of Americans, goaded by certain preachers and papers, had viewed Taft’s Unitarianism with contempt during the campaign. Because Unitarians rejected the divinity of Jesus Christ, Taft was essentially a nonbeliever in many Christian eyes. Rumors also circulated that Taft was a Catholic, or at least in league with Catholics, and possibly even beholden to the Pope.[76] In August, Taft predicted that this line of attack from his adversaries might actually endear him to voters who abhorred religious prejudice. “It might prove to be a sword cutting both ways, especially among the Jews,” he suggested to Roosevelt.[77] Taft was right. The Jewish paper *Emanu-El* exclaimed, “The whole matter is decidedly un-American, nay! It is positively anti-American.”[78] Even the Democratic *Hebrew Standard* came to Taft’s defense, reproaching hateful ministers for “sticking their clerical noses into politics.” These clergymen were nothing more than “bigots.”[79]

Roosevelt himself had been indignant about the infusion of religious intolerance into the race. In the campaign’s closing weeks, TR vented to Taft, “The attacks upon you by a certain type of small Protestant bigot are so infamous as to make my blood boil.”[80] But the president held his tongue and stayed his pen during the race—and advised Taft to do the same. After all, any defense of Taft’s religious background would amount to a concession that a candidate's faith *should* be subjected to political scrutiny.[81] With election day now behind them, Roosevelt felt free to publicly voice his long-suppressed ire.

He trained his righteous anger on a piano dealer in Ohio named J. C. Martin. Like many Americans, Martin had sent a letter to the president amid the campaign season disparaging Taft's religious affiliation. The piano dealer predicted, erroneously, that Taft would prove unelectable because he is an "infidel (Unitarian) and his wife and brother [are] Roman Catholics." (In fact, neither Taft's wife nor his brothers were Catholic.) Roosevelt's post-election reply to Martin was scathing—and widely distributed to newspapers. "I received many such letters as yours," the president wrote him. "I did not answer any of these letters during the campaign because I regarded it as an outrage even to agitate such a question as a man's religious convictions, with the purpose of influencing an election." In response to Martin's insistence that Taft expose his religious beliefs for public examination, Roosevelt retorted, "It is a matter between him and his Maker, a matter for his own conscience; and to require it to be made public under penalty of political discrimination is to negative the first principles of our government, which guarantee complete religious liberty, and the right to each man to act in religious affairs as his own conscience dictates." This comment reflected not only the free exercise clause in the First Amendment but also the Constitution's explicit ban on religious tests for federal office.[82]

The president's letter to Martin venerated the religious variety in his administration, nodding to Oscar Straus's trailblazing role. "In my cabinet at the present moment there sit side-by-side Catholic and Protestant, Christian and Jew," he proudly boasted. Lest anyone think these appointees were tapped because of their identity rather than their merit, Roosevelt quickly added that all of them had been selected based on their fitness for office. Diversity of faith could also be found among elected officials, he noted. Whereas Martin had expressly doubted that Americans would vote for a Unitarian, TR highlighted the routine election of candidates who differed in creed from most of their constituents. "By their very existence in political life, they refute the slander you have uttered against your fellow Americans," he seethed. "I knew particularly well … one man of Jewish faith who represented a district in which there were hardly any Jews at all"—this was an allusion to Roosevelt's college friend Lucius Littauer, whose rural district in upstate New York sent him to Congress five times. Roosevelt made a bold prediction about the liberality of America's electorate: "I believe that this Republic will endure for many centuries. If so, there will doubtless be among its presidents Protestants and Catholics, and, very probably at some time, Jews."[83] From Montana to Georgia, newspapers nationwide reprinted Roosevelt's letter on page 1.[84]

TR's frequent reference to Jewry in the letter is noteworthy. Plainly, he appreciated that if prejudice were to prevail against a Unitarian, all the more tenuous was the religious freedom of a Jew. American Jews understood this grim fact—and thus understood the significance of Roosevelt's letter for their own community. A Midwestern rabbi urged his congregants during a sermon, "If you have missed that letter, you should procure it and put it away among your most valuable family papers, to be bequeathed to your children."[85] An editorial in *Emanu-El* emphasized the letter's timing—that is, after the election—when Roosevelt's words could not be dismissed as a mere gambit for votes: "This expression of the president is no campaign document." It was, rather, a heartfelt pronouncement that rebutted "narrow-minded church bigots who would drag religion into politics."[86] Excited by Roosevelt's prediction of a Jewish head of state, Philadelphia's *Jewish Exponent* marveled at "the president's implied prophecy that Seder may be observed in the White House at some future day."[87] Notably, the Democratic-leaning *Hebrew Standard* printed a letter praising Roosevelt's response to Martin for its "undiluted Americanism."[88] Simon Wolf, the former president of B'nai B'rith, told Roosevelt, "Not a single act of yours will redound more to your glory and fame than the letter you have just written on religious liberty."[89]

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Roosevelt spent his final morning as president hosting Taft for breakfast. The night before, a gentle snow had begun falling on Washington; by morning, blizzard-like conditions took hold. Armed with an umbrella and galoshes, Roosevelt emerged from the White House and boarded his horse-drawn carriage with his successor seated beside him. Some spectators trudged through three inches of slush on Pennsylvania Avenue to catch glimpses of the presidential pair en route to the Capitol.[90]

The ill-timed snowstorm brought Washington to a halt. Trains, trolleys, and telegraphs were all inoperable.[91] Taft's inauguration was forced to relocate from the publicly viewable Capitol steps to the seclusion of the Senate chamber, gravely disappointing the crowd on hand that had braved the weather.[92] Roosevelt enthusiasts had reason to cheer, however, once the inauguration concluded. He emerged from the Capitol to find an enthusiastic "marching club"—numbering nearly one thousand Republicans from New York—who had been patiently waiting to escort the former president's carriage to the train station. As Roosevelt and the marching club began the half-mile journey, a band played the somber tune "Auld Lang Syne," which seemed to capture the wistful mood in the air. The *New York Times* reported, "The whole mass of humanity that detached itself from the sea of faces around the Capitol to see the last of the retiring president moved on to the rise and fall of the song." Even the congenitally jovial Roosevelt grew pensive as the melancholic notes rang out. But spirits were soon lifted when the band transitioned to an upbeat number, "There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight." By the close of that second song, the procession reached the newly opened Union Station, an architectural wonder of its day. TR alighted from his carriage, and the marchers mobbed the ex-president in search of a handshake. Roosevelt managed to oblige a fortunate few in his immediate proximity before retiring to the station's waiting room to reunite with his family members. Finally, at 3:26 p.m., Roosevelt's train departed Washington and headed north to Oyster Bay. The man who had reshaped the presidency, and with it the nation, was once more a common citizen.[93]

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The following day, the Jewish newspaper *Emanu-El* featured a retrospective on Roosevelt's tenure at the White House. "Even Roosevelt's severest critic must confess that he accomplished considerable [deeds] for the country and the world," *Emanu-El* remarked. The paper deemed him a "great leader" but acknowledged he wasn't quite a Lincoln or a Washington. Rehearsing Roosevelt's record on Jewish issues, *Emanu-El* found cause for celebration and frustration alike.[94]

That postpresidential assessment—upholding Roosevelt as worthy of admiration but still finding some fault—aptly epitomized the Jewish experience with him. With the Romanian Note and Kishinev Petition, he demonstrated a willingness to bend or even break diplomatic norms in defense of Jewry overseas. Roosevelt also repeatedly pressured Russia to respect the passports of his own Jewish constituents. Moreover, his administration extolled America as a political asylum for the world's persecuted, refusing to extradite a dissident refugee to the czar's clutches. Roosevelt consistently used the most visible means available—State of the Union messages, the GOP platform, his nomination acceptance—to champion Jewish causes. And he took an unprecedented measure in American history: the elevation of a Jew to the cabinet. For all these efforts, Jewish voters rewarded Roosevelt with historic support at the ballot box.

But Roosevelt's ties to Jewry sometimes frayed. During Russia's appalling bloodbath in 1905, the telegraph wires from Washington to St. Petersburg hardly hummed. Roosevelt defended his inaction, insisting that a diplomatic push for Jewish rights would be futile amid the anarchy. For many American Jews, however, Roosevelt's strategic inertia felt cruelly tepid in the face of mass slaughter. If that nonintervention marked a low point for Roosevelt-Jewish relations, it wasn't the only moment of strain. Roosevelt endorsed a literacy test for aspiring immigrants, to the chagrin of his Jewish allies. Limiting the influx of newcomers, he argued, would ease the burden on those already crammed into urban slums. Roosevelt's Jewish friends tried to dissuade him, but to no avail.

His complicated history with Jewry reflected the countervailing forces acting on him at any given time. Roosevelt often found himself caught between humanitarian crisis and diplomatic protocol, between philosemites and antisemites, between pluralism and assimilation. These tensions bespoke the complexities of the moment—and of the man. After all, Roosevelt was famously rife with incongruities. Here was the East Coast aristocrat who became a Dakota cowboy; the bookish intellectual who threw punches in the boxing ring; the combat-thirsty colonel who won a Nobel Peace Prize. There was perhaps no more fitting representative of a nation riddled with its own irresolvable contradictions.

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EPILOGUE

Theodore Roosevelt remains the youngest person to claim the White House and the youngest to leave it. He emerged from office only fifty years old and brimming with energy. In the decade that followed, Roosevelt rarely took a beat. He ventured a treacherous exploration of the Amazon. He dined with royals in the palaces of Europe. He launched a third party—nicknamed the Bull Moose Party—in a bold bid to recapture the Oval Office. His legendary efforts in that race included delivering a stump speech after taking a bullet from a would-be assassin. Roosevelt lost that election but not his life. Even when TR wasn’t on a ballot, Americans were seldom left to wonder what their former president thought of current events; he published editorials, essays, and books at an astounding rate. Roosevelt was still very much the man in the arena.

Amid this afterlife of his administration, he deepened his engagement with Jewish people and Jewish causes. The same issues that had preoccupied American Jewry during his presidency persisted thereafter: persecution abroad, immigration at home, and antisemitism on both sides of the Atlantic. Roosevelt was alive to these challenges. He weighed in on them routinely in public addresses and private correspondence. As with his presidential years, Roosevelt’s standing with his Jewish fellow citizens depended on the moment. More often than not he earned their adoration; sometimes he elicited their consternation. The story of Roosevelt and the Jewish community in this postpresidential period is so rich that it merits a book all its own.[1] But suffice it to say that Jews played a significant role in his journey until the very end—an end that came far sooner than the world expected.

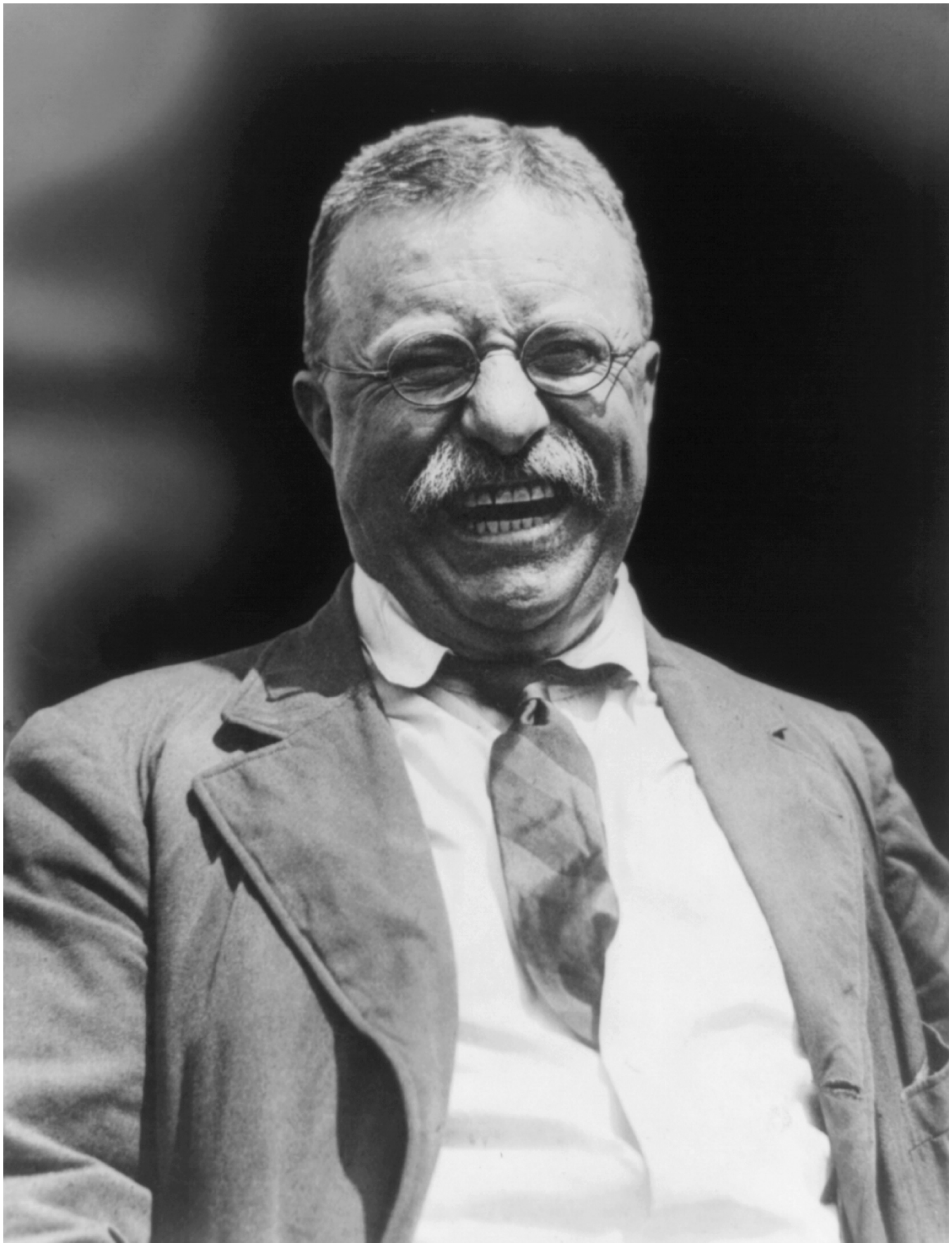

FIGURE 9.1. Theodore Roosevelt in his post-presidency. *Source*: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

On Christmas Eve, 1918, Roosevelt was discharged from the hospital after receiving treatment for inflammatory rheumatism. His prognosis was largely favorable, even if total recovery seemed unlikely. He plunged himself into writing after the new year, dictating pieces for *Metropolitan Magazine* and the *Kansas City Star*. But the first weekend of January had been a fitful one for Roosevelt. He told his wife that Sunday evening before bed that something felt amiss. The next day, Roosevelt's youngest son telegraphed his two older brothers: "The old lion is dead."[2]

* * *

As word spread from Sagamore Hill to the farthest reaches of the country, Americans were stunned by the sudden news of Roosevelt's demise.[3] Here was the Rough Rider who braved Spanish snipers unscathed, the Bull Mooser who campaigned with a bullet freshly lodged in his chest, the ex-president who improbably survived a perilous journey through the Brazilian jungle. And yet, for all Roosevelt's seeming invincibility, the life had quietly slipped from his body amid the calm slumber of a winter's night. "Death had to take Roosevelt sleeping, for if he had been awake there would have been a fight," the sitting vice president mused.[4]

At the spare funeral in Oyster Bay that could accommodate limited numbers, the exclusive guest list included the giants of American politics. There was Roosevelt's ally-turned-adversary William Howard Taft; his old confidant Senator Henry Cabot Lodge; and the imperious House Speaker "Uncle Joe" Cannon. Oscar Straus, besieged with grief, was of course in attendance. After a brief church service, the mourners adjourned to a nearby cemetery for the burial. Roosevelt had long ago chosen his resting place atop a hill that featured spectacular views and birdsong melodies. Six pallbearers labored mightily to lift the flag-draped coffin up a steep incline that was slick with snow.[5] That grueling final act was a fitting tribute to the man whose appetite for "the strenuous life" had been famously insatiable.[6]

For every individual on hand that day in Oyster Bay, millions more paid their respects from afar. Roosevelt's hometown of New York shut down to mark his passing—from schools and subways to firehouses and factories, a reverential stillness replaced the typical commotion. Further afield in the nation's capital, Congress and the Supreme Court suspended their proceedings. And in American military outposts the world over, the armed forces honored their former commander-in-chief by firing shots every thirty minutes from dawn until dusk. Nor were lamentations limited to Roosevelt's compatriots. Amid the capitals of war-torn Europe, orators gave homage to his legacy. Westminster Abbey even took the unprecedented measure of forgoing its evening service and holding a memorial ceremony.[7]

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American Jews felt the loss deeply, especially those whose lives had been directly touched by Roosevelt. "He was the most encouraging person that ever breathed," remarked Edna Ferber, a Jewish novelist he had warmly buoyed.[8] Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf, who had once communed in Cuba with Roosevelt and his Jewish troops, arranged for his synagogue to install a stained-glass window commemorating the colonel.[9] Meanwhile, the Jewish Welfare Board—which Roosevelt had gifted a generous portion of his Nobel Prize cash award—organized a day of mourning for its constituent chapters throughout the country.[10]

Countless other Jewish Americans, who had never met the man, nursed hearts heavy with sadness. From synagogue pews, they heard sermons cataloguing Roosevelt's service to their people. Jewish newspapers published paeans to his conviction in religious equality. "Jewish immigrants had no better friend than Theodore Roosevelt," declared the *B'nai B'rith Messenger*. "He ever championed their cause." The *Hebrew Standard*, a Democratic organ that had often found fault with Roosevelt in his lifetime, now conceded after his passing that he was "the greatest of our fellow-citizens." Through these exercises in remembrance, Jews nationwide became reacquainted with the many chapters of Roosevelt's Jewish story: Police Commissioner Roosevelt's clever decision to guard an antisemite with thirty Jewish officers; Colonel Roosevelt's dogged fighting in Cuba alongside his Jewish volunteers; and above all President Roosevelt's defiant stands against Jewish suffering overseas.

As might be expected in the midst of mourning, Jewish commentators passed silently over Roosevelt’s strained moments with their community. No rabbis reminded their congregants of his muted response when the pogrom wave crested in Russia. No Jewish editors prompted their readers to recall Roosevelt’s support for a literacy test that would have barred a quarter of Jewish refugees. No Jewish memorial services recollected his enthusiasm for an assimilationist play that Jews themselves roundly condemned for seeming to promote Jewish self-extinction. Undoubtedly, Roosevelt *was* beloved by his Jewish constituents, but that love was never blind to his flaws, real or perceived.

* * *

Roosevelt ascended to the White House in the throes of a great national transformation. Once a fragile new republic committed to neutrality abroad, America was becoming a global player that projected its power well beyond its borders. Once a young country where Anglo-Saxons predominated, America increasingly saw its streets packed with strange newcomers speaking in alien tongues. In short, America was coming to the world, and the world was coming to America.

But the path to modernity wasn’t smoothly paved. Roosevelt found himself navigating foreign resistance to American intervention and domestic anxiety about immigration. The Jewish challenges confronting him—from massacres to migration—assumed outsized importance in American political life because they threw into vivid relief just how rapidly the country had grown daring in its external engagement and diverse in its internal composition. His mixed approach to Jewish affairs aptly reflected a nation uncertain of its own destiny. Would the United States prove wary of crises abroad and suspicious of fresh arrivals to its shores? Or would the country embrace the forces of globalization that were collapsing vast distances between the Old World and the New? Roosevelt’s checkered answer was of no small moment. At stake for America was nothing less than its very self-conception; at stake for untold Jews was nothing less than their very survival.

* * *

The night before Roosevelt's funeral, his corpse lay in the trophy room of Sagamore Hill. He had asked a friend to design the room as an addition to the home, and Roosevelt thrilled to its completion halfway through his presidency. "You cannot imagine how delighted I am with the new room," he told the architect, adding, "Really, I like it better than any room in the White House which, as you know, is my standard of splendor!" Guests would descend from a raised platform down several steps into the trophy room, whose wood paneling and animal skins lent it the unmistakable air of a hunting lodge. The room was appropriately named—its various trophies, gifts, and mementos reflected Roosevelt's many sides. The buffalo head signified Roosevelt, the hunter. The Rough Rider saber represented Roosevelt, the soldier. And the golden eagle mounted between the windows symbolized Roosevelt, the patriot.[11]

A tradition common to Christianity and Judaism alike calls on the living to watch over the dead before burial. And as Roosevelt's corpse passed this final night in the trophy room, only one person was permitted to keep vigil over the body. That honor didn't fall to any of the famous personages who had populated his life, nor to the best man at his wedding, nor even to his eldest child. In these small hours, as the world slept, Roosevelt's sole companion was a Russian-Jewish immigrant: Otto Raphael.[12]

Recall that Roosevelt and Raphael met decades earlier, when Roosevelt had just taken over New York's police department and Raphael was a young man working at his family's failing meat market on the Lower East Side. Raphael was introduced to Roosevelt as the neighborhood hero who had rescued people from a burning building. With this, Roosevelt recruited him to the police force. The two became sparring partners in the boxing ring and ultimately developed a lifelong relationship. To be sure, the differences between them were striking—the one, a strictly kosher Russian Jew raised in the East Side slums; the other, a silver-spooned cowboy with Dutch blood and a Harvard diploma. But Roosevelt treated Raphael as an equal. It couldn't have been lost on Raphael that back in the czar's dominions he might have been savagely slaughtered, but in the United States he could keep company with an American president.

Theodore Roosevelt was an imperfect leader of an imperfect nation. Yet he fervently believed—when many others didn't—that the likes of Otto Raphael made America a better place. On that last evening in Sagamore Hill, amid a trophy room adorned with the tokens of feats and fame, there could be no finer symbol of the very best in Roosevelt than this final farewell between two faithful friends.

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Preface

I have felt a fond attachment for New Orleans ever since my friend and teacher Rabbi Julian B. Feibelman of Temple Sinai first introduced me to its charm almost thirty years ago. Three years later, at the behest of beloved Myra and Bernard H. Eichhold, I assumed rabbinical leadership of my first congregation—Shaaray Shomayim of Mobile, Alabama. At least once a month my friend Joseph Bear would take me with him to New Orleans on some excuse or other. On none of those visits in 1940 or 1943 did it ever occur to me that I would become involved in this study of the beginnings of Jewish life in New Orleans.

Over the years of my research into various aspects of American Jewish history, I had touched on themes of importance to New Orleans: the nature of Judah P. Benjamin's feelings about Judaism; Judah Touro's strange indifference to his religion until the last years of his life; Benjamin Levy's pioneering career as a bookseller, printer and publisher. But as a matter of simple fact, I never intended to write this book.

Some years ago I began to assemble material for a study of Jewish life in the ante-Bellum South; a monograph on *Jews and Slavery in the Old South* was one product of that effort. As I surveyed the available resources, I discovered that very little thorough research had been done into the earliest periods of New Orleans Jewish history, and I decided that I would have to do some basic digging myself. I presumed that little would be found, but I had to make certain. Much to my astonishment, the more deeply I delved, the more I uncovered—a host of early Jewish settlers who were totally unknown to those who had previously written brief essays on Jewish life in the city; a number of colorful personages who fascinated me so profoundly that I had no alternative but to try to learn more about their experiences; and some distinctive, perhaps unique, aspects of Jewish life in the community—or better, accounting for the lack of a sense of community before 1827–28—which struck me as being worth more than brief reference in a larger framework.

I was, then, ambushed into writing this book. This research has taken an inordinate amount of time, and yet it has given me more pleasure than any other work I have essayed. This is partly because I have made so many friends in the process—hundreds of librarians, scholars, students, researchers and just plain people, who have generously contributed material to these pages, or have helped me to find it. Had I lived in New Orleans this work would have been finished in one-quarter of the time. Much of the hunt had to be carried on through correspondence, microfilms, photocopies and notes made by research assistants. But on a number of occasions it was my privilege to be able to work in New Orleans libraries, museums and depositories of historic materials. These trips brought me the great pleasure of spending time with my colleagues Rabbis Julian B. Feibelman and Leo A. Bergman, and with my friends Dorothy and Shepard Shushan, in whose lovely home I was so warmly welcomed and permitted to make my New Orleans headquarters. To them and to all the others who have helped with hospitality, encouragement and information—whose names I have tried to list in the Acknowledgements—I offer my sincere appreciation.

The first and second drafts of this book were written during the summers of 1966 and 1967 in the hospitable surroundings of the American Jewish Archives at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, while I was given time off by my long-suffering but sympathetic congregation. The rich collections which my beloved teacher, Professor Jacob Rader Marcus, has assembled at the Archives during the twenty years which have passed since its foundation, made it possible for me to do much checking and doublechecking while engaged in the writing process. The staff of the Archives exemplifies the highest standards of helpfulness which a research institute can offer. My thanks go as always to Professor Marcus for his unfailing encouragement and assistance as I struggled with knotty problems of synthesis and narrative.

I know that some members of my congregation have thought at times that I dwelt in the past as much as in the present. All the more am I gratified that they have indulged my research and detective work so uncomplainingly. They have afforded me the widest latitude in pursuing my second career as a student of history. They even provided me with a former president, Mr. Charles C. Pollack, who helped to translate some of the myriad of French documents with which I have had to deal.

Two other men rate a special word of gratitude: Professor Jack D. L. Holmes of the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and Mr. Winston De Ville of Alexandria and Chapel Hill. Dr. Holmes has constantly placed at my disposal his rich knowledge of the Spanish colonial period of Louisiana, and Mr. De Ville, the most ubiquitous student of French archival resources in all of Louisiana, has hunted far and wide to help me locate elusive pieces of isolated information. Both of these friends and co-workers have helped me to achieve an intimate comprehension of the colonial period. For the later, American period, I have been ably helped by Mr. and Mrs. H. L. Forsyth, dedicated students of Louisiana genealogy and joyous friends to all who are interested in New Orleans history, who always seemed to be able to come up with a new lead whenever I ran into a deadend. An entire section of Acknowledgements lists the names of the innumerable folk who have assisted in the research for this volume. Mention must be made here, however, of these: Mrs. Michell Jacques, who typed the original manuscript and has proof-read the book into print; Mrs. Herbert Greenspan, Miss Imelda McGonigle, Mrs. Leonard Sarner and Mrs. Hyman Penn, my secretaries, who participated in its preparation in many ways; my colleague, Rabbi Abraham I. Shinedling, who helped me get the manuscript ready for the press and has prepared the index; Bernard Wax, the Director of the American Jewish Historical Society, who has shown devoted interest in the success of this project; and Dr. Maurice Jacobs, my friend, the printer, who cares about the book as much as I do.

My choice of a biographical rather than a thematic approach was made somewhat reluctantly. It would have been far easier to have described the activities of these New Orleans people in terms of the various categories of life—economic, political, social, cultural, etc.—pursuing a comparative method. But the clarity achieved by this sort of treatment would have blurred the view of them as whole persons and as members of families, which I have attempted to achieve. Because they were, in such large measure, isolated persons rather than members of a Jewish community, it seemed to me essential to present them as distinct individuals. I have reverted to the thematic approach only in regard to their religious views and practices because here, as a group, they offer a sort of case study in the tension between accommodation and continuity which underlies all of American Jewish history.

My terminus ad quem requires some explanation to those who will be scandalized that I have not attempted to delineate in any great detail the experiences of the New Orleans Jewish community beyond the 1840's. Although I do devote some attention to the life stories of some early Jews who lived even into the 1890's, and much effort to the attempt to achieve an understanding of Judah Touro's later years, my primary concern has been with the origins of the community, the tracing of the story up to the point somewhere in the late 1830's or early 1840's when New Orleans began more closely to resemble other Jewish communities throughout America. Some aspects of distinctiveness did continue—a higher rate of intermarriage; a greater number of transients; a more urgent need for institutions like the Touro Infirmary and the Jewish Widows' and Orphans' Home; a lengthy delay in the creation of a genuine Reform congregation—but most developments in New Orleans can best be understood in relation to those in other major communities in the South and throughout the nation. If God spares me, I still hope to move on to an evaluation of the nature of Jewish life in the South prior to the outbreak of the Civil War. In such a study, more can be said about the further growth of New Orleans Jewry than would have meaning here.

One further explanation is in order: I was altogether astonished at the mountain of material about the Monsanto family which turned up in the later years of my research. I had presumed, without justification, that others had worked exhaustively in colonial Louisiana materials and had found nothing about early Jews.

The Monsanto story is another reason for the distinctiveness of the New Orleans Jewish community's origins; it is altogether different from Jewish experiences in the British colonial areas on the Atlantic coast. And I am equally grateful that the pursuit of the Monsanto family into British West Florida records revealed so much additional material about the first Jewish settlers in my old Southern home, Mobile.

Ordinarily a work like this would be accompanied by a formal and formidable bibliography, but I believe that this would be unnecessary. A collation of all of the manuscript and published sources to which reference is made in the notes would simply add to the length of the book, but would serve no useful purpose; nor could a bibliography legitimately include all of the thousands of books and pamphlets whose pages I have turned in the vain hope of discovering some reference to my people. Suffice it to say that I have hunted for material in every logical or illogical source noted in the standard Louisiana bibliographies; turned cards in the catalogue of every major library in the New Orleans area; and read through every available issue of New Orleans newspapers, in the original form or on microfilm, from the earliest issue to the end of 1842. I have preferred to concentrate my attention on the notes, some of which are, perhaps, too tightly packed with detailed information; but I should not want any fellow researcher to miss any hint of a detail which I have succeeded in discovering. The course over which I have plodded has been too arduous for me to refrain from sharing anything that I have found.

Although I have attempted to exploit relevant source materials with as much thoroughness as possible, New Orleans possesses an embarrassment of manuscript riches. The Notarial Archives, in particular, are incredibly informative. It would take most of the rest of my life to search through every notarial volume in the basement of the Civil District Court Building in New Orleans for additional data about the life of these people whom I call "my people" because I feel as though I have brought them back to life. But I do not think that additional years of such research would change very much in this volume, although a great deal of specific data, particularly about the business careers of some of my dramatis personae, would indeed be of interest. I hope that some candidates for master's and doctor's degrees in Louisiana universities will undertake further research along these lines. It will undoubtedly be illuminating.

Even more to the point are the similar records in parish (the Louisiana equivalent of county) court houses throughout the state, which I have not even seen, let alone searched. Rural Louisiana presents yet another challenge to students of local Jewish history. I am certain that much new material about Jews during the period from 1810 to 1840 will be uncovered in such caches of manuscripts.

Basically I conceive of this book as the story of people, not just any people, but people who are—were—part of the People Israel, the People of mystery, of pain, of hope. Always an enigma to others as well as to themselves, these who belonged to the People Israel fled through the night, over continents, and across the ocean, in search of freedom, opportunity and self-realization. In the process of flight and settlement, many of them lost their sense of relatedness to the People Israel, and abandoned their personal identity as Jews, but even this was part of the search. Many had endured too much to be content any longer to be regarded as inferiors—in an age when the Jewish religion had not yet found a way of surviving in the modern world. If they wanted to forget that they were Jews, we can understand even that. But though individuals may end their search on bypaths, the People itself persists, rediscovers itself, renews itself. Despite every obstacle, challenge, danger and difficulty, somehow Israel manages to survive to face another day, and even finds it possible to live creatively and to wring a blessing from the Most High.

B.W.K.

Wyncote, Pa.
April 1, 1969.

Chronology

1718	Founding of New Orleans by the French.
1754–63	French and Indian War, between France (joined in 1761 by Spain) and England, the American colonial equivalent of the European Seven Years' War (1756–63).
1762	Treaty of Fontainebleau (November 3), by which France ceded New Orleans and the Louisiana colonial area west of the Mississippi River to Spain, as compensation for Spain's impending loss of Florida to Great Britain.
1763	Treaty of Paris (February 10), ending the Seven Years' War and France's colonial empire on the American continent. French Louisiana east of the Mississippi was surrendered to the British; this area included the lower third of the present states of Mississippi and Alabama. The British divided their new possessions, French eastern Louisiana and Spanish Florida, into British West and East Florida.
1766	Arrival in New Orleans of the first Spanish governor, Antonio de Ulloa.
1769	Arrival in New Orleans of the second Spanish governor, General Alejandro O'Reilly.
1779	Capture of Baton Rouge, Manchac and Natchez from the British by the Spanish under Governor Bernardo de Gálvez.
1780	Capture of Mobile by Gálvez.
1781	Capture of Pensacola by Gálvez.
1800	Treaty of San Ildefonso (October 1), by which Spain ceded New Orleans and Louisiana west of the Mississippi to France. Formal transfer November 30, 1803.
1803	Louisiana Purchase Treaty between the United States and France (April 30). Formal transfer December 20, 1803.
1810	Revolt of West Florida settlers in the Baton Rouge area against Spain (September 23) and annexation of the area by the United States (October 27).

New Orleans was French from 1717 to 1766; Spanish from 1766 to November 30, 1803; French from November 30, 1803, to December 20, 1803; American from December 20, 1803.

Baton Rouge was French from 1717 to 1763; British from 1763 to 1779; Spanish from 1779 to 1810; American from 1810.

Mobile was French from its founding in 1702 to 1763; British from 1763 to 1780; Spanish from 1780 to 1813, when it was seized by the United States, which had claimed it since 1803.

Pensacola was Spanish from about 1699 to 1763; British from 1763 to 1781; Spanish from 1781 to 1814, when it was taken over briefly by the British before Andrew Jackson seized it for the United States.

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THE EARLY JEWS OF NEW ORLEANS

I

The Colonial Experience

1. Jews in the French Caribbean

Just as the 1492 expulsion of the great Jewish community of Ferdinand and Isabella's Spain drove shock-waves of refugees to every conceivable area of open or clandestine settlement in Europe, North Africa and Asia Minor, so the minor diaspora which resulted from the capture of Dutch Brazil by the Portuguese in 1654 scattered another significant Jewish community into the nooks and crannies of a newer world. Wherever they could find a haven, hospitable or begrudging, temporary or permanent, these Spanish and Portuguese Jews, called Sephardim, sought to settle. Some went back to the Old World, to the security of Amsterdam, even to London, but many, apparently, having taken the adventurous voyage to the Western Hemisphere, attempted to establish themselves in the islands and ports of the Caribbean and Atlantic. A few found their way, by accident, to the bleak, bustling town of New Amsterdam that Peter Stuyvesant ruled on the North American mainland. Stuyvesant's heavy-handed effort to prevent them from remaining in the colony evoked the strong protest of the Jews of Amsterdam to the directors of the Dutch West India Company. They complained that

> "... The French consent that the Portuguese Jews may traffic and live in Martinique, Christopher and others of their territories, whither also some have gone from here, as your Honors know. The English also consent at the present time that the Portuguese and Jewish nation may go from London and settle at Barbados, whither also some have gone. . . ."[1]

The Jewish burghers of Amsterdam might well have mentioned that Jews had perhaps settled in Martinique even before the

French added the island colony to their New World possessions in 1635, and that refugees from Brazil had fled not only to Martinique and St. Christophe, but also to Guadeloupe.[2]

This is not to suggest, however, that the status of the Jews in the French islands during the seventeenth century was idyllic. Some of the leading statesmen in the homeland and in the colonies realized full well that every brain and pair of hands, even Jewish, brought added strength to the island frontiers, but conservative religious and economic forces continually agitated against this permissive view. Controller-General Jean Baptiste Colbert supported the liberal attitude so vigorously that Louis XIV issued a formal decree on May 23, 1671, which authorized Jews to remain in "la Martinique et les autres Isles habitués par mes sujets."[3] But in 1685 this tolerant policy was reversed in the first published compilation of laws for the regulation of slavery in the colonies, the *Code Noir*; one section of that code ordered the banishment of Jewish settlers from the French island colonies:

> "It is our wish, and we decree, that the edict of the late King of glorious memory, our greatly honored lord and father, dated April 23, 1615, be carried into effect in our Islands and, by these Presents, We command all our officers to chase out of our Islands all Jews who have established their residence there whom, as declared enemies of the Christian faith, We command to get out in three months, counting from the day of the publication of these Presents, upon penalty of the confiscation of their persons and property."[4]

The edict of 1615 had not been applied to the Marrano merchants of Bordeaux and other commercial centers of southern France—they continued to enjoy a special status. Similarly, although some Jews may have been expelled from the French West Indies, or denied admission to them, as a result of the decree of 1685, certain privileged Jewish entrepreneurs continued to maintain residence and conduct their businesses in the islands. Members of the noted Gradis family, for instance, developed extensive commercial and agricultural holdings in Martinique and Saint-Domingue (the present-day Haiti) early in the eighteenth century.[5]

2. JEWS IN EARLY LOUISIANA?

The Caribbean islands were far more attractive to ambitious, resourceful Jews like the Gradis family than the Louisiana colony which was abuilding so painfully and so slowly on the Gulf Coast mainland. Despite the efforts of the brothers Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville and Jean Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville, who exhibited great confidence in the potential promise of Louisiana, the colony languished "in a state of confusion, with quarreling factions, abandoned concessions, habitations, and farms, and an immoral and generally worthless French citizenry."[6] There is no positive documentary evidence known to the writer that any Jew came to Louisiana during the early years of the colony.[7] Such immigrants to Louisiana as Jacob David, shoemaker, Romain David, tailor, Robert and Genevieve Jacob, and a soldier named Louis Salomon, all of whom arrived in 1719, have been regarded as Jews simply on the basis of their names, but no contemporary document identifies them as Jews or Jewish converts to Christianity.[8] Nor is there evidence that any of the early German colonists who settled in the area called "the German coast" were known to their fellows as Jews. The religion of almost every one of these early Germans is recorded; none is identified in available lists or documents as a Jew or as a convert from Judaism. It is natural for the historian seeking Jewish relevance to be attracted to such names as Marx, until he discovers that the first Marx in Louisiana was named Balthazar, and that he gave his religion as Roman Catholic.[9] The search for early Jews in Louisiana should continue, but researchers ought to agree that names alone can hardly be offered as conclusive evidence.[10]

In a similar vein, the ban on the residence of Jews in the Louisiana *Code Noir* of 1724 should not be regarded as presumptive evidence of the actual presence of Jews in the colony. A much more likely explanation is that the text of the 1724 *Code* (which was drawn up in Paris, not in Louisiana) was based in large measure upon the prior document of 1685, which had been issued before the establishment of the settlements on the

Gulf Coast. The section on the Jews varied only slightly in the new version:

> "The edict of the late King Louis XIII, of glorious memory, dated April 23, 1615, shall be executed in our province and colony of Louisiana: this being done, We enjoin the Directors General of the said Company, and all our Officers, to drive out of the said country all Jews who may have established their residence there. These, as declared enemies of the Christian name, We command to leave in three months, counting from the day of the publication of these Presents, upon penalty of the confiscation of their persons and property."[11]

One of the variations, it will be noted, is a greater uncertainty in this document about the actual presence of Jews than in the 1685 version, as if to say that no report of the settlement of Jews in Louisiana had reached Paris.

The inclusion of a ban on Jewish settlement as Article I, and on the practice of any religion other than the Catholic as Article III, in a code which regulated Negro slavery in the colonies, has seemed to baffle certain historians. Charles Gayarré, for instance, voices his mystification: "By what concatenation of causes or ideas, these provisions concerning the supremacy of the Roman Catholic religion and the expulsion of the Jews came to be inserted in the Black Code, it is difficult to imagine."[12] But it is not so difficult once we recognize that the basic motivation was a missionary concern for the souls of the Negro slaves: if Jewish landowners could practice Judaism, they might feel free to convert their slaves to their own religion. Only a double-edged denial of the right of Jews to settle, and of the freedom to practice any faith other than the Catholic, would guarantee the proper Catholicization of the slaves. Since the time of the Emperor Constantius (339), legislation of the Roman Empire, of Church Councils, and of individual states, had sought to support the spread of Christianity by prohibiting the holding of Christian slaves, and even of potential slave converts to Christianity, by Jews, as well as the conversion of slaves to Judaism by their Jewish owners.[13] But whatever the background of the *Code Noir*, it should not be regarded as positive evidence that Jews who would be subjected to its provisions had already come to Louisiana. This is not to suggest, however, that they would have been welcomed into the colony. A bureau document of the Company of the Indies, dating from 1716 or 1717, urged the exclusion of Jews because they would be politically unreliable and economically too aggressive. "Those of Portugal [who are in France now] give us a good example of what to avoid."[14] It is idle to wonder what would have happened if a Jew had tried to settle in the colony. It should be recognized, however, that if Jews did not attempt to settle in Louisiana, their avoidance of the area was not motivated by their fear of rejection or banishment, but rather by their awareness of the fact that the colony's languishing economic condition offered them little opportunity of making a living in their accustomed commercial pursuits.

The extensive economic potential of Louisiana was seen clearly by one Jew who never settled there, but whose vision, if acted upon, might have stimulated the kind of growth the colony sorely required. This Jew was Abraham Gradis of Bordeaux, whose family, as we have noted, had already established commercial branches in the Caribbean and who, in 1748, organized the highly successful Society of Canada venture for the promotion of commerce in the northern colony. In the same year, Gradis proposed the establishment of a similar company which would exploit the commercial and agricultural opportunities he perceived in the Louisiana settlement. The key to the problem, as Gradis saw it, was the massive importation of Negro slaves into the colony under the auspices of the King—he suggested ten thousand slaves over a period of five years. These slaves would be utilized primarily for the clearing and cultivation of land. Some of the lumber would be used for construction, and the excess would be exported. The major objective of all this activity would be "a lucrative trade in all our manufactures with New Spain [Mexico], a commerce now inaccessible to the French because of the sea. Through overland caravans into this colony, the Spaniards could secure our merchandise and wares in exchange for gold and silver. . . ." Gradis' memorandum which embodied these recommendations to the French government was submitted from Bordeaux on May 21, 1748. It was filed without comment or action.[15]

Very possibly, however, even though Gradis' plan was not carried out, the first contacts of Jews with Louisiana were through trade rather than permanent settlement. The earliest located transaction on record concerns a cargo of goods worth 14,162 piastres and 2 reales, which Josue Henriques, Jr., a Jewish businessman in Curaçao, shipped to one Bertrand in New Orleans some time before July, 1748. Bertrand accepted the consignment, sold it and absconded with the proceeds. On July 19, 1748, the Layssard brothers, Jean Baptiste and Etienne, who were apparently Henriques' correspondents in New Orleans, petitioned Vincent d'Auberville, Commissaire Ordonnateur of the Province and First Judge of its Superior Court, for the seizure of Bertrand's property in New Orleans, so that Henriques might be reimbursed for his losses. D'Auberville approved the petition on July 19, and the required notice was served at Bertrand's residence on August 3. In September, a Bertrand associate admitted possession of merchandise worth 4,132 piastres which belonged to the fugitive, but insisted that he would not voluntarily surrender it. The incomplete record of the case ends here.[16] There may, of course, have been many other commercial contracts during the 1740's and 1750's between Jews in the Caribbean area and merchants and customers in New Orleans of which no record remains because they did not become the subjects of such legal wrangling as this.

3. The *Texel* Affair

Within a decade of Henriques' trouble, however, a few Jewish merchants and their families had finally established themselves in New Orleans. Attention was called to their presence in the colony, which violated the first article of the *Code Noir*, in the barrage of correspondence which documents the complex "*Texel* affair." As a result of the arrival in New Orleans in January, 1759, of the ship *Texel* which gave its name to this cause célèbre, the hostility which had long been simmering between the Governor of the colony, Chevalier Louis Billouart de Kerlérec, and the Commissaire Ordonnateur, Vincent Pierre Gaspard de Rochemore, burst into the open. The *Texel* had come to New Orleans from Jamaica on a *parlementaire* voyage. *Parlementaire* shipping ventures were a well-known feature of the Seven Years' War (1756–1763) in the colonial areas. Originally designed to encourage the exchange of prisoners of war, they developed into speculative trips to enemy territory for the sale of cargoes of scarce merchandise. A few prisoners would serve as the excuse for the shipment of sorely needed goods to an enemy port. Kerlérec welcomed these opportunities to obtain foodstuffs and other commodities for his colony, even at high prices. Rochemore opposed the Governor's policy. The *Texel* arrived in the Governor's absence. The Ordonnateur, in an effort to establish his authority and demonstrate his virtue, accused Kerlérec of violating the intent of the law and of sharing in the profits of such cargoes. He therefore seized the *Texel* and imprisoned its captain. Kerlérec, on his return to town, released the ship and the captain, and reprimanded Rochemore for taking the law into his own hands. Both men, of course, wrote reports to Paris to justify their conduct. The captain of the ship was a Jew named David Dias Arias, who died in New Orleans before he was able to leave the colony. In Curaçao, years before, Dias Arias had married Gracia Yesurun, daughter of Haham Rephael Yesurun (1678–1747). The rabbi was so unlucky as to countersign a heavy note of indebtedness for him; when Dias Arias found himself unable to pay his debts, he fled Curaçao and took refuge in Jamaica. The rabbi had to sell all his possessions in order to raise just one-quarter of the huge sum for which he was now responsible. An unsavory character, at best, was Dias Arias, to become the subject of so intense a colonial furore. The conflict between the two highest officials of the colony and their supporters dragged on for years, culminating in the dismissal of Rochemore and the resignation of Kerlérec. Long after Louisiana had been ceded to the Spanish, their families brought suits and countersuits in the courts of France and wrote memoirs on the case.[17]

It was clearly an accident that the owner of this *parlementaire* ship happened to be a Jew. Dias Arias was probably no different from the other commercial adventurers who participated in this legalized smuggling business. But Rochemore had little liking for Jews anyway, and used their presence in New Orleans as another argument to justify his seizure of the *Texel* and his defiance of the Governor:

> ". . . The sale of the cargo [after it was released by Kerlérec] has been accomplished by the Captain [Dias Arias] of this ship in the stores of the Jews established in this colony. The Captain has received the money for it, and has left the river after having had time during a two months sojourn, at complete liberty in this city, to gather knowledge of the weakness of this colony, and to carry away such commodities as he wished. One of these Jews left in another ship a short time after without declaring his destination and without a passport; and, furthermore, this is the custom in this colony on the part of those who leave for foreign and enemy colonies, to receive the approval of the Governor, who alone knows their designs. . . .
>
> "These Jews, who according to the edicts and ordinances must not remain in a colony more than three months, under penalty of imprisonment and confiscation of their property, are forming establishments here the progress and the danger of which have been observed by the whole country. There are, at present, six of them here, and I do not include those of the ship of Dias Arias, engaging in commerce both wholesale and retail, with the same freedom as French businessmen. The merchants and other inhabitants of this colony are persuaded that the Jews are only tolerated here as a means of raising money, through a tax that I know nothing of. . . ."[18]

Thus Rochemore marshalled his accusations against the Jews: they were spies for the enemy; they were weakening the colony through the exportation of commodities; they were bribing the Governor to obtain permission to remain; and they were an economic danger to the inhabitants of the colony. Had Rochemore gained the upper hand in his struggle with the Governor, or had Kerlérec agreed with his position, there is no doubt that the Jews would have been summarily expelled. But, fortunately for them, Rochemore's defiance did not prevail, and they were permitted to remain.

4. The First Documented Jews in New Orleans

Unfortunately we do not know the names or activities of all of the six Jews to whom Rochemore and his clique referred, nor do we know precisely which one was the first to settle permanently in Louisiana. That distinction may quite possibly belong to a person whose name and affairs are unrecorded in any document, but more likely than not it should be accorded to Isaac Rodrigues Monsanto. In early 1757, Monsanto and his associate, Manuel de Britto, then in Curaçao, chartered the sloop *St. Joseph* from its owner Charles Guillaume, for a voyage to New Orleans. Manuel Monsanto, Isaac's brother, was a passenger on the ship, probably for the purpose of supervising the sale of the cargo in New Orleans. Isaac Monsanto and de Britto may have gone ahead to New Orleans, while the ship stopped at Saint-Domingue. Either on its way to New Orleans, or on its return, the ship was captured in the Bay of Monte Christi by a New England privateer, the *Black Snake*, under the command of Captain Ebenezer Tyler, and taken to Providence, Rhode Island. After its arrival there, Manuel Monsanto and his associates gave their power of attorney for the recovery of the sloop to Jacob Rodriguez Rivera, a prosperous Jewish merchant of Newport, R. I., on June 8, 1757. De Britto meanwhile hastened to Rhode Island to help to secure the release of the ship, which was finally accomplished through the payment of a ransom, but the cargo was apparently confiscated because it was destined for, or had come from, a French port. The *St. Joseph* was loaded with rum and once more set out for the Caribbean area, only to be captured by another privateer, this time, apparently, for good. A series of suits and countersuits ensued in the courts of Saint-Domingue and New Orleans, beginning in late 1757 and continuing until 1763. Guillaume sued for the rent of the ship while it was in British custody; Monsanto and de Britto sued for the expenses involved in fitting and refitting the ship and for the profits anticipated from the sale of the rum, which they said Guillaume's agent, one Perpignot or Perpina, had hijacked for sale in Saint-Domingue—

the reason that the sloop was captured by the British the second time. The final judgment of the New Orleans court in 1763 cannot be found, but the case was so confused and complicated that neither party had all the right on its side—the real problem was that the British privateers were too efficient.[19]

It is not clear whether Isaac Monsanto had already decided to transfer his business operations from Curaçao to New Orleans before the *St. Joseph*'s voyage, in view of that port's great need for consumer goods due to the war, or whether his enforced stay in New Orleans to pursue the case through the courts persuaded him that this would be a good location for his activities. It is also possible that Isaac Monsanto had already become discouraged by the highly competitive commercial atmosphere in Curaçao, which was perhaps the most active entrepreneurial port in the Western Hemisphere at the time. But whether through accident or design, by October 24, 1758, at the latest, Isaac had established himself in New Orleans. On that date he made some purchases at the auction of the property of Claude Joseph Villars Dubreuil, the deceased Contractor of Public Works. One of these purchases was "a little Negro girl named Quetelle," for whom he paid 1,400 livres. He was obviously setting up a household; hence his need for a slave.[20]

5. The Monsanto Family in The Hague and Curaçao

Isaac Monsanto was born at The Hague, Holland, in October, 1729, the eldest son and second child of David Rodrigues Monsanto, a native of Amsterdam, and his wife Ester Levy. Monsanto was a Sephardic Jew; Ester was an Ashkenazi (Central European) from Münster in Germany.[21] The father is first mentioned as the clerk of Sir Solomon de Medina in 1715, but he may have served in that capacity prior to that time; Medina had already established his residence at The Hague in 1705 after moving to the continent from England in 1702 in order to remain in close contact with the Duke of Marlborough, for whose armies he was a major supplier of transportation and foodstuffs. William III had knighted Medina on June 23, 1700, in recognition of his financial services to the Crown and to Marlborough. He was the first professing Jew so to be honored by a British monarch. By the time of David Monsanto's employment, however, Medina had lost much of his immense wealth, and after Marlborough's disgrace in 1711, his connection with momentous affairs of state had ended. Nonetheless, Medina was still a man of substance and influence, and we may be certain that David Monsanto's responsibilities as his secretary-bookkeeper were arduous and weighty. Sir Solomon was still supervising his business operations and investments in England and the Netherlands from The Hague, and was continuing to attempt to retrieve money he had loaned to Marlborough. David Monsanto was both loyal and efficient: he remained in Medina's employ until the latter's death at the age of eighty in 1730, and continued to serve Lady Ester de Medina and the executors while the estate was being settled, at least until 1739. Sir Solomon reposed such confidence in his clerk that he left him a bequest of 400 guilders, plus an additional 1,500 guilders following Lady Ester's death—a larger legacy than Sir Solomon's bequests to his own grandchildren, and the third largest beyond the family circle. Unfortunately, Medina's affairs were so tangled, and his debts so enormous, that David Monsanto probably never collected even a fraction of this inheritance.[22]

During his employment by Medina, who must have been fairly generous to him, David Monsanto had saved enough money to make an investment in the Compagnie van Beleninge, a municipal bank of The Hague; to contribute modest amounts of money to the building fund of the Honen Dal Congregation, which dedicated its new synagogue in 1726; and to establish a family. He married Ester Levy in the synagogue in 1726 or 1727 and sired his first child, Sara, in 1728. At least eight other children, in addition to Isaac, came of this union. Probably because the anticipated legacy from the Medina estate would make him a fairly substantial citizen, David decided, in 1732, to register his marriage to Ester in the civil records of The Hague, and to have a civil wedding ceremony performed. This was not an unusual procedure; Protestants, too, had the privilege of choosing between a civil or religious wedding ceremony, and sometimes decided on both. During the 1730's, David was apparently a fairly prosperous man. He probably pursued some of the business interests in which he had been involved with Medina, and also represented clients in business transactions by exercising their power of attorney, much as he had done for Medina. In 1736 he was elected to an expensive honor by his congregation, and to equally expensive office the following year. In 1741 he served as trustee of an estate. But by late 1742, apparently, he had fallen on hard times. Perhaps he had been borrowing against the anticipated Medina legacy, which by then had become a forlorn hope. He left The Hague for Germany, probably in an effort to recoup his fortunes, but to no avail. When he returned in 1745, he notified the authorities that he did not have the money to pay the special tax which had been levied to meet the cost of Dutch participation in the War of the Austrian Succession. Beginning in 1746, David Monsanto and his family were maintained by the Jewish community, now united by the merger of the two congregations, Honen Dal and Beth Jacob, which had taken place during his absence, in 1743. This man who, as secretary of the wealthy Medina, had kept the records of investments in the hundreds of thousands of pounds sterling, was now reduced to accepting a monthly stipend from the community of which he had once been a fairly substantial member. On Passover he received gifts of *matzos*, and on Hanukah both clothing and money. He who had gratefully accepted and paid for the high honor of serving in 1736 as the "Bridegroom of Genesis" on *Simchas Torah* (the Festival of Rejoicing in the Torah, celebrated on the last morning of the Feast of Tabernacles in the autumn), now served as a *minhanista*—that is, one of the group of unemployed, idle and retired men who, in exchange for a small allowance, were required to attend services in the synagogue every weekday, in order to assure the presence of the mandatory quorum (*minyan*) of ten men necessary for the conduct of public Jewish worship.[23]

The available evidence for the birth years of the children of David and Ester Monsanto is confused and contradictory. We know definitely that Sara, the eldest, died in January, 1736, and that a third child, Jaël, was eight months old in January, 1732. But the registration of birth of some of the other children does not give their names; and later testimony of the children themselves offers various ages which contradicts their statements on other occasions. The best guesses that we can offer are only approximations: Jaël may be the daughter named Judith who was one of the oldest children and who later lived in Saint-Domingue; Joseph may be the child born in 1733, and Manuel was born probably in 1734. There is a big jump in time to the other children, although still other children may have been born and died during the intervening years in that age of severe infant mortality—Gracia (1743?); Angélica (1744?); Eleanora (1745?); Jacob (1746?); Benjamin (1747?). We know definitely that Jacob and Benjamin were still young enough to be pupils in the synagogue school in The Hague in 1753–54. We also know that Ester, probably exhausted by child bearing and rearing, by poverty and want, died in July of 1747. If all the children were hers, as we believe, that is the terminal date for their birth. David Monsanto was too poor to pay the fee for the registration of Ester's death and burial.[24]

After years of dependence on communal funds for their support, in late 1754 the Monsanto family decided to take the bold step of beginning life anew. They made application to the officers and board of The Hague Jewish community for a grant which would enable them to emigrate to Curaçao. A total of 600 florins was offered to them; this included the 120 florins which they ordinarily received each year, aside from special gifts on holidays.[25] Many European Jewish communities during this period, and later, got rid of their paupers by dispatching them to other cities in the Old and New Worlds, but one wonders if in this case, at least, the decision to strike out for new opportunities was not made by the paupers themselves. Although the subsidy was given to David, the titular head of the family, it would seem unlikely that it was he who made this momentous decision: from what hidden reserve of psychic energy could he have summoned the imagination and courage to start a new life after eight years of poverty and failure? In view of Isaac's subsequent leadership of the family, it seems far more probable that it was he who was unwilling any longer to submit to dependence and want, and that it was his ambition and aggressiveness which precipitated the move to the New World. Isaac may well have promised his father that he would take care of his brothers and sisters if David would agree to this drastic action—but promise or not, his future conduct indeed demonstrated his willingness to assume responsibility for the rest of the family.

No record has been discovered which marks the Monsanto family's arrival in Curaçao, but it seems reasonable to suppose that it was in 1755. Actually, the first reference to any member of the family in the Curaçao archives relates to the ill-fated *St. Joseph* voyage of 1757, but the family would have had to be in Curaçao[26] for at least a while in order to accumulate the funds necessary for that venture. It is, of course, possible that Isaac and Manuel had made the trip alone at first, with the rest of the family following later, but this seems unlikely in view of the family's tightly-knit unity in later years in Louisiana. At any rate, by 1758 Isaac and Jacob both possessed certificates as brokers in Curaçao, while the father was pursuing his old occupation of representing the legal interests of clients by utilizing their power of attorney. Far from being a solicitor or barrister, let alone attorney-general of the colony, a legend which persists among some of his descendants—all that David Monsanto or any other Jew could do was to participate in a legal transaction by exercising the power of attorney of a client who was out-of-town or was too busy to be present.[27]

We have no certain knowledge of which brothers and sisters Isaac took with him to New Orleans in 1757–58. There is definite evidence that Manuel did remain in Curaçao, carrying on an import and export business there, but he may have been engaged in these ventures on Isaac's behalf. The last records in Curaçao relating to David and Manuel date from the summer of 1763. It may have been then that the family closed down its Curaçao headquarters, Manuel moving to New Orleans to join Isaac, and probably taking along with him Manuel de Britto, who apparently up until then had spent more time in Curaçao than in New Orleans. The date and place of David Monsanto's death are not known. Although his name is not listed in the incomplete burial records of Curaçao, he may possibly have died there in the summer of 1763, when members of the family seem still to have lived there. It was surely not in New Orleans, for, as we shall see, a bequest by David to his daughters in New Orleans was later described as having come to them in the form of a shipment of cargo. Perhaps the most probable location of David's death was Saint-Domingue, where his son Joseph settled, and where his daughter Judith (Jaël?) lived with her husband Moïse Julien. Whatever David's fate, it is clear that he had succeeded in reestablishing himself at least to the extent that he was able to leave some money to his three daughters. The move to Curaçao had indeed given him a new opportunity in life.[28]

Manuel Monsanto and Manuel de Britto probably took along with them to New Orleans another Jew, Isaac Henriques Fastio, who was to outlive most of the Monsanto brothers and sisters in Louisiana. Fastio, a native of Bordeaux, had probably established himself in Curaçao by April, 1757, when his wife Ester left Bordeaux for Curaçao by way of Amsterdam, with their four daughters in tow, accompanied by her brother Abraham Rodrigues and a forty-six-year-old servant, Abraham García. Fastio and Manuel Monsanto were partners in some complex export operations in 1763 which brought them into conflict with the son of the late governor of Curaçao. Perhaps Manuel Monsanto, de Britto and Fastio were compelled to leave Curaçao after this disastrous venture which, apparently, plunged them into debt. At any rate, Fastio was in Louisiana by 1766 at the latest, participating in some business ventures with Isaac Monsanto. Although he may have opened a store in New Orleans, it is more likely that he moved almost immediately to Pointe Coupee where he spent most of his active business life in Louisiana. His death record in 1804 states that he had been a Louisiana resident for "about 50 years," but so far as we can trace his movements, he could not have moved to New Orleans until 1763 at the earliest. Possibly Isaac Monsanto had prospered so well that he could now also support Manuel and de Britto; he may also have promised to give Fastio a share in some of his ventures. The transfer to New Orleans may also have been stimulated by the end of the Seven Years' War, and the expectation that business opportunities in New Orleans would be more attractive than in Curaçao.[29]

6. Isaac Monsanto and Company in New Orleans, 1758–1769

New Orleans had indeed offered ample opportunity for Isaac to demonstrate his capacity for aggressive and imaginative commercial activity. Assisted by the continuing scarcity of consumer goods created by the interminable warfare between England and France, the absence of competition from the largely indolent French settlers, the useful contacts which he already had established in Curaçao and possibly in Saint-Domingue and elsewhere, and the ready help of his younger brothers, he succeeded in becoming a prosperous merchant during the period 1758–69. Isaac Monsanto seems to have had a vigorous, out-going personality, and to have made friends easily. Not only did Governor Kerlérec refuse to eject him and the other Jews, but he seems to have taken a friendly interest in Isaac, which the latter reciprocated. Monsanto was one of twenty-nine merchants who signed a statement on April 29, 1763, which praised Kerlérec's efforts to encourage the commerce of the city during the war.[30] Kerlérec continued to maintain business relations with Monsanto even after his return to France. In 1766 he wrote to Monsanto from Paris about the sale of some cypress, and reported that "Mr. Gradis, who is here now, spoke to me about 600 quarts of flour you have in your store. I promised him I would do what I can to help you."[31]

The Gradis firm of Bordeaux was one of a large number of correspondents with whom Isaac Monsanto had business dealings during the period 1758–69. On occasion, Monsanto acted as their agent and collected funds due them from customers in New Orleans, and, similarly, Monsanto was sometimes asked by Louisiana clients to arrange for the transfer of credit from the Gradis firm to New Orleans.[32] Monsanto also transacted business with other firms, whose headquarters were in Bayonne, La Rochelle, Bordeaux, Paris, Cadiz and London. In the Caribbean area, he sent cargoes to, and received them from, Saint-Domingue, Cuba, Vera Cruz, Campeche, Jamaica, Martinique, Curaçao and St. Eustatius.[33] Nearer home, the Monsanto company had customers and clients in the Louisiana settlements and posts at Rapides, Pellas Creek, Bayou Manchac, the German Coast, Houma, Opelousas, Natchitoches and Pointe Coupee.[34] Ranging farther afield on the mainland, he shipped goods to New York City, Pensacola and Mobile in the British colonies, and up the Mississippi to Natchez and to more distant posts in the Arkansas and Illinois country.[35] Consignments from these areas were also shipped to Monsanto in New Orleans. Like other merchant shippers, Monsanto established limited partnerships for specific ventures: in 1765, for instance, he chartered a ship for a voyage to Vera Cruz, carrying a cargo of liquor and other merchandise, with Kerlérec's successor as Governor, Jean Jacques Blaise D'Abbadie, as a partner.[36] It was not unusual for Royal Governors and other officials to participate in business ventures like these, but it is reflective of their attitude towards the Jews that neither Kerlérec nor D'Abbadie hesitated before dealing in this way with Isaac Monsanto.

The broad geographical range covered by Monsanto's interests was equalled only by the variety of commodities which he handled in both wholesale and retail quantities. The merchandise which he traded ranged from handkerchiefs to guns, from canvas to lumber, from cordage to indigo, from sugar to lime, and from bullocks to slaves.[37] The latter were not only bought and sold singly, but en masse. In 1768 the firm had an interest in a contracted shipment of eighty slaves who were, however, never delivered to New Orleans.[38] Monsanto made frequent purchases at auction, the most important on record being the Trianon plantation of the late Chevalier Bernard de Vergès, the engineer who had been in charge of public works. This plantation, which Monsanto bought in 1767 for 5,500 livres, was located a few miles above New Orleans, across the Mississippi, with a frontage of seventeen and a half arpents on the river. The plantation house was fifty feet long, with eleven rooms and front and rear galleries. It was a palatial residence for the time, with outbuildings and slave quarters. De Vergès had been in debt to Monsanto for 2,000 livres, but the estate was bereft of cash. Since this was a time of severe commercial depression, it is entirely possible that Monsanto purchased the plantation only to protect his interest in the estate.[39] There is no indication that he ever occupied the plantation house or intended to become a planter. He was a businessman, and he was compelled to give daily attention to his affairs.

According to a court record of 1766, living with Isaac in his combination home, store and warehouse on Chartres street[40] were his sisters Angélica and Gracia, his brother Manuel, a man named Abraham Robles (apparently not related), a mulatto slave from Martinique named Valentin, a number of other slaves including a little girl and a male whose name was Baptiste Manuel Monsanto, and Jean Baptiste Marcellin Lomère, a thirty-five-year-old French weaver who had boarded with Monsanto for about seven years. Whether de Britto lived with Monsanto when he was in town—he was probably the traveling partner in the firm—we do not know. Lomère, who had always seemed a little peculiar, created a stir in September, 1766: Robles found him chasing the little Negro slave girl and brandishing a stick at her; Robles seized the stick, and Lomère promptly attacked him with a knife and stabbed him four times. In the subsequent trial, the Attorney-General demanded a fine for the state, 800 livres in damages for Robles, imprisonment and banishment of Lomère: "to be returned to his family [in France], to be confined for the rest of his days as a mad man, known by several of his acts." But before Lomère was shipped out of the colony, Monsanto and de Britto were required to return to him the 5,000 piastres gourdes which the weaver had deposited with the firm.[41]

Lomère was not the only Louisiana settler who used Monsanto as a banker; many others deposited money with him—including his sisters Gracia, Angélica and Eleanora, who left with him the money they inherited after their father's death[42]—and he, in turn, was indebted to many of his fellow residents.[43] Hard money was always scarce in a frontier area like Louisiana, and especially during the period of Monsanto's business activity in New Orleans.[44] Many of his customers required credit over a long period of time, and he sometimes had to enter suit to secure payment after the passage of many years. Louis Marie Populus de St. Prother, for instance, bought some merchandise from him on credit in 1764; the debt was still unpaid in 1773 when, with interest and charges, it had almost doubled. On occasion, even when a customer was finally ready to remit payment, the bill of exchange might not be honored. On May 15, 1765, John Stuart, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Southern Colonies of Great Britain, then making his headquarters in Pensacola, bought merchandise from Monsanto worth two hundred pounds. Two years later he paid him with a bill of exchange on Charles Ogilvie of London which was eventually protested.[45]

Skins were frequently used in lieu of cash in large-scale dealings throughout the area. Monsanto owed a large sum of money to the Pensacola firm of McGillivray and Struthers long enough for John Fitzpatrick, their agent in New Orleans, to put angry pressure on Isaac in April, 1769. Fitzpatrick reported to his Pensacola superiors that

> ". . . I delivered your Letter to Mr Monsantto and intimated him that he must Not think of baffling me any longer about the payment & that if Continu^{e} Pleading his Accostmed Excuses I would present a petition to the Councl to Request they would see me Redressed by giving me up the Neoxus [a ship which belonged to Monsanto?] Untill an Entire Satisfaction was made for what he ows. . . ."

Isaac promised to do what he could as soon as possible. Shortly afterward he left for the Illinois country to buy skins; Fitzpatrick sent word to Pensacola as soon as he received reports of Monsanto's imminent return. Finally, on July 17, Isaac was back in New Orleans, assuring Fitzpatrick that boatloads of skins were on their way to New Orleans, and that some would be taken directly to Pensacola where McGillivray and Struthers could take in trade the entire amount of the debt at the rate of 37 sols per dried skin and 42 sols for a skin without the hair removed. The unsettled conditions of the time prevented the fulfillment of the agreement, however, and in September Fitzpatrick was still trying to obtain the money, although he admitted that cash was dreadfully difficult to find anywhere in New Orleans.[46]

7. Monsanto's Service to the British in West Florida

Some years earlier, Isaac Monsanto had a desperate need for cash in connection with an important service which he rendered to the British authorities in Mobile and Pensacola in 1764–65, when they were preparing to send an expedition up the Mississippi in order to take possession of the Illinois country, in keeping with the provisions of the Treaty of Paris which ended the Seven Years' War. According to a report which the Louisiana Governor, D'Abbadie, sent to the Minister of Marine in Paris, the British Commandant at Mobile had "struck a bargain with M. Monsanto, a merchant, for furnishing bateaux, utensils, etc., which would be necessary for this convoy, by the terms of which he promised to send him also ten thousand livres upon his arrival at Mobile, and to send advances in proportion to the successive expenses which he will be obliged to make; but, since the first sum has not yet been sent, the preparations for the expedition have been stopped and the only activities that M. Monsanto has performed while waiting consist in repairing five or six bateaux. . . ."[47] This report was written on January 29, 1765, but Isaac Monsanto had already been waiting impatiently for several months for the initial payment which had been promised to him by John Lind, captain of a British schooner. Lieut. Alexander Maclellan of the British forces had tried to reassure Monsanto, in a letter dated November 10, 1764, which said in part:

> ". . . Since you ask my advice I counsel you quite frankly not to stop the proceedings. I do not know at all the powers or the orders that Mr. Lind had in these matters. His Excellency Mr. D'Abbadie showed me a copy of the agreement between you and the said gentleman, according to which he was to pay you the amount of 2000 piastres instantly upon his arrival in Mobile. Since this was not done because of the different money used, you have been inconvenienced a bit at the present time, but you will no doubt be reimbursed and I hope that will be soon. . . . If the papers for the rent of the boats have been drawn up, please send

> them to me as there is a chance that I will leave [New Orleans] for Pensacola tonight. . . ."[48]

Monsanto had still not received any payment from the British by January 23, 1765, when he wrote an importunate letter to Major Robert Farmar, the British Commandant at Mobile:

> "This moment I received the honor of your two letters by Mr. Campbell, bearing date the 21st decr. & 4th Jany. by which I see you order me to continue the work, in order that every thing may be ready, and that you will send me the dollars and bills of Exchange by the first opportunity. As you have not done it as yet, the want of money I find has been the occasion, that some want unfortunately is found here, and is the occasion of my finding my self very much put to it; I Imagined I deserved the preferance [sic] to Mr. Dupart who has recd. 1400 dollars, when at the same time his work is done by his own Negro's, for whom he advances nothing; and I am obliged to do every thing with ready money, for which I have paid a great Interest, (and I can't find what I have occasion for to continue the work). I was in hopes from this motive that money would have been sent, and It is now more than a month since you mentioned it. I should have been very glad [if] you had at least sent me a part.—I have been afraid for some time past on account of the bills of Exchange, but now I have more reason than ever from the news spread abroad by an English vessel just arrived from pensacola, that all your Bills were returned protested. I flatter myself that this News is false, but it is made public all over the Town, which you may be assured will prevent me negotiating the bills; there is a means of making easy this payment, by sending me good skins at 50 sols a pound french weight, delivered to me here, which makes half a dollar gourde—
>
> "If You have not sent the money on the receipt of this, I beg Sir you would not defer It, You know I am obliged only to deliver the Boats two months after the first payment. They may be ready sooner, and I don't doubt but you will likewise, if not, You'l be so good as to send somebody to receive them, once finished I cannot take charge of them, besides I shall have occasion for the last payment. I hope likewise to be indemnified on account of the augmentation of my expenses, and for the Interest of the

> money I have been obliged to pay, from my not receiving It according to agreement—Be persuaded that every thing shall be done with all possible zeal, concerning what may be usefull to you, which is my reason for now offering you my services in praying you would believe that Nobody is more respectfully
>
> Sir
>
> Your most humble
> and most Obedt. Servant
> Monsanto—
>
> "[Post-Script:] Mr. Pittman & Stuart are arrived, as they came away eight days after Mr. Campbell, I was in hopes of touching what you did me the honor to mention in your letter, which was to be sent me the first opportunity; I hope It will soon come."[49]

Pressing as his needs were, and eager as he was for this contract to be completed, poor Isaac had to wait even longer for British colonial bureaucratic legalism to inch its way forward. Major Farmar submitted a petition to Governor George Johnstone, on February 20, 1765, urging that Monsanto be paid in skins, despite the prohibition of such exports for the purpose of trade:

> ". . . your Petitioner is necessitated to represent to your Excellency, that the important service of taking possession of the country of Illinois is entirely retarded and put a stop to, for the great inconvenience of the general want of money, which at present prevails in this Province, that it will be impossible to proceed according to the express orders of the Commander in Chief, unless some expedient is fallen upon to discharge the different expences [sic] of the contracts works &c occasioned by this intended expedition.
>
> "Your petitioner therefore prays that your Excellency would take the above into your Serious Consideration, and that the law prohibiting the exportation of Deerskins to any foreign parts may be suspended till twelve hundred weight of deerskins is shipped and transported to New Orleans, in order to pay part of the contract concluded with Mr. Monsanto on the part of the Government for providing and repairing a sufficient number of Batteaux to transport His Majesty's troops to the said country of Illinois, as this appears the only salutary measure to put

> immediately into execution the orders received from Headquarters and fully to answer the expectation of Government thereupon."

The petition was bounced back and forth from Farmar to Johnstone to the Provincial Council. The Council criticized its legal form, so Farmar had to resubmit it. Then he was asked to come in person to answer questions, but he protested that he was so ill that he could not appear and could only answer questions sent to him in written form. Eventually the Council decided to proceed with the project by requesting the revenue officer not to "obstruct the exportation of that quantity of Skins," but suggested that the packages "should be inspected and sealed" so that no more than the required number would be shipped to New Orleans. The same duty would be paid by the colonial government as though the skins were being sent to commercial buyers in Great Britain. Most of the payment, however, was made in drafts—£1,405.18.8 in March and £397 on April 1, 1765. The expedition finally departed for the North, and Monsanto must have heaved a sigh of relief—but his troubles with the British had not quite ended, for in December he was sued for their wages by boatmen who returned from the Illinois country in a bateau belonging to "his Britanique Majesty."[50]

8. The First Jews in Mobile and Pensacola

Major Farmar's problems, on the other hand, had just begun. Trapped in a power struggle between the British civil and military authorities, he was court-martialed in 1766 for embezzlement and misappropriation of funds. It was a complex and lengthy case, but Farmar was finally acquitted. One of the charges made against him was "For sending flour belonging to the King to New Orleans, and selling it or attempting to sell it there, by means of one Pallachio, a Jew."[51]

Joseph de Palacios and his two Jewish partners, Samuel Israel and Alexander Solomons, who did business in New Orleans under the French as well as in Pensacola and Mobile under the British during this period, had arrived in the West Florida Province in late 1763 or the beginning of 1764. On February 2, 1764, just six months after the British took possession of the area from the French in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Paris, these "three English merchants residing in this city [Mobile]," purchased a lot "in the street of the burying place . . . fronting the [King's] Indian House." This property, for which they paid 200 Spanish dollars, included a house and other buildings. One should note that while Mobile had been a French possession, no Jewish merchant had been sufficiently attracted by its commercial possibilities to undertake to settle there, but no sooner were the British in command, than these merchants arrived in this now new frontier. On May 8, 1764, de Palacios and Solomons (Israel is not mentioned in this deed) bought another property, three lots of ground, including a house planked above and below, raised on a brick foundation, covered with shingles, and consisting of "a Hall, a Chamber and alcove, another Chamber and a Cabinet," with a brick chimney, a kitchen, oven, stove and garden court. For this property they were to deliver to the seller, Claude Mortal, nicknamed Chalan, two hundred barrels of flour, two hundred weight each, "good, sound and merchantable," within five months. The firm of de Palacios, Solomons and Israel was engaged in transactions with Major Farmar very early, for on July 20, 23 and 24, 1764, Alexander Solomons was in New York City receiving cash from Judah Hays for part of a Bill of Exchange which Farmar wrote on the Lords of Treasury for £700.[52] The partners were also moving back and forth between Mobile and Pensacola; since the Spanish had previously controlled Pensacola, these may well have been the first Jews in the town. On February 9, 1765, their applications for building lots and garden lots in Pensacola were approved. Palacios was assigned lot number 29 and Solomons number 35, lots that backed on to each other, while Israel was granted number 44. In the West Florida Provincial Council minutes, the three names were listed under "first class choices," in sequence, as though the partners had stood in line together.[53] On November 2, 1765, the Governor ratified the grants to Israel and de Palacios; Solomons' must also have received approval because he later mortgaged his lots.[54]

The following year, 1766, another Jew received assignments of land in Pensacola, including town and garden lots number 119, and additional grants of 50 and 500 acres. He was Isaac Mendes, formerly of Jamaica, who had come to West Florida even earlier than the three partners. As early as the fall of 1763, Mendes sold £25 worth of goods for use as "Indian presents" to Governor Johnstone. It is possible that this man is identical with the Isaac Mendes who was in Albany with the British troops in 1756. If so, he may have been a trader who traveled with a particular regiment.[55] At any rate, Mendes did not remain in the colony very long. By May, 1766, he was in debt to Charles Strachan and Company to the amount of £293.7½. It was probably in order to collect funds for the payment of the bill that, in July, he mortgaged his town lot number 119 and his dwelling place to one Manuel Josephson (possibly the New York and Philadelphia Jewish leader of the same name who became well-known in post-Revolutionary times) for $560, and a month later he and John Crozer sold lot number 23 for $375. In October, 1766, Mendes transferred title to his town and garden lots numbered 119, and to his home, to Benjamin Ward, in settlement of a debt of 1,200 Spanish milled dollars which Mendes owed to Ward. Mendes probably left Pensacola soon after these transactions, for he does not again appear in the records.[56]

The grants of land which were received by Mendes, de Palacios, Israel and Solomons draw our attention to their political status in the British province. Alexander Solomons and Samuel Israel had been born probably in London; Mendes appears to have been a Jamaican. We do not know enough of the background of de Palacios to tell where he was born, but if he had not possessed proof of naturalization, he would not have qualified for grants of lots in Pensacola. The "Act to encourage Foreigners to come into and settle in this Province," passed by the House of Assembly of West Florida on December 22, 1766, and subsequently approved by Governor Johnstone, provided for the naturalization of foreigners in residence for a minimum of three months who were willing to take the oath of allegiance and to pay a small fee. Naturalized persons were to have the same "Immunities and Rights" as natural born citizens. This act was specifically designed to attract French Roman Catholics, and therefore noted that Catholics were to be treated the same as Protestants, and "upon being Naturalized . . . shall be Intitled to have and possess Town Lotts and Tracts of Land on the same conditions prescribed to his Majesty's Protestant Subjects." The act also guaranteed the free exercise of the Roman Catholic faith "because no People can be truly happy though under the greatest enjoyment of Civil Liberties if abridged of the freedom of their Consciences as to their Religious Professions." Lots were to be set aside in Pensacola and Mobile for the construction of Catholic "Churches or Chappels." The act further stipulated that Catholics were to be given the right to sit on juries and to cast ballots in elections. The only privilege not included was that of election or appointment to office. No list of naturalized foreigners has been located in the West Florida Papers, so it is impossible to tell whether de Palacios and Israel were naturalized there, or brought proof of their status with them from some area of previous residence. The Jewish religion was not mentioned in the act, but the freedom of conscience provision undoubtedly applied to these Jews, although there is no reason to believe that there were ever enough of them to form a quorum for religious worship.[57]

Meanwhile, Solomons, de Palacios and Israel continued to fulfill Major Farmar's assignments. In April, 1765, they billed him for £215.11.9; this included the purchase of boards and nails for a brig, hire of the brig, pilotage to Mobile, a lost anchor, and the transportation of some troops and their gear to the brig. Perhaps it was because they were so close to Farmar that Solomons joined twenty-one other inhabitants of West Florida in sending a complaint about Governor Johnstone's administration to the Lord Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, in April, 1766.[58]

The partners do not seem to have been particularly successful. In 1765 they purchased the well-known plantation outside of Mobile known as "Lis Loy," but had to mortgage it to a merchant in Pensacola who foreclosed on them the next year. In November, 1765, they borrowed £610 from John McGillivray, William Struthers and William Trewin, using their headquarters in Mobile and three Negro slaves as collateral. In

1767, Solomons mortgaged his town and garden lots in Pensacola to Patrick Morgan, who foreclosed in 1774. In 1767–69, the partners owned one less slave, for they paid taxes on only two. The tax was a dollar a head. The account of the Provincial Treasurer reads, in an amusing but informative shorthand, "Jews on 2." Things went from bad to worse: in 1769 de Palacios petitioned the West Florida Assembly for relief from imprisonment as a debtor to the Frenchman who had sold "Lis Loy" to the partners: "That the Petitioner was become Insolvent and had been Confined upwards of Two Years, and was reduced to the lowest Ebb for the want of necessary support . . . That he was confined at the Suit of a Monsieur Montberault of New Orleans who lately removed with his Family for Old France, and had left no Orders with his Attorney for the Releasement of the Petitioner." Within a month, de Palacios was free, but he apparently never succeeded in gaining a secure economic foothold.[59]

In 1773, de Palacios was in trouble again. A New Orleans citizen to whom he had been in debt for almost 3,000 livres since 1766 sued the court for permission to seize one of his slaves in New Orleans. At the trial a witness testified that the still insolvent Jew was "absent in Pensacola and . . . was accustomed to come to [New Orleans] without presenting himself to the public and . . . it was not easy to be able to see him on these occasions." In other words, de Palacios was still dodging his creditors, although he was obviously attempting to do some business.[60]

Samuel Israel is a vague, indistinct person. He never appears alone, but always as a member of the team. Perhaps he did not spend much time in the province.[61] Alexander Solomons was more successful than de Palacios; at least, there is no record of his having been imprisoned for debt. In 1770, Joseph Badon of Mobile mortgaged one hundred head of large horned cattle to Solomons as security for the payment of a bill of exchange for £150 on a Bordeaux merchant. Alexander's brother Haym, who was not a member of the firm, signed as a witness to this transaction and, again, a year and a half later, when the same mortgage was transferred to another merchant. Haym was a clerk for McGillivray and Struthers in Pensacola. He remained in West Florida longer than the others. On May 10, 1779, he was one of the "Gentlemen Freeholders and Principal Inhabitants of West Florida" who signed a petition to the Lord Secretaries of State. They pledged their loyalty to the Crown and affirmed their abhorrence of the Revolutionary ideas of the Atlantic coastal colonies, but protested against the favoritism and corruption of Governor Peter Chester's administration. When the Governor wrote to London in 1780 and denounced the signers of the petition, he belittled Haym Solomons as "a Hireling about Mr. McGillivary's home."[62]

In March, 1772, Alexander Solomons, "Late of Mobille in the Province . . . but now of the Town of Pensacola . . . Merchant," took a mortgage of five hundred and fifty Spanish milled dollars from Peter Rochon of Dog River, near Mobile, on fifty head of the "Largest and best Cattle" on his plantation. If the debt, plus accrued interest, were not paid by the clearance of a bill of exchange in Solomons' hands, Rochon was bound to supply "a sufficient number of Persons and Horses to Drive the aforesaid fifty Cattle to Pensacola," and defray the cost of slaughtering enough cattle to pay off the debt. The same month Solomons signed as a witness when a German couple sold some land near Natchez; he witnessed a second deed for the same people in 1774.[63]

De Palacios did not remain in British West Florida long enough to be there when the Spanish captured the colony in 1780–81. He was gone by 1778, when he took the oath of allegiance to the new state of South Carolina as a "transient person." But he was not a visitor for very long. He remained in Charleston, married there in 1785, and became an active member of the Jewish community.[64] Alexander Solomons disappears from view after 1774, but his brother Haym was still in West Florida when the Spanish under Gálvez took it from the British in 1780–81. He fled with William Struthers to Georgia, went up to Charleston to sell some skins, and decided to stay there. He had to be approved by a patriot committee whose duty it was to ferret out Loyalists. Haym presumably did not tell the committee about the petition of 1779 in which he pledged his loyalty to Great Britain. Gershom Cohen, who vouched for Haym as "a man of good character," probably knew nothing of that prior declaration either. Haym, who said he was born in England but left there when very young, may not have had very strong political opinions in any direction. He probably went along with the trend of the time, whatever it was wherever he happened to be. At any rate, he liked Charleston well enough to make his home there, carrying on an auction business until his death in 1801.[65]

9. The Arrival of a New Spanish Governor in New Orleans and the Expulsion of the Jews

Dreary as was the financial plight of de Palacios in British territory, Isaac Monsanto's fate was ultimately far worse. Though the continued residence in New Orleans of the Monsanto family, de Britto, Fastio and possibly other Jews of whom we have no knowledge,[66] was clearly in contravention of the *Code Noir*, Rochemore had been the only official who questioned their presence during the French regime. No one else seems to have attempted to dislodge them from their very comfortable and profitable position. Isaac Monsanto, above all, was as secure as he could desire to be. He conducted his business affairs, purchased property both real and movable, traveled freely throughout the colony and back and forth into such foreign areas as British West Florida, engaged in transactions which involved the Governor and other lesser officials, and sued in the courts and was sued. He also assumed an official legal role: in 1762, he acted as a translator for the Superior Court of Louisiana.[67]

But that same year, 1762, France and Spain signed the secret Treaty of Fontainebleau, in which the French ceded the Louisiana colony west of the Mississippi, and the city of New Orleans, to the Spanish. This was to compensate Spain for her loss of Florida to the British, in the general settlement which marked the end of the Seven Years' War. The news of this change of regime may have troubled Monsanto when it was formally made public, for he well knew that Spain had never tolerated the presence of Jews in her American colonies, and that Spanish economic policy was highly restrictive. But his fears, and those of other Louisianians, were lulled to sleep by Spain's long delay in taking formal possession of the new territory. It was not until March, 1766—more than three years after the treaty had been signed—that the new Spanish governor, Antonio de Ulloa, arrived in New Orleans. Ulloa was given so little support by Spain's colonial administrators that he was compelled to rely on his French predecessor, Captain Charles Philippe Aubry, to run the colony . . . further reason for Monsanto to relax. Very little had really changed. But in October, 1768, Ulloa published a list of new commercial regulations, quite in keeping with Spain's traditional colonial practice, which would have driven Monsanto and other merchants in New Orleans out of business. Resentment against these restrictive ordinances, and against other Spanish actions, aroused a number of French Creole leaders to such a pitch of indignation that they chased Ulloa out of the colony. While Monsanto took no part in the uprising, he probably agreed with the general sentiment that the Spanish would let the colony go without a fight. But he and other merchants and the leaders of the rebellion were very wrong in their decision to stay. Monsanto's delay in making plans to leave New Orleans proved to be very costly.

The second Spanish governor, Lieutenant General Don Alejandro O'Reilly, who reached New Orleans on August 17, 1769, was a different kind of man from Ulloa, and he had far stronger forces at his command than were ever given to Ulloa. O'Reilly was a soldier who had the fixed intention of remaking the unsuccessful French province into a genuine Spanish colony. He meant to enforce the law. His first attention was directed to the foolhardy revolutionaries who had refused to acknowledge the reality of the French cession of Louisiana to Spain, and who had succeeded in driving his predecessor out of Louisiana. Even while the rebel leaders were on trial, leading to their imprisonment or execution,[68] O'Reilly set about guaranteeing stricter enforcement of the Spanish colonial trade regulations.

On September 1, 1769, John Fitzpatrick, the British commercial agent in New Orleans, reported to his employers in Pensacola that ". . . Things are in a very Critical State here at present as the General Will not Allow any foreigners to Vend their Merchant Dise here in Future; they are allowed to Dispose of what they had in Store before his Arrival of which they ware all Obliged to give in an Inventory to him. . . .” Seven days later, he wrote, “I intend Leaving this place shortly as all English subjects who are not Married or have no fixed settlements [farms] here are Ordered away by His Excellency General O Relly . . . No English Subject is allowed to land any thing here. . . .” On September 11, Fitzpatrick told another British firm that “it is Immagined that all the English Subjects here will Shortly be obliged to leave it which is Reasonable to Expect being Universally known the Spanish Government will not allow any Foreigners in their American settlems. therefore we Must submit to their Accustomed Rules of Government. Altho such as has any outstanding Debts rely on his Excellency’s Clemency for Time to recover them the result of wch God only knows.” Unable to secure an extension for the collection of debts, he placed his papers in the hands of a local merchant, and, on September 21, reported that he intended leaving for Mobile the following day.[69]

O’Reilly approached his problem systematically: first the British, then other businessmen. Since it was impossible for any merchant to have observed to the letter every Spanish commercial regulation which had been promulgated during Governor Ulloa’s ineffectual administration, O’Reilly had no difficulty in nailing all of them with charges of illegal trade. On October 17, 1769, he wrote to Fray Julian de Arriaga, Minister of the Indies, that he had obtained a confession of guilt from two Genevan brothers named Duraldes “who were dealing in diamonds, watches, gold caskets and other jewelry, galloons, laces and other costly goods . . . [in] illegal trade [with] Campeche and Vera Cruz. . . .” He ordered these brothers and twelve other merchants to leave the province before the end of October, “together with three Jews named Monsanto, Mets,[70] and Brito,[71] who had also made some illegal shipments and had correspondents in Vera Cruz, Campeche, the nearby presidios, and other places.”[72] O’Reilly believed that he had broken the back of illegal trade by requiring the departure of all of these merchants: “By pursuing this same course with equal care, I can assure you that the value of the illegal shipments which can be made from this colony to the other dominions of the King in America will be very small. This is the important objective."[73]

There is no extant document in which O'Reilly proclaimed the expulsion of all foreign Protestant and Jewish merchants, but this was the understanding of O'Reilly's intention among the British officials in the West Florida Province, who were following developments in New Orleans very closely. Lieutenant-Governor Montfort Browne reported to London on October 8, 1769, that, after the rebel leaders had been sentenced, ". . . a General Pardon to the Rest of the Inhabitants has since been published most of whom have taken the oath of Allegiance to the King of Spain; such as would not were allowed a Month's time to Settle their affairs and Depart, the English to a man and all protestants and Jews are driven from there; Count O'Rilly is detested for his Inhumanity and falsehood. . . ."[74]

In a communication to his superiors, dated October 17, 1769, O'Reilly seemed to refer to the religion of the Jews as a major factor in the decision to expel them: "There are to leave this province during the current month two Jews, named Brito and Mets, and before the end of the next month the Jew Monsanto, for the reason that all three are undesirable on account of the nature of their business and of the religion they profess."[75] Isaac Monsanto, who had gotten along so well with the easygoing French officials, especially with Governors Kerlérec and D'Abbadie, was apparently unable to believe that O'Reilly was serious about the order of expulsion. He misunderstood the reason, and assured the new Governor that he had not taken any part in the ill-fated rebellion, and was loyal to the new administration. Unfortunately this Monsanto letter cannot be located; he may even have offered to take the oath of allegiance to the Spanish King. But, on December 26, 1769, O'Reilly rejected Monsanto's appeal, although the deadline for his departure had obviously been delayed:

> "In regard to the demand which you have made to me, Monsieur, concerning the conduct which you have maintained in this colony during the uprising which took place here, I render you the full justice which is due you, and [state] that you were not opposed to the Government of his Most Catholic Majesty.

> "The departure which I require of you and your entire family is specifically a consequence of an order of the King which expressly forbids all Jews from residing in this state.
>
> "I am, Monsieur, etc."[76]

But O'Reilly was not telling the entire truth to Isaac Monsanto. Fitzpatrick knew and accepted the facts of life; he was willing to recognize that the Spanish Governor's motive was primarily economic. Religion and nationality were really secondary. O'Reilly was finding one way or another of ridding his colony of almost all of its successful merchants, including some of the wealthiest Frenchmen who had every right to remain.[77] O'Reilly wanted Spanish authority to dominate the colony's economic life. That the Jewishness of Monsanto and his partners was not a major factor in their expulsion is confirmed by the Spaniards' failure to disturb a petty country storekeeper like Isaac Fastio who, in all probability, had long since left New Orleans to set up business in Pointe Coupee. As we have already noted, de Palacios was in and out of New Orleans during early Spanish rule; he had to dodge his creditors, but the civil authorities did not try to exclude him because he was a Jew. Moreover, as we shall shortly see, it was only a brief time before one or another member of the Monsanto family visited Louisiana or returned there to live. Ultimately all of them resumed residence in Louisiana under Spanish rule, and seem not to have been challenged by any official. Perhaps, then, the truth went even deeper than Fitzpatrick imagined. Too much economic power may have been concentrated in the hands and strongboxes of the seventeen or so merchants who were expelled, and of the rebels whose wealth was confiscated. If so great a proportion of the commerce of New Orleans were monopolized by a small number of merchants, what gain would Spain derive from the colony? Certain it is that the edict of expulsion was tantamount to the confiscation of the assets of the merchants who were affected by O'Reilly's edict.

The partners had probably been trying desperately to arrange the Monsanto firm's affairs, to collect debts and sell off their holdings, but due to the scarcity of cash and the disoriented state of commercial affairs, they had as little success as Fitzpatrick, and they were far more deeply involved than he. The lack of specie among their local customers was only one part of the problem. Their transactions covered such a wide geographic area and transportation was so slow that it was actually impossible for them to settle their accounts in three months. Hundreds of firms and individuals in the Mississippi valley and in the Caribbean area were in their debt, and they in turn owed money to suppliers as far away as Europe. Even a year would not have given them enough time to round out their affairs and close their books. They were, therefore, compelled to place their fate and fortune in the hands of men who probably had no interest in seeing that they would receive any proceeds from the settlement of their affairs. By December 18 Monsanto and his partners had drawn up memoranda listing their debits and credits; these, together with all of their papers and files, were turned over to two court-appointed syndics or receivers, Nicholas Forstall and Jean Joseph Duforest.[78]

Although it is clear that Monsanto's firm was one of the largest in New Orleans, it is impossible to assess his net worth at the time of his expulsion. The documents relating to his affairs are known only in manuscript and printed summaries, and in papers scattered through the Spanish and French manuscripts in the safe of the Cabildo in New Orleans. It cannot even be discerned if Monsanto's debts outweighed his credits, but this is unlikely. The settlement of his New Orleans business interests continued for many years; in 1785, fifteen years after his expulsion, two hundred and sixty-nine separate files of bills, accounts, receipts, memoranda, deeds, contracts and notes were still in the hands of syndics, but the notarized list does not give their dates or any hint of their contents. For at least two more years, suits were still being entered in the New Orleans courts by creditors seeking their share of the remaining property. The two sets of syndics had undoubtedly eaten up a great deal of the assets while distribution was taking place. It is important to note, however, that beyond Isaac Monsanto's constant need for cash, a perennial problem in the colonial areas, there was no sign that he was in financial difficulty before the expulsion. Monsanto's was a large and prosperous business until O'Reilly's order.[79]

10. The Monsanto Family in Exile

What alternatives were open to the Monsanto clan as they prepared to leave New Orleans? They could have attempted to convert to the Roman Catholic faith in the hope of being permitted to remain in Louisiana, but Isaac was apparently too loyal to his ancestral faith to follow this course of action; had he desired to abandon Judaism he would have done so long before danger arose—for he and his family had already been subjected to the constant pressure of the dominant faith for many years. It is, however, not even certain that apostasy would have secured the remission of O'Reilly's order. The Governor's successor, Colonel Don Luis de Unzaga y Amézaga, who took command of Louisiana in March, 1770, indicated this quite firmly in a letter which he wrote during his first month in office: "In all our realms of America it is forbidden by law to admit any foreigners, not even the French, who are Christians [i.e. Roman Catholics] being exempt from this law, much less persons recently converted for their own private ends."[80] If they could not remain in New Orleans, then, where should they go? They could seek refuge in the nearest mainland colony beyond the Spanish frontier, that is, in the British West Florida capital of Pensacola, where Isaac had done business over the years, where there were already a number of Jews in business (although, as we have seen, they were none too successful), and where other refugees were fleeing.[81] But was trade in Pensacola brisk enough for Isaac to support his large household? Jamaica or one of the British seaboard colonies, such as South Carolina, Palacios' eventual destination, would offer another opportunity for a fresh start, but Monsanto had apparently not established very fruitful contacts in these areas. Saint-Domingue was even more promising because Isaac had relatives and correspondents in that French island, and its life and trading conditions were not dissimilar to those of Louisiana. The actual decision was to move to the closest possible point, Pensacola.

Precisely when Isaac Monsanto and the members of his household left New Orleans is not recorded in any document.

It may be that they arrived in Pensacola as early as January 11, 1770, for Isaac signed a promissory note on that day to John Waugh of London, "Mariner," for 457 milled dollars, equal to £106.12.8, mortgaging his slaves Prince and Princess as security. It is entirely possible that Waugh was the captain of the ship on which the family left New Orleans, and that, being unable to pay for their passage and the transportation of whatever luggage and possessions they brought with them, Isaac had to execute a note for the expenses of the trip.[82] On June 1, 1770, Isaac borrowed 435 Spanish milled dollars, 5 and ¾ reales, at eight per cent interest from his old correspondents John McGillivray and William Struthers. His Negro slaves Caesar and Dolly were the collateral. The deed begins, "I, Isaac Monsanto late of New Orleans, now of the Town of Pensacola in the province. . . ."[83] How many of the members of his household came with him is in doubt. It is possible that Isaac's brothers scattered in various directions in an effort to find safety and security. Certain it is that Manuel was expected to turn up at the Natchitoches Post in the spring of 1770. On June 16, 1770, Athanase de Mézières y Cluny, Lieutenant-Governor of Natchitoches, reported to Governor Unzaga:

> "Of the two Englishmen whom I have sent to your Lordship's presence and [notice of whose] return to this villa you deigned to give me under date of May 15, last, only Guillermo Ovarden [William Warden] has arrived; concerning him and Señor Manuel Monsantto I am punctually fulfilling my orders from your Lordship. . . ."[84]

Whether Manuel attempted to reach Natchitoches is not recorded. If he did, the likelihood is that he was turned away.[85]

For the time being, at least, there was no place in Spanish Louisiana in which the Monsanto family could reside. But they could be closer to the colony than Pensacola. John Fitzpatrick traveled from New Orleans to Mobile, and then journeyed to the settlement of Manchac on the Mississippi River at the junction of the Iberville River, within a very few months. Fitzpatrick chose Manchac because he knew that there would be ample opportunity for trade with the inhabitants of Spanish Louisiana since "in all Likelyhood Goods henceforward will be very Scarce in Orleans," and the French and Spaniards "will always find Means to pay for What they want; in Deer skins Indigo Cotton Tobaco Rice & Cash." The Monsanto brothers had either maintained a storehouse in Manchac all along, or got there first and established themselves in one of the few serviceable structures. When Fitzpatrick arrived he complained about "the heavy Expencess my precipitated Departure from Orleans has Caused, Occasioned by Genel. Oreyleys ill natured proceedings; also in Building my self a house as none here was Habitable Except them Occupied before my Arrival by Monsantos Brothers & Mr. Bradley. . . ."[86] Fitzpatrick reported on August 30, 1770, that one of the Monsanto brothers was expected back in Manchac from New Orleans in the near future. From that time on, one of the brothers was usually in the Manchac settlement, which was their headquarters, participating in the brisk, illegal trade that sprang up over the border of the Mississippi River despite the Spanish prohibition of traffic with the British merchants.[87]

Whether Isaac actually established residence in Pensacola is not known. He appears in the court records from time to time, usually in reference to loans and debts. On November 9, 1771, John Scott secured a judgement for £212.8, with interest, against Monsanto in the General Court of Pleas. Monsanto mortgaged his slaves Caesar, Dolly, Prince and Princess, to Scott. The debt was paid on March 28, 1772. Two days later Isaac was writing to Brigadier General Frederick Haldimand asking for a loan of two hundred piastres to be repaid in a few months, with the slave Jen as surety. He also reported that one of the Duralde brothers, his fellow exiles from New Orleans, had absconded to Saint-Domingue, and that their cargo of plank boards and other merchandise, just arrived, was no help at all to the Duraldes' creditors (including both Haldimand and Monsanto). Obviously, Monsanto was not the only former New Orleans merchant who was in desperate straits as a result of O'Reilly's order of expulsion. On January 25, 1772, Isaac mortgaged his slave Fanchonet to John Ritson of Pensacola for 270 Spanish milled dollars. The slaves were apparently the only property he had been permitted to carry with him from New Orleans. He mortgaged them again and again, to raise money for investment in trade goods which he or his brothers sold wherever they could. In March, 1772, he mortgaged the perennial Caesar, Dolly, Prince and Princess to John Stuart, Superintendent of Indian Affairs of the Southern British colonies, with whom he had been doing business since 1765. The deed was registered in December, and Stuart had to foreclose on Prince and Princess in February, 1773.[88]

While the brothers were attempting to reestablish themselves in business in Manchac, Angélica remained in Pensacola long enough to be courted by and married to George Urquhart, a young Protestant Scotsman who had been in Pensacola since 1766. Urquhart had done business with Isaac previous to the expulsion, and witnessed a deed for him in June, 1770. Urquhart family tradition reports that the marriage took place early in 1772 in Pensacola. By July 30, 1772, George was at his plantation on the British side of the Mississippi, writing a letter to Angélica in New Orleans addressed to "Madame Urquhart." She was probably on her way from Pensacola to her husband's plantation, "Semhas Vale." The letter, interestingly enough, is addressed to her in care of "Monsr. Forestall;" she was staying with one of the syndics of Isaac's property! Her older son, Thomas, was born in Baton Rouge on June 25, 1773.[89] However long some members of the family remained in Pensacola, at least one of them, Eleanora, went on to Saint-Domingue to join the brother and sister who lived there. She was married to Pierre André Tessier de Villauchamps at Cap Français on that island on February 7, 1773. Her first child, Charles André Tessier, was born there on October 3, 1775. The next year the Tessier family moved to Louisiana, bringing Eleanora back home.[90]

Isaac seems to have been unable to reestablish himself in business to any degree. Previously a strong, bold man of affairs who was willing to undertake any venture, he strikes a pathetic figure from 1770 until his death in 1778. Constantly borrowing money, he apparently was unable to fight his way back to financial security. Perhaps the Spanish confiscation had not only driven him from home and familiar surroundings, but also had broken his will. Some indication of Isaac's financial condition may be gathered from the petition which Gracia, Angélica and Eleanora submitted to the New Orleans court and Governor Unzaga some time between 1770 and 1773, in which they asked that the amount of 1,095 pesos and 6 reales, which they had left on deposit with Isaac from their inheritance from their father, be granted them from the assets of his firm in the hands of the syndics. They said that Isaac "having been obliged to leave this city because of the laws of the Kingdom, and leave his business unfinished . . . is in complete poverty because of his great losses . . . the said brother not having that sum of money. . . ." They may have been exaggerating to some degree, but Isaac's situation was certainly well known; Governor Unzaga would not have acceded to their request if he had believed that Isaac could well afford to repay his sisters.[91]

John Fitzpatrick had no liking for Isaac when they were both in New Orleans. In exile, Fitzpatrick mocked him when he appeared at Manchac in December, 1773:

> ". . . Mr. Isaac Monsanto came here the Other day & had some Cotton Checks for sale & as I was in Much want of [them] And as he . . . sold them very Cheap I bought to the Amount off $102, and drew on your house [Miller and Swanson of Mobile] for the payment, as I imagined you would have no Cash to disburse in the affair; I hope you will not think hard of my Drawing on you; for if I thought you should have the money to pay, I should not have drawn on you. . . ."[92]

In other words, Isaac Monsanto could go hang for the money, even though the goods were cheap, and Fitzpatrick needed them!

In November, 1774, Isaac was staying with Angélica and George Urquhart near Baton Rouge. The next month, he spent at least nine days in New Orleans, recording his power of attorney to Francisco Liotau, and swearing to the settlement of all accounts (from the French days) between himself and the estate of one Grimaul. The latter notarial record describes Isaac as "passing through the city."[93] In June, 1775, he was in Pointe Coupee, where Manuel, and Eleanora and her family had settled. He was in some kind of business deal with George Urquhart at the time, and had correspondence with Oliver Pollock of New Orleans about it.[94] By the time of his death in April or May of 1778, he had apparently settled in a house on the land of François Allain in Pointe Coupee. The inventory of his affairs was in no way as complicated as the lists of business transactions he left behind in New Orleans in 1769–70. His personal property was valued at 4,550 piastres; it consisted of trunks, furniture, clothing, a cypress strong box containing 400 livres, some books, a perpetual almanac, a pistol and a clock; he also had some merchandise which included two cases of sugar and a container of coffee. One side of the house had been used as Isaac's store, and a small cabin had served as his storehouse. He owed 5,765 piastres, while his customers were indebted to him for 24,955 piastres. He had sold five slaves to Manuel and Jacob the previous November. Such was the end of Isaac's business career: from a large warehouse in New Orleans, with ventures on three continents, to an insignificant little store in Pointe Coupee.[95]

11. Matters of Religious Identification and Practice

There is no question but that Louisiana became an exception to the traditional Spanish colonial policy of rigid exclusion of Jews. Once the Monsanto family had been driven out of New Orleans and had been deprived of their position of prominence in its commerce, they were allowed to return without interference; and Isaac Fastio seems not to have been disturbed at all, probably because his commercial activity was too minor to interest O'Reilly. But the members of the Monsanto family revealed an equally indifferent attitude to Judaism. They had, in the first place, moved away from Curaçao with its synagogue, its large Jewish community and its flourishing Jewish life, and deliberately chose to live in New Orleans, where there was only a small handful of Jews. It is possible that they tried for a time to observe Jewish religious customs in their home, but there is no evidence of this; certainly objection would have been voiced if they had attempted to conduct Jewish religious services during the French regime. They had remained in New Orleans for eleven or twelve years without contact with organized Jewish life. Now that they were compelled to leave

Louisiana, at least partly because of their religion, they did not choose to establish residence in a place like Charleston or Curaçao where they would be able to participate in a full Jewish life. They either could not or would not stay away from Louisiana. Whether it was Isaac's fear of his inability to re-establish himself elsewhere, or an unrealistic expectation that he would be able to regain control of his affairs in Louisiana, or a strong sense of belonging which all of the brothers and sisters had developed for the colony, the specific motivation really makes no difference. The important fact is that the family refused to take advantage of this opportunity to move to some community where they could practice Judaism. While there is no evidence that the brothers and sisters ever held a family meeting to determine what role Jewish identification would play in their future, it is hardly a coincidence that none of the three sisters married during their time of residence in New Orleans, with its large male population, while they did marry so soon after their enforced departure from the city—Angélica and Gracia in British West Florida and Eleanora in Saint-Domingue, all three to non-Jews. It is almost as though they had attempted to preserve their identity, if only in a negative way, while they were in New Orleans, but subsequently decided to bow to circumstances, to take on the protective coloration of the environment, to act for all practical purposes as though they had been born Christians, and to ignore the religion in which they had been reared but which was now only a memory. In a certain sense, the Monsanto brothers and sisters became Marranos, Jews living like Christians in the eyes of the outside world, without, however, making any effort to preserve their ancestral heritage in secret—in fact, they became secularists, because Judaism no longer meant anything to them, and Christianity did not arouse their interest. This is the only interpretation which can be given to their behavior.

Before sketching the further events of the lives of the Monsanto brothers and sisters, it may be useful to assess the available evidence relating to their personal, individual religious convictions and identification throughout the years after the expulsion.

Benjamin, the youngest member of the clan, was the only brother who took a bride, and the only Louisiana sibling who married within the faith. In 1787 he married Clara la Mota, the twenty-two-year-old daughter of Solomon la Mota and Rica Coen of Curaçao, who had been in New Orleans at least since the previous September, when she purchased a female slave.[96] We do not know why Clara came to New Orleans, whether to marry Benjamin or for another reason. The possibility exists, at any rate, that Benjamin had visited Curaçao on a business trip and fallen in love with her there, bringing her to New Orleans later. In Curaçao they might have been married in the synagogue. In New Orleans, they underwent strict Spanish Catholic legal procedures: Benjamin had to provide witnesses to testify that he was a bachelor, that he had not promised to marry anyone else, and that he had his brother Manuel's permission to marry. He and Clara affirmed that they had been baptized in the Catholic faith at birth. This was obviously untrue, because Benjamin's attendance at the Jewish school at The Hague in 1753–54 is documented in that community's records. But this affirmation proves that Benjamin was not a convert, for in that case he would have offered evidence of his adult baptism.[97]

Nevertheless, the wedding had to take place in the St. Louis Parish Church of New Orleans because there was no other place in town where a wedding could be held, and no person other than a Catholic priest could officiate. Father Antonio de Sedella, later known affectionately as Père Antoine, stated in his ecclesiastical record of the ceremony that Benjamin, "together with his contracting party, made public abjuration of their errors in the mode and form which is prescribed in her ritual, Our Mother the Holy Church. . . ."[98] Roman Catholic authorities have been unable to explain the meaning of this phrase; according to present practice, the formula refers to the Profession of Faith which is made by converts before baptism. But neither Benjamin nor Clara appears in the St. Louis Cathedral Baptismal Registers! It is possible that the officiating priest used both the convert's formula and the affirmation of baptism at birth in order to protect himself from possible ecclesiastical censure for officiating at the wedding of non-Catholics, for it was not until 1792 that special regulations were issued for the registration of the weddings of non-Catholic (Protestant) persons by Catholic priests in Louisiana. The entire matter becomes even more confused and ironic when we realize that only a few months later—on July 21, 1787—Governor Miró was officially notified that Father de Sedella had been designated Commissioner of the Holy Inquisition in Louisiana, and, because he feared the effect this news would have on the many Protestant British and American settlers whom he wished to encourage to remain in the colony, Miró forbade the priest to exercise this function and hustled him out of New Orleans.[99] We have no way of knowing whether Père Antoine knew that the bridal couple was Jewish, but Benjamin and Clara do not seem to have attempted to hide their origin in Natchez, where they lived most of the time. Even a stranger who visited the town in 1790–91 heard that they were Jews. Major Samuel S. Forman, who traveled down the Mississippi from Ohio to Natchez, wrote in the account of his trip that "in the village of Natchez resided Monsieur and Madam Mansanteo—Spanish Jews, I think—who were the most kind and hospitable of people."[100] But in 1785, when Benjamin testified as a witness at the trial of Jorge Rapalie for treason, the record states that "having taken due oath on the Holy Gospels according to the usage of his religion, he was asked whether he swore by God and promised the King to speak the truth upon the points on which he will be questioned."[101] This was the customary oath taken by the Protestants in the Spanish colony, especially in the Natchez area, where there were large numbers of them. The record of Benjamin's death on September 30, 1794, is couched in the standard, formal phrases which were used for all Catholics; he was buried in St. Louis Cemetery No. 1.[102] Benjamin's will, dictated the day before his death, but not signed by him because he was already so weak, began with pious Catholic formulas of faith which the notary may have inscribed automatically. Benjamin did, however, request "three masses for the repose of my soul." We have no way of telling what these Catholic rites meant to him.[103] Clara married a second time; she followed the example of her sisters-in-law when she became the wife of a non-Jew, Captain William Scott, some time before

1800.[104] Clara and William Scott had one child which was baptized as a Catholic at its death at the age of two in April, 1802.[105] Clara herself was buried in the St. Louis Cemetery No. 1, after her death on July 19, 1822, at the age of fifty-seven. Her funeral mass was conducted by the same Père Antoine who had married her to Benjamin thirty-five years before.[106]

Of Eleanora's religious experience we know nothing other than a few ritual records. Her grandchild, Marie-Eulalie Roques, was baptized at St. Louis Church on September 5, 1798, with Clara acting as godmother. But Eleanora had already died and been buried from the Church on April 8, 1796. Her funeral record, unlike the others, fails to use the customary formula relating to last rites.[107] Gracia's husband, Thomas Topham, was British, and was therefore probably a Protestant. Her will, dated December 8, 1790, does not mention religious matters, but her Catholic funeral record, January 3, 1791, uses the customary ritual formulas.[108] Both Jacob and Manuel took oaths "by God and the Cross, according to law," when they testified in the New Orleans court on June 28, 1785, in one of the final hearings relating to the disposition of Isaac's property.[109] Manuel had several slaves baptized in St. Gabriel Church, at the Iberville Post, south of Baton Rouge, on April 22 and 23, 1781, but this would not necessarily be proof of anything—even Jews who were synagogue members in later periods did not express any interest in converting their slaves to Judaism.[110] Jacob left no will, but he, too, was buried from St. Louis Church, on June 5, 1789.[111] Manuel wrote two wills. In the first, dated March 8, 1792, he contributed "two reales for each of the Churches of the city," and bequeathed a pearl rosary to his sister Angélica. Both bequests were omitted from his second will, February 23, 1795, which was necessitated by the sudden death of Benjamin. Had he already given the rosary to Angélica?[112] Manuel's death on July 10, 1796, is recorded without the usual description of last rites. It is impossible, of course, to tell whether various priests entered their records differently, one in a more cautious, another in a more mechanical fashion, or if, indeed, this sort of omission has any significance at all.[113]

Actually, we are attempting to do the impossible when we try to assess any person's religious feelings solely on the basis of formal records. Who can tell what any religious ceremony, of any faith, means to another person? Human emotions are so variable that a religious service may have a more profound effect one day than it does the next. All we possibly can do is surmise that since the Monsanto siblings were born into Judaism, and we have been unable to discover a record of conversion to Christianity of any one of them, they must therefore have been no more devoted to Christianity than to Judaism.

There is one exception to this generalization: Angélica, who eventually seems to have become a devoted member of the Episcopal Church. If so, this was due to the influence of her second husband, Dr. Robert Dow, whose father had been a Presbyterian minister in Scotland, and who was an early leader of Christ Church of New Orleans, founded in 1805. Dow was senior warden of the Church from 1807 to 1815 and was a close friend of Bishop Philander Chase while he was serving in New Orleans. Members of the family recall hearing about a copy of the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer which Dr. Dow had presented to Angélica.[114] Her will, dated June 16, 1821, in contradistinction to the formalized statements utilized in the wills of some of her brothers and sisters, seems to express sincere, personal piety:

> ". . . I commend my soul to the Lord of life, steadfastly believing that through the merit and satisfaction of His Son, Jesus Christ, I shall obtain pardon for my transgressions, and that having finished these days of misery and mortality, I shall inherit everlasting quiet, and I give my body to the earth, whereof it was made, to be decently interred without any pomp or superfluous expense, in humble hope, that it shall rise a glorious body at the general resurrection. . . ."[115]

Doctor Dow was not guided by Angélica's wish for modesty. The tomb he erected over her grave was one of the most striking in the Girod Street Cemetery and, after the relocation of the remains of those buried therein, the obelisk was removed to the Louisiana State Museum on Jackson Square: "The singular monument consisted of a freestone obelisk surmounting a brick tomb. On it, in high relief, was carved a skull and crossbones, a grim memorial that could well have been conceived by a man of medicine. The words 'Memento Mori' are chiseled beneath it and the date '1821' above it."[116] On the front of the monument were carved the words: "SACRED/ to the memory of/ ANGÉLICA/ consort of/ Doctor Dow/ died Oct. 21, 1821,/ aged 72 years./ Whose deportment as a Wife,/ a Mother and a member of Society,/ was too conspicuous,/ to require Eulogium,/ being rarely equaled/ and never excelled." Among the Urquhart family papers is a manuscript eulogy of Angélica written by General James Wilkinson of military and conspiratorial fame; in it, Wilkinson referred to Angélica's religious fervor:

> ". . . This lady was a member of the Episcopal Church, a regular communicant at the Lord's table, she was pious without profession, and religious without affectation . . . in conversation with an old friend who had visited her not more than twelve hours before her decease she observed: 'I now feel so well that I think I may live five or six years longer, to-morrow being Sunday I will go to Church and give thanks to God for his goodness to me.' The intention was known to Him from whom no secret is hidden and we trust the immortal spirit has received the reward of those who die in the Lord. . . ."[117]

It is ironic that of all the members of the family who had participated in religious functions of one kind or another in the St. Louis Catholic Church—where she and Robert Dow were married on September 9, 1781[118]—Angélica alone should have become not only a sincere Christian, but a Protestant Christian! Angélica's adoption of Christianity may be explained by either of two factors: perhaps she possessed a natural bent towards piety—if Judaism could not be her religion in any genuine sense, then she would become a Christian; or, more likely, her gratitude and attachment to Dr. Dow were so strong that she said to him, like Ruth of old, "thy God shall be my God."

At least one of the Fastio girls, on the other hand, was formally converted to Roman Catholicism. Elizabeth, who gave her age as thirty-two, was baptized on April 4, 1782, at St. Francis Church in Pointe Coupee. If her age is correct, she is probably the daughter who was listed as Judica, age six, in the Bordeaux embarkation records of 1756. Elizabeth's conversion had nothing, apparently, to do with marriage, since it was three years before she was married, in the New Orleans St. Louis Church, to John George Noeherberg or Noerberg, a native of Philadelphia, who was a Protestant. Elizabeth died in New Orleans in 1796, and was buried in St. Louis Cemetery No. 1. Nothing else is known of the life of the other Fastio girls or of their mother. If Elizabeth's sisters married at all, it must have been out of the faith, just as the Monsanto girls did; and Ester Fastio, like her husband, probably died under Catholic auspices, just as, to all intents and purposes, they had lived as nominal Catholics.[119]

12. Gracia Monsanto and Thomas Topham

The West Florida Protestant marriage records cannot be located anywhere, but it may have been in Manchac rather than in Pensacola that Gracia was married to Thomas Topham. During the period 1772–77 he was applying for grants of acreage and town lots in the Manchac area.[120] John Fitzpatrick referred to Topham as a partner of one Proffit in the Natchez area in 1776.[121] Topham had written Isaac's will on January 1 and April 12, 1778, but he pleaded the pressure of business after Isaac's death, and was not present as an executor at the inventory which was taken beginning on May 7.[122] He did, however, make an appearance at the inventory of Angélica's husband's estate in February, 1779.[123] On April 12 of that year he and Gracia sold a lot and two houses, located in Ascension Parish, to Jacques Cantrelle.[124] In June, 1780, he sold two slaves to Angélica.[125] He was still in business with Proffit in 1780, but this is the final reference to him which has come to light, prior to September 22, 1784, when Gracia received 5,669 pesos from Manuel and Jacob and Robert Dow which they had set aside for her from her deceased husband's estate. There was a dispute over Topham's affairs with merchants in London, which had to be settled by arbitration; this London reference suggests that Topham had originally come from England.[126] Since we know so little of Topham's business life, it is difficult to venture any statements about him. His will cannot be found, but Gracia's, executed in 1790, indicates that she led a fairly comfortable life: in addition to unspecified amounts of cash, she bequeathed nine slaves to her brothers and sisters and her Urquhart and Tessier nephews and niece. Among the prized possessions which she named in her will and specified as gifts to various relatives were: a large mirror, a large chair with arms, a silver setting for twenty-four, a porcelain coffee pot with matching cups, shoe buckles, two damask table cloths, two dozen napkins, and a picture painted on glass. These provisions reflect a meticulous, sentimental woman who cherished the things she touched, a loyal and affectionate sister and aunt who distributed her possessions in such a manner that each member of her family received something from her.[127]

13. Eleanora Monsanto and Pierre Tessier

We know somewhat more about Eleanora's life after her marriage to Pierre Tessier in Saint-Domingue in 1773 and her return to Louisiana in 1776. She seems to have been the only one of the Monsanto sisters to make a really bad match. In November, 1779, she was desperate enough to go to court to petition for a property separation from her husband. He was then in prison as a debtor; his liabilities amounted to 1,579 pesos, while his land, house, outbuildings and four slaves in Pointe Coupee were worth only about 1,570 pesos. Her dowry at the time of the marriage had been 6,000 livres with an additional 2,000 livres in linen, jewelry, silverware, and the like. (Where did all this come from, in 1773, when Isaac had so little? From Eleanora's brother Joseph and sister Judith in Saint-Domingue, where the marriage took place?) Tessier had made a gift of 4,000 livres to her at that time. Now, she complained, he had been so cavalier with her funds that the only remaining assets which could possibly replenish her dowry account were the land, house and slaves, which the creditors were attempting to take away from her. She petitioned the court, therefore, to assign to her all of the assets of the family, to declare her free of responsibility for Pierre's debts, and to grant her complete control over the remaining property without the need of consulting her husband. This is the earliest recorded case of such a suit in Spanish Louisiana judicial history. Eleanora's attorney contended that Tessier's "bad conduct" accounted for the shrinkage of his own and Eleanora's property, and assured the court that she could be trusted with control "because of her good conduct and executive ability." The witnesses on her behalf, George Castles, Marcos Olivares and Angélica's husband-to-be, Dr. Robert Dow, testified that "they have known Pedro Andres Tessier, at Pointe Coupee, for a long time, he is an abandoned man, possessed of many vices and bad, dissipated habits. He is unable to work and it is also well known how he has wasted the greater part of his wife's dowry." Strong words—strong enough to persuade Governor Gálvez to approve the petition, and to instruct the Commandant at Pointe Coupee, Don Carlos de Grandpré, to conduct an inventory of the Tessier property, with the creditors as witnesses.[128] One of the first things Eleanora did was to get rid of three of the slaves by selling them to her brother-in-law-to-be, Dr. Dow.[129] What ultimately happened to Pierre Tessier cannot be discovered. He apparently outlived Eleanora, for she is not described as a widow in her death record. But she was a good manager; when her daughter Marie-Eulalie married Pierre Roques in May, 1795, Eleanora was able to give her a dowry of 3,000 pesos, although part of this money may have come by inheritance from Eleanora's siblings.[130] Her son, Charles André Tessier, redeemed the family name from the dishonor which Pierre's dissolute conduct had cast upon it. Beginning in 1796 he served as Secretary of the Spanish colonial government. After the Louisiana Purchase, he became an aide-de-camp to Governor William C. C. Claiborne, achieving the rank of Major in the Territorial Militia, and held the office of Parish Judge in East Baton Rouge from 1815 to 1846. On August 13, 1813, Governor Claiborne wrote of him to Secretary of War John Armstrong:

> ". . . This Gentleman is a native of Louisiana, and a member of an extensive and influential family [;] his education has been respectable, & he has acquired by Traveling a considerable knowledge of the man [sic] and of things.—To a very commanding

> graceful person he unites the most polished manners, and altho' his partiality for the ladies may have betrayed him into some imprudencies, his deportment has been so conciliatory, & his integrity, bravery & honor so well established that his acquaintances hold him in very high estimation.—Tessier during the Territorial Government was one of my aids and is now a Major in the Militia of the State.—I think him worthy of a like Commission in the Regular service;—But if this cannot be obtained I recommend him for a Captaincy. . . ."

So far had the son gained acceptance among his fellow-citizens that they identified him with his prosperous and civic-minded cousins, Angélica's sons, Thomas and David Urquhart, rather than with his worthless father. We may be certain that Angélica, with her strong sense of family unity, had a good deal to do with encouraging her nephew.[131]

14. Angélica Monsanto and George Urquhart

Angélica's life was the longest, happiest and most fruitful of all. Her first husband, George Urquhart, who had come to Pensacola in February or March of 1766, was born in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, in the mid-1730's; his mother was a Forbes of Blackton. He may have been in Middlesex County, England, before his journey to America. He secured generous grants of land shortly after his arrival, and achieved swift recognition as a leader in the colony. In 1766, he was appointed Deputy Collector of His Majesty's Customs at Pensacola; in 1771 he signed as a witness at the treaty between the administration and the Congress of Chiefs of the Upper Creek Tribes. His first expectation was to become a planter in the Pensacola area, but his original land grant was not fertile enough; he secured another near the Tunica village, but in 1772 decided to settle on the Mississippi opposite Louisiana. Meanwhile he had been engaged in various business transactions, and had borrowed money in fairly large amounts. Once in the Manchac area, he served as a Justice of the Peace, and succeeded in apprehending the murderers of some nearby French people; he also was a member of the Assembly of the Province. Urquhart was a dynamic, aggressive man in the best sense of the word, a builder, a good pioneer for such an area as British West Florida. He died in February, 1779, of "a Sore Breast and cough which turned into consumption." Angélica for a time considered the possibility of leaving Louisiana and moving to Scotland with her children, but George's mother thought she would be wise not to do so, in view of the distance and her own age.[132] It was probably to be near her brothers that Angélica moved to New Orleans with six-year-old Thomas and one-year-old David. So she petitioned the court, in September of 1779, for permission to sell the plantation, explaining that she had found a purchaser willing to pay 400 pesos more than its assessed worth, and that the property was "daily deteriorating" because of neglect. The sale took place in December, 1779; the price was 1,400 pesos.[133] So ended George Urquhart's dream of a planter's life in the New World.

15. Angélica Monsanto and Dr. Robert Dow

It was only a brief time before Dr. Robert Dow, physician to the Royal Hospital of New Orleans, was courting Angélica. Another Scotsman, the son of Robert Dow, a Presbyterian minister, and Juana (Janet) Adie, Dr. Dow had left Scotland for the West Indies, and then had gone on to Louisiana in 1776. He began his practice of medicine in New Orleans in 1778. Prior to their wedding, he and Angélica appeared before a notary on May 10, 1781, to register their financial affairs. Angélica brought to the marriage a total worth of 13,390 pesos, of which sum almost 5,500 pesos was in trust for her two sons. Her dowry was in the form of notes and credits, in addition to furniture, household possessions and eight slaves. Dow himself gave 2,000 pesos to Angélica as his dowry. The wedding was performed on September 9, 1781.[134] Dow was an outstanding personage in New Orleans for more than four decades, a highly regarded participant in cultural, religious and medical affairs, and a deeply valued friend to many. Years later Charles Gayarré described him as "full of genial, exhuberant kindness for all his fellow human beings, of a florid complexion, of convivial habits . . . Dr. Dow was a great authority, and no member of his profession ever acquired more popularity. . . ." Governor Claiborne paid tribute to him as being "at the head of his profession and universally beloved, because of his amiable disposition, his humanity and his urbanity." Claiborne offered him a seat in the Louisiana Legislature in 1804, but Dow felt that his obligations to his family and patients precluded his acceptance of that responsibility.[135]

Angélica and Robert Dow were a good match. Angélica possessed a warm, cheerful personality that shone from her face. She was loving, kind and gracious. Her home was always open to guests. In 1787, when James Wilkinson, an utter stranger, came to New Orleans on the first of his controversial visits, it was in the Dow home that he stayed; Angélica and David became his "respectable, dear and honoured friends." In his eulogy of Angélica thirty-four years later, Wilkinson made special mention of the soirees in the Dow home, No. 7 Condé street between Dumaine and St. Ann (into which they moved in 1784): "A prominent and universally acknowledged trait of character which distinguished Madame Dow was her generous hospitality. She always spread a sumptuous table and health permitt[ing] every respectable stranger and a long list of the most distinguished inhabitants partook of the urbanity and good cheer of her home." The Dow couple loved the theater and took a box when the first professional company opened its stage in New Orleans.[136]

Equally as important to Angélica as Dr. Dow's affection for her was his strong and generous behavior towards her sons, one of whom did not remember his father at all, and the other only a little. Letters from Dow to Angélica's sons, in 1802 and 1821, which have fortunately been preserved by the Urquhart family, are written in warm, affectionate and genial terms. One begins with the words, "My dear Friends Thomas & David, for I dislike the formal Name of calling You my Step Sons. . . ." In her will, Angélica paid tribute to her husband "as a small testimony of my gratitude and love which he has during the whole period of our happy union, manifested towards me," and charged her sons to give him their unstinting respect "from a grateful remembrance of that attention and care which my dear husband bestowed on their education from their early life up to manhood." To him she bequeathed, so long as he lived in Louisiana, the income from her property—worth about $8,000—and to his nephew in Scotland, a pair of silver candlesticks together with a silver tray and snuffer, all initialed T.G.T. (Thomas, Gracia Topham) "which were presented to my dear husband by my deceased sister. . . . And I particularly charge my dear husband with the accomplishment of this bequest, in order that the said plate may remain in his family as a memento of mine."

In 1821 Dr. Dow estimated that their joint property was worth about $32,000, including their home, some land in Baton Rouge, their shares of stock in the Louisiana Bank, and some notes for loans. He was a good manager, and she had business sense too; they invested in real estate and bought and sold a number of slaves throughout the years. She was proud that their financial situation was so good, and he attributed this to "our joint endeavors." This substance permitted them to lead a comfortable, satisfying life all their days.[137]

Dow made several trips to Europe, one in 1785–86 in connection with "urgent family business." Before he left, John Fitzpatrick wished him "Great Success in your undertaking, and a safe retourn to your familly," when he asked him to take a letter to London.[138] The second trip lasted, perhaps, as long as two years. He had left New Orleans by July 7, 1800, when Angélica entered into the first of two slave transactions in his absence; on August 23, 1800, he was in Philadelphia, visiting with the famous Dr. Benjamin Rush, who made this entry in his commonplace book: "Dr. Dow from Orleans breakfasted with me. He was on his way to Scotland after an absence of 23 years. He said at Orleans the natives and old settlers who went out of town and came in again took the yellow fever last year, but no other natives or old settlers. He said diseases of the skin were very common in Orleans. He told me Don Gálvez, the Governor of Florida, made it a practice to retire when he was angry, and drink a bottle of Claret to compose his body and mind." After this professional talk and gossip, on to Europe. Perhaps it was in connection with the settlement of his mother's estate, for the previous year he had sent a power of attorney to his nephew in Scotland. Dr. Dow was still in Europe in July, 1802, when he wrote to Thomas about the cession of Louisiana by Spain to France: ". . . it is very much to be feared, the Inhabitants there, will gain nothing by the change of Government or new Masters. It is a fixed Maxim & Principle of this Government [he was writing from France] that every Colony Should pay its own Expences, and Impositions will infallibly be laid on the People. . . ." He paid a call on Madame Miró and Baron Pontalba, distinguished friends from New Orleans now living in a château outside of Paris, and found Pontalba "apprehensive that his Property at New Orleans will decrease in its value. . . ."

Most important is the suggestion in Dow's letter that he had been expecting Angélica to join him in Europe for a permanent change of residence. The letter is addressed to Thomas at Bordeaux and Dr. Dow begins by saying that he was "a little Surprised and disappointed, as you may well conceive at finding your good Mother not along with you. She has been playing Cross Purposes with me . . . however I have no Reflexion to make on her Conduct being convinced that She has acted for the best, and now that I am sure we are to have her in Britain, we shall endeavour to make her happy there and I shall hurry home to her as soon as posible, and then there will be an end to my Rambling Disposition. . . ." But the good Doctor was deceiving himself if he thought he could drag Angélica away from New Orleans. Despite his dislike for the climate of New Orleans—he considered it to be "malarial and debilitating," the source of so much of the disease in the area—he returned to the city and stayed there. It was not until after her death that he would move back to Europe; perhaps she knew that this would happen, and that was why she restricted the income from her estate to such time as he remained in Louisiana. But he would not stay; about two years after her death he moved to Europe. In 1840–41 he was still living in England, but family papers contain no further information about him.[139]

16. Monsanto Family Unity

Angélica's affectionate reference to Gracia's gift of the silver candlesticks and other pieces, thirty-one years after Gracia's passing, is a telling example of Monsanto family closeness. Shining through the tedious and repetitious verbiage of legal documents are constant reminders that the Monsanto brothers and sisters maintained a fiercely close and typically Jewish family relationship throughout the years. Benjamin paid the expenses of Eleanora's suit for property separation from her husband; Jacob acted in her behalf in selling off three slaves to Angélica's husband-to-be. Jacob was a witness at the signing of Angélica's marriage agreement with Doctor Dow. Manuel and Jacob and Angélica's husband acted as guardians of Gracia's property after her husband's death. Isaac and Gracia's husband were present at inventory of George Urquhart's estate. They did not even feel distant from their Saint-Domingue brother and sister: Gracia, Benjamin and Manuel made bequests in their wills to Joseph; Gracia and Manuel to Judith. They were, quite naturally, worried about the fate of their family during the revolution on the island. Manuel, the last of the Monsanto brothers to die, said very sadly in his will, because he had not heard from Judith for a long time, that "if on account of the revolution [she] has moved to another country and because of this circumstance she has died, I name in her place her daughter Da. Raquel, my niece, who will inherit her share instead."[140] And so it continued through the years, this Monsanto protectiveness, probably instilled in them through the example of Isaac's generous assumption of responsibility for his brothers and sisters in the early years, and strengthened by the experience of adversity in 1769–70 when they were flung out into the world. Although French and Spanish law required the participation of family members in many legal matters, the Monsanto children never followed the example of their neighbors by engaging in the typical suits and countersuits over financial questions that frequently marred the unity of other colonial families. As a matter of fact, the only recorded family disagreement was fomented by Clara, Benjamin's widow, when she refused to accede to her late husband's wish that his and Manuel's settlement with their creditors should take precedence over her own claims on his estate.

17. MANUEL, JACOB AND BENJAMIN MONSANTO IN BUSINESS

For more than twenty years prior to Benjamin's death in 1794, the three younger brothers operated a business consortium in undisturbed harmony, first under Isaac's leadership, then with him as a somewhat minor partner, and finally without him after his death. There is, however, no precise mention of Benjamin in any documentation during the 1770's other than as an executor of Isaac's estate. This may be because he was the youngest brother and therefore not empowered to sign for Manuel and Jacob. In his correspondence, John Fitzpatrick refers to the Monsanto store in Manchac frequently from 1770 through July of 1781. Jacob and Manuel were dealing in dry goods, cattle, slaves and other merchandise. They were traveling back and forth to New Orleans. They had as much trouble finding hard money as Isaac always did, and paid their debts in notes and bills of exchange. On October 6, 1773, Fitzpatrick refers to Manuel as though he is established in Pointe Coupee, and not just visiting.[141]

In July, 1772, Jacob petitioned the Council of West Florida for the customary grant of three hundred acres "opposite the Spanish Settlement of Point Coupee," as though he intended establishing himself as a farmer. But the petition was denied on the ground that he had not become a naturalized resident: "It was the opinion of the [Council] that the Petitioner cannot hold lands—untill naturalized, being a Foreign Jew." This was an interesting answer; it demonstrated that there was no objection to his being a Jew, but that he, like every other alien, needed to go through the simple steps required for naturalization. Jacob did not protest that he was not a Jew, nor did he undergo naturalization so far as we know.[142]

As has already been noted, the Spanish gave no further trouble to the Monsanto brothers and sisters because of their religion, after the family was driven out of New Orleans in 1769–70. Beyond Governor Unzaga's reference to Manuel in June, 1770, there is no further mention in official Spanish documents of objection to the presence of these Jewish people. O'Reilly's successors were less successful than he was in the enforcement of commercial regulations—trade between Manchac and Louisianians continued at a merry pace until West Florida was captured by the Spanish under Gálvez in 1779. Restrictions against Protestant settlers were formally eased over the years; by the 1790's there was an affirmative policy of encouraging such immigrants, and some of these, like Dr. Dow, became prominent residents.[143] The Monsanto brothers did not actually settle in New Orleans as full-fledged residents until the early 1780's, but there seems to have been no objection to their traveling in and out of New Orleans as early as August, 1770, and doing business there. This may be the real reason that Jacob did not want to be naturalized as a British subject in 1772—because he still considered himself a Louisianian and was only waiting for a propitious and advantageous time to return permanently to the colony. It is surely significant that even Isaac, with all the bitterness he must have felt towards the Spanish, came back to settle, and die, in Louisiana.

But there was one occasion when Jacob got into trouble with the Spanish colonial government. In January, 1773, he arrived in Natchitoches in a canoe with a Canadian and two Negroes and a cargo of contraband merchandise. When Lieutenant-Governor de Mézières discovered that the contents of the canoe did not match the certified bill of lading, he threw Monsanto and the crew into prison, seized the cargo, and requested instructions from Governor Unzaga. In March, the Governor ordered Mézières to send Monsanto, his companions and the cargo to New Orleans. There the very desirable merchandise was sold at public auction, and the proceeds of 2,112 reales deposited in the public treasury. Monsanto was apparently released on parole, and promptly fled the city. He was tried in absentia in October, and sentenced to "five years of presidio duty at Oran." Meanwhile another Monsanto shipment, carried by one La Derrive, an employee of the firm, to the Rapides Post in September, 1773, had been seized by the commandant of that settlement; this cargo consisted of illegal trade goods worth 298½ reales. The Council of the Indies in Madrid did not get around to considering the case of Jacob Monsanto until 1776; they then criticized the Governor for some imperfections in his report of the case, and questioned the ability of a sheriff who would be so lax as to permit his prisoner to escape. But apparently the Spanish colonial authorities were not really interested in imprisoning smugglers; Monsanto was not the only merchant who was apprehended and then permitted to escape after his property was confiscated—three other smugglers had the same experience. So far as we know, no official attempted to arrest Jacob during subsequent trips into the colony; his trial appears to have been a mere formality. But what is most instructive about the entire record of these proceedings is that Jacob is not identified either as an unwanted Jew, or as a member of the family of merchants which had been expelled from Louisiana just a few years before. Matters had indeed changed since O'Reilly's departure.[144]

In October, 1773, the West Florida Province declared a moratorium on land grants, and it was not possible for the Monsanto brothers to obtain land for the time being. Manuel and Jacob did, however, request a special favor in March, 1775:

> "Read the Petition of Manuel and Jacob Monsanto setting forth as follows—viz.—That your Petitioners have for several years past kept a Store on the Lands reserved for His Majesty's use at Manchack. That having frequently petitioned your Excellency and your Predecessors for a Grant of Lands on this River which however it has not been their good fortune to obtain and being now desirous to Erect a small Dwelling House or Store on the abovementioned reserved Land for carrying on their business of Merchandize they therefore humbly pray your Excellency and Honors will Grant them permission to Erect Buildings for that purpose on the Ground which they have occupied since their residence at Manchack being at the upper end of the old Cleared Ground, and that they may peaceably possess the same untill it shall be wanted for His Majesty's use at which time they beg to

> have the Liberty to remove their said Buildings or to dispose of them in such other way as they shall be able. And your Petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray &c.—"

No mention here of the reason for the negative response to the prior request; this was simply an effort to make life and business more comfortable while they were still trading out of Manchac. This petition was viewed with favor:

> "It was the unanimous advice of the Board that the prayer of the Petition should be Granted—Upon which His Excellency ordered that Manual [sic] and Jacob Monsanto the Petitioners should have Liberty to reside and occupy their several Buildings at Manchack until the Lands whereon they stand is required for the King's use—and that they may have Liberty to remove all their property when they are ordered off said Land this being the same indulgence that was given to Mr. Fitzpatrick in Council on the 17th of February in the year 1772."[145]

Manuel and Jacob, in other words, were to be treated as though they were British subjects. And so indeed they continued to be regarded: in September, 1776, when grants were again available, Jacob applied for a grant of 450 acres on the claim of family right ("His family consists of himself and Seven Negroes") and 1,000 acres through purchase. No mention was made in this petition of the reason for previous denial, and no one brought it up at the Council meeting: he was given 700 acres. Surely he had not become naturalized. Was it because he had become more prosperous, or because George Urquhart, his brother-in-law, was so prominent in the area in which he wished to settle, or because the disturbed conditions in the Atlantic seaboard colonies had aroused justifiable apprehensions about the safety of the West Florida Province—and happy settlers were valued, particularly those whose trading activities at Manchac were so important? Probably all of these factors were involved. The land granted to the Monsanto brothers was just north of George Urquhart's plantation on the Mississippi.[146]

So the brothers were up and down the Mississippi River, from New Orleans to Manchac and Baton Rouge and on to

Pointe Coupee and Natchez. They did business with a New Orleans merchant like Oliver Pollock, sold Captain Pierre Joseph Favrot some equipment for repairs at Fort Baton Rouge, took a mortgage on some land and on a schooner on the river, and borrowed cash from George Urquhart when things became tight.[147] By 1780 Benjamin had established himself in Pointe Coupee in business with his brother Isaac's old associate, Isaac Fastio. Fastio and Isaac Monsanto had engaged in commercial transactions at least as early as 1766; in fact, Fastio was still trying to recover the large sum of 3,330 pesos, 5½ reales, from Isaac's syndics. It is obvious that Fastio did not blame Isaac or the brothers for the financial confusion of Isaac's affairs: he had taken part in the inventory of Isaac's possessions on May 7, 1778, and now he was quite happy to join together with Benjamin in various business dealings over a period of at least eight years—until 1788, when they dissolved the partnership which had been created "only by faith through a private agreement"—not by a notarized, public document. But the termination of the partnership was announced publicly, and entered into the records of the Commandant of Pointe Coupee Post: it stipulated that Fastio had no claim on Benjamin's possessions, "consisting of a plantation at this post, slaves, furniture, utensils, animals, etc., and all other goods he possessed elsewhere."[148]

Benjamin appears to have been the "country" representative of the firm after Manuel and Jacob closed the Manchac store and moved their headquarters to New Orleans, where they lived on Toulouse street. Together as a team, sometimes each on his own account—for it was another loose partnership, without formal papers—they bought and sold land, acted as agents for the collection of debts, bought or attempted to buy goods at auction, even a ship, bought and sold slaves, and engaged in a general wholesale and retail business as well, much along the lines of Isaac's prior commercial activities. Among the many items which they are recorded as selling are the following: sugar, butter, salt meat, West India rum, soap, tobacco, indigo, cloth, English shoes, linen trousers, thread stockings, hats, beaver skins, ship cable and horses. Only one detailed account has survived the ravages of time; it is a list of the items which the

Monsanto brothers supplied to Santiago Lemelle, a planter in Attakapas, during 1783–84:

8	dishes
2	pitchers
1	dish and 1 ladle
2	water jars
18	flasks of brandy
7	colored linen handkerchiefs
1½	ells of brown cloth
4	ells of Rouen linen
3½	ells of calico
2	ells of cottonade
6	ells of dull linen
4	ells of ribbon
1	pair of woolen stockings
1½	ells of flannel
2½	ells of coarse carpet
1	pair of silk bandages
1½	ells of blue cloth
1½	ells of white flannel
3	ells of linen
3	ells of linen for the Negroes
1	box of tea

The total cost of these products was 118 pesos, 6 reales. But Lemelle did not pay in cash. He manufactured candles on his plantation, and the Monsanto brothers took the candles in exchange for the merchandise. The total value of the candles they needed for their other customers exceeded the sum of his purchases, so that they had to give him hard cash as well—139 pesos, about one-fifth of the cost of a good slave.[149]

Many of the Monsanto brothers' transactions were in slaves—some for their own use, a few of whom they freed, but most, of course, for resale. Every person in Louisiana who could afford slaves owned them. By 1800 Angélica and Robert Dow had bought six and sold five; Gracia bought four and sold two; there is no record of Eleanora's purchases, but she sold six. The total of the brothers' purchases and sales, derived from the examination of thousands of pages of records in New Orleans and Natchez, but not in other Louisiana localities, is as follows: Benjamin bought nineteen and sold ten; Jacob bought two and sold thirteen; Manuel bought thirty and sold twelve; the brothers as a firm bought thirty-seven and sold eighteen. Because many of their business activities were in partnership, however, it must be presumed that Jacob sold some of those listed as Manuel's purchases, and that Benjamin sold slaves bought by his brothers, in addition to those he used on his plantation. Only three large transactions in slaves are included in the Natchez and New Orleans notarial records: twelve were bartered by Benjamin in 1785 for 3,280 pounds of indigo, which he probably had received in exchange for some other type of merchandise; thirteen were bought by Manuel in 1787 for 3,780 pesos from Hilaire Boutté; and thirty-one slaves were purchased by Manuel and Jacob from Daniel Clark the elder for 9,300 pesos "of the new Mexican mint," later in the same year.[150] No merchant of the time devoted himself exclusively to slave trading; this was a later development, when the number of farmers grew and the corresponding need for slaves increased. The Monsanto brothers therefore qualify as slave traders, in the manner of the times, although this was only one aspect of the exceedingly broad range of business activities in which they engaged.

18. Benjamin Monsanto in Natchez

Although Benjamin had been in partnership with Fastio, this did not exclude a similar relationship with his brothers. But Benjamin aspired to be a planter. Although some of his purchases of land in the Pointe Coupee area were obviously for investment purposes—in less than a year, for instance, between April, 1784, and March, 1785, he made a ten percent profit on some acreage—he did run a plantation at the Pointe Coupee Post for a few years. But he was apparently not satisfied with that venture, and felt that he would do better in Natchez, where the brothers had already engaged in various business transactions, and which had replaced Manchac and Pointe Coupee as a center of trade. He purchased his first land there in February, 1785.[151] Shortly before this he had heard George Rapalie's boastful talk in Natchez about an imminent rebellion against Spanish rule, and had to testify as a witness in the long and involved trial which ensued.[152] Fortunately, no suspicion was directed against him, and some time after his marriage to Clara, he decided to undertake a planter's life in Natchez.[153] He had no difficulty in becoming accepted as a member of the Natchez community; his knowledge of French, Spanish and

English meant that he was equally at home with all of the settlers in the area. He not only enjoyed the social prestige to which Major Forman referred, but was accorded the trust and confidence of the Governor. Governor Manuel Gayoso de Lemos twice appointed him to teams of citizens who conducted inventories and appraisals of the estates of deceased neighbors, and in 1790 he was one of the men on a panel from whom arbitrators were chosen to compromise a dispute.[154]

Benjamin's plantation on the bank of St. Catherine's creek, next to David Williams' property (his daughter Mary Gayoso Williams later married Angélica's son David),[155] covered 500 arpents of land. The dwelling house, "planked and roofed with shingles," was, according to the inventory of Benjamin's estate in 1794, "somewhat decayed, feebly constructed and wanting repair." The outbuildings consisted of a kitchen of hewn logs, four small cabins serving as milk houses and slave quarters, and a well. Of furniture the main dwelling had little: "three beds and some trifles of furniture." Of animals there were two yoke of oxen, one hundred and twenty sheep, five work horses, about forty head of horned cattle, and some hogs in the woods. A cart and irons, three ploughs and seven spades, was the total of agricultural equipment. Benjamin owned seventeen slaves, but five were sold to a neighbor before his death, and four belonged to the partnership with Manuel.[156]

Benjamin had not succeeded too well in his farming venture—perhaps he had been draining cash from the business in order to support his ambition to become a planter. At any rate, whatever the reason, the firm was in trouble. On June 17, 1792, Benjamin had been compelled to borrow 1,000 silver dollars from his neighbor David Williams, using three slaves as collateral.[157] In early 1794, Benjamin joined eight other Natchez citizens in protesting to Governor Francisco Luis Héctor Carondelet against a formal moratorium on debts in the area—this would obviously put merchants like Benjamin and Manuel in a bind.[158] Four months before his death on September 30, 1794, Benjamin was in New Orleans with Jacob, negotiating with their creditors. On May 28, 1794, the creditors agreed to accept settlement over a period of three years. Some of the slaves would have to be sold immediately to raise cash. The complete list of assets and debits demonstrates that the Monsanto brothers should have had nothing to worry about. Customers in the Natchez area, and in New Orleans, Pointe Coupee, Galveztown, Natchitoches and Attakapas, were indebted to them for a total of $14,803. Added to this were their slaves: six already turned over to the creditors, worth $1,500, and ten more worth $3,200. They owed a total of only $6,610 to six creditors.[159] The difficulty was, as always, the scarcity of ready cash; and due partly to the moratorium on debts in Natchez, the brothers were in very narrow straits. Hence the need for time. Unfortunately, Benjamin's death intervened. Clara had to go to court for permission to sell some land in order to pay her overseer's salary and some other personal debts—only $300 was needed, but she could not do without it.

Not the least of the complications was the fact that Benjamin had made two wills. The first, dated January 25, 1792, when Benjamin was already ill, divided the estate between Clara and Manuel; Clara's dowry of 2,500 milled dollars was to be returned to her, but "if the present payment of the above sum should be attended with great inconvenience to my brother Manuel Monsanto, I desire that he may not be distressed, on giving good and undoubted security for the sum, and paying regularly and exactly the interest of the same, for the maintenance of my dear Wife." This will had been executed in Natchez, and was presented to the Natchez court and accepted for probate.[160] Then came the news from New Orleans that Benjamin had revoked this will and had written a new one, the day before his death. In the new will he left nothing to Clara, merely returned her dowry to her; he did not refer to "my dear Wife." Because of the "large sums of money we owe," Benjamin granted his executors an extension beyond the usual period of a year for the termination of his affairs. The surprise was that he designated his brother Joseph in Saint-Domingue as his residuary heir.[161] No wonder that Clara made claims on the estate, and created difficulties for Manuel, and for the creditors, upsetting the settlement which had been negotiated in May. It may be that Benjamin had been victimized by marital as well as financial and health problems—this might have been the reason for his decision to leave Clara out of his will, except for her dowry. Benjamin's estate was still in the courts in 1802–1803, when some of his debts had still not been discharged.[162]

19. MANUEL, JACOB, MAIMI AND SOPHIA

Manuel now had to struggle on alone; he survived Benjamin by less than two years. He tried hard, in his will, to help his executors to distinguish between his personal affairs and those of his distressed company: anything dated before Benjamin's death, though personal, was to be assigned to the creditors; anything dated thereafter belonged to him individually, as did the goods in his own home (which probably served as his storehouse). He bequeathed personal mementoes to Angélica's husband and sons, to Eleanora's children, and to Eleanora and Angélica. The estate as a whole was bequeathed to Angélica, Eleanora, Judith and Joseph. One of his most interesting bequests was a medicine box which he left to Dr. Dow. The portrait which emerges from Manuel's will is that of a scrupulously fair merchant—in a postscript he made special mention of two personal debts which he insisted be paid—and a fond brother, spelling out precisely which of his personal possessions he wanted each member of his family to have.[163]

Manuel made one further bequest: "fifty pesos to the quadroon named Sofia, daughter of the mulattress Mamy, another fifty to said Mamy, an identical sum to the free negress Rozeta, my former slave, all of which I want to be done." Manuel had freed Rosa on May 29, 1792. But Mamy, Maimy or Maimi William had not been Manuel's slave—she had belonged to Jacob, who freed her on August 4, 1783, when she was twenty-six years old, "in appreciation of her good service and for the payment of 300 pesos." Maimi did not have the money, then: Jacob gave her a year to secure it, but it was four years before Jacob acknowledged payment. Manuel made a point of referring to Maimi as a mulatto and to Sophia as a quadroon. The conclusion is inescapable that Sophia was Jacob's daughter, and that this was why Manuel remembered Sophia and her mother in his will. Manuel did not leave a bequest to another slave Jacob had freed in 1781. The deed of sale of a slave from Maimi to Sophia, dated February 9, 1795, is the first of many references to Sophia as Sophia Monsanto. By 1805, when both Sophia and Maimi had their own residences, or at least lived in different houses on Bienville street, Maimi too had adopted the name Monsanto. Maimi died in 1817; the heirs to her estate of $558 were Sophia and the pharmacist Philippe Zerban. There is no record of Sophia's passing. But it is natural to wonder if Madame Dow ever nodded to Sophia if she saw her while out strolling; Angélica must have known that Sophia was her niece.[164]

It is equally natural to wonder if Madame Dow ever greeted Judah Touro, after his arrival in New Orleans in 1802, with the information that she came of the same Sephardic stock as he, from the same Holland in which his father had been born.[165] If Manuel, Jacob or Benjamin had lived into the nineteenth century, they might have mentioned to Touro that they too were Jews, for they did not have Angélica's good reasons for identification with the non-Jewish community and with Christianity. But there had been no opportunity for them to associate with fellow Jews. It is therefore only in a more modern sense that the Monsanto brothers and sisters were Jews: they did not and would not abandon their Jewish identification; they would not become Christians; they remained conscious of their sense of being different—but only in this way were they Jews. They probably did nothing about being Jewish other than to resist the religious pressure of the environment—and part of the price they had to pay for this resistance was their expulsion from Louisiana. Had they adopted Catholicism formally, and become French subjects, after their arrival in 1757 or 1758, they would probably have been permitted to remain in Louisiana, would have preserved their hard-earned property. But this they did not do. Perhaps in this way alone did they reflect their origins in that Dutch community of Jewish refugees from Spain and Portugal—they would not turn against the memory of those fleeing ancestors.

The significance, then, of the Monsanto brothers and sisters is that of pioneers, who successfully tested and bested the

French prohibition against Jewish colonists, who were probably the only Jews ever to be expelled from territory now part of the United States partly because they were Jews, who successfully breached even the Spanish colonial barriers against Jews, and who were the first permanent Jewish settlers in a variety of localities: New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Pointe Coupee and Natchez.

20. Other Jews and Supposed Jews in Spanish Colonial Louisiana

For decades, the statement has been repeated that two Jews named Mendez and Solis were pioneers in the development of the sugar cane industry in Louisiana, during the 1790's.[166] There is no need here to discuss the complicated question of what contribution, if any, these men made to experimentation in the field of sugar cane refinement, but it must be noted that there is no evidence that members of Joseph Solis' family considered themselves to be Jews or that they were Marranos. The lineage of this family is known in some detail: they had come to New Orleans by 1771, after successive residence in Ireland (where Joseph Solis' grandfather, Manuel, was born), Boston (about 1717, where Joseph's father, also named Manuel, was born), and Santiago de Cuba (about 1755, where Joseph had married Barbara de Rosas). It is possible, of course, that some distant ancestor had been a *converso*, but no contemporary record has been located which refers to the Jewish background of the family.[167]

The question of the background of Joseph Solis' friend, Antonio Mendez, is more interesting and revealing. Born in Havana in 1750, Mendez was in New Orleans before August 16, 1784, when he petitioned the court for a *limpieza* certificate. The *limpieza* code, which had developed in Spain and was transferred to the colonial areas of the Spanish empire, was an antecedent of the Hitlerian "racial purity" laws. In order to safeguard the "blood purity" of Spanish "old" Christians, in contradistinction to "new" Christians, that is, former Jews who had been converted voluntarily or through compulsion, it was required that genealogical data be presented to the courts which then certified that a family were "old Christians, pure of all taint of bad races of Moors, Jews, Mulattoes and Indians, and that they are not recently converted." In certain parts of the Western Hemisphere, of course, the emphasis was on the proof that Indians and Negroes did not appear in the family tree, but originally the reference to Jewish or "new" Christian forebears was of primary significance. Suits for the certification of family *limpieza* were entered in the New Orleans courts as early in the Spanish period as 1776. Apparently any Spaniard who possessed or aspired to social position wanted such certification, as did anyone who sought to play a role in the colony's official life.[168] The record of the hearing for Mendez' appeal is worth quoting in full:

> "Proceedings brought by Antonio Mendez to prove his legitimacy, purity of blood, life and habits.
>
> Court of Governor Esteban Miró.
> Assessor, Juan del Postigo.
> Escribano, Rafael Perdomo.
>
> Antonio Mendez, a native of Havana and a resident of New Orleans, petitions to say it is convenient to him to have witnesses testify in answer to the following questions:
>
> 1st. Whether he is not the legitimate son born of the lawful marriage of Josef Mendez, a native of Pontevedra, in the Kingdom of Galicia, and of Ana Muñoz de Lara, born in the city of Havana?
>
> 2nd. Is it not true that his said parents always kept him in their house and called him their son and, he, in turn, called them his parents?
>
> 3rd. Is it not true that his said parents and maternal grandparents are and always have been old Christians, free from the taint of all impure races, such as Moors, Jews, mulattoes and Indians, and have not been recently converted and have never been prosecuted for infamous crimes, but on the contrary have always been employed in places of honor, have held high offices and have distinguished themselves by their personal qualities?
>
> 4th. Has he not always comported himself with dignity, has

his conduct not been correct, frequenting the Holy Sacraments often with the congregation of the faithful?

5th. Is not all that he has stated publicly and generally known?

Governor Miró, on Juan del Postigo's advice, decrees: Let the testimony this party requests be received, according to the tenor of the above interrogatorio, the taking of the said testimony to be entrusted to the Escribano, and done, bring the depositions to the Court.

Marcos Aragon is the first witness called. His testimony reads: In the city of New Orleans, on the 17th of August of the year 1784, the Escribano, pursuant to the foregoing decree, received the oath of Marcos Aragon, a witness presented by Antonio Mendez to give the evidence the latter has offered and the Court ordered taken. This oath was made according to law, and when examined upon the tenor of the foregoing interrogatorio, to the first question he answered: This is true in all its contents. The witness knows it [to] be a fact because for many years past he has been a frequent visitor in the home of Antonio Mendez' parents.

2nd. What has been stated is also true and well known to the witness through long years of acquaintanceship.

3rd. What is set down in this question is also true and well known to him, namely, that Mr. Mendez' grandparents have always been reputed to be white, people of distinction and free from any taint of impure races.

4th. It is true that Antonio Mendez has always conducted himself properly, and has never seen nor heard anything detrimental to him in the city of Havana, on the occasions the witness has been there, nor during his residence here. On the contrary he has heard everyone speak of him as an honorable man.

5th. All that he has stated is generally and publicly known and is voiced by everybody. What the witness has answered is the truth, under charge of his oath, he is 60 years of age, and he signed, to which Escribano attests. (Signed) Marcos Aragon, before Rafael Perdomo.

The other witnesses, Juan Francisco Romero, a resident of Havana, and Manuel Ramos, each in a separate declaration, corroborates the testimony of Marcos Aragon.

Then Governor Miró, on Juan del Postigo's advice, decrees: Considering the foregoing testimony produced for Antonio

> Mendez, by which he has proven his legitimacy of birth, purity of blood and good conduct, His Lordship says that he must approve and does approve his claim, and for its greater validation and force he interposes his authority and judicial decree. He orders the certified copy requested, authorized in public form, given to the petitioner, upon the payment of all just and due fees."[169]

In 1785–86, Mendez was acting as the attorney for claimants on Isaac Monsanto's property. Later he served as a legal official of the Spanish colonial government. In 1790 he married Felicite Ducre in New Orleans.[170] Apparently a man of ability, he was called upon by the first American governor of the Louisiana territory, William C. C. Claiborne, to serve the new government in the area. Let Claiborne describe the ensuing experience in the words of his report to Secretary of State James Madison, from New Orleans, under date of February 13, 1804:

> ". . . I appointed a few days ago a Mr. Mendez, who had been represented to me an Honest Capable Man, Civil Commandant of a District [Terre aux Boeufs] about Six leagues below New Orleans. This District is inhabited principally by an humble, poor, indolent, ignorant people, emigrants from the Canary Islands, who Idolize their Priests, and feel little attachment for any one else. Mr. Mendez altho a Catholic; is said to be of Jewish extraction, and on this account (and for other reasons unknown to me) is by no means a favorite with his neighbors, who manifest disquietude at his appointment, and a few were imprudent enough to talk of not recognizing him as their Commandant. This Affair was represented to me as an alarming event, and strong measures on my part were advised. In pursuance however of that conciliatory Policy which I have adopted, I sent for some influential characters of the District, and on this day had an Audience with them; they professed attachments for the Government of the United States, respect for its Officers, and a determination to be obedient to the Laws; but as well for themselves as their neighbors they entreated me to nominate for them another Commandant. I determined to grant their request, and they have returned to their homes apparently well pleased.
>
> "I have given you these particulars, since this Transaction has

> been greatly misrepresented here, and should it reach (by way of report) the City of Washington, the exaggeration will probably be great. . . ."[171]

No other correspondence about the Mendez case has been located; this might imply that Claiborne was unduly anxious. Yet he was correct in feeling embarrassed by the affair, for Article III of the Treaty ceding Louisiana to the United States provided that

> "The inhabitants of the ceded territory . . . shall be maintained and protected in the free enjoyment of their liberty, property and the religion which they profess."

This provision was intended to protect the largely Catholic population of certain sections of Louisiana from any discrimination by the Protestant majority of the United States as a whole. But the Federal act which divided Louisiana into two territories, passed in 1804, did not refer to any one particular religion:

> ". . . no law shall be valid . . . which shall lay any person under restraint, burden, or disability, on account of his religious opinions, professions, or worship; in all which he shall be free to maintain his own, and not burdened for those of another . . ."[172]

Even if Mendez had been a practicing Jew, Claiborne would not have been bound to revoke the appointment, let alone on the basis of a rumor that one of his ancestors was Jewish. Certainly the Governor had no desire to perpetuate medieval Spanish prejudices; yet he interpreted his primary responsibility as being the establishment of American authority with a minimum of friction or controversy. He therefore followed the prudent course of giving in to the demand of the Canariotes for the time being . . . only to appoint Mendez to the position of Justice of the Peace for St. Bernard Parish three and a half years later. Claiborne had his way—gradually.

Even though there was no testimony about Mendez' paternal grandparents (perhaps because there was no one in New Orleans who could testify about the family's reputation in Pontevedra, from personal knowledge), he was regarded as an "old" Christian by the Spanish authorities; otherwise he would not have obtained the *limpieza* certificate, nor would he have held positions of legal responsibility under Spanish rule. Perhaps, as in thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of individual cases, since the establishment of the Inquisition in Spain and Portugal, the accusation of Judaizer was only a mask for other, less theological purposes; Claiborne hints at this in his report to Madison. At any rate, Mendez was surely not a Jew in terms of personal religious affiliation, conviction or knowledge, even if distant ancestors had been "new" Christians. But his experience points up one aspect of the Spanish colonial period, carried on into the years of the American regime, which demonstrates that there were areas of Louisiana and classes of its population which would have nothing to do with Jews, and which regarded a man's Jewish background with suspicion and hatred.

So far as we know, this was not characteristic of all settlers and officials of Spanish background, let alone of the larger French population. The French never did pursue Jews or former Jews with the same unrelenting fanaticism as the Spaniards. During the 1790's at least one family of Jewish refugees from Saint-Domingue appears to have settled in Louisiana. In early 1796, Sara López Pardo, surely a Jewess to judge by her name, applied in Bordeaux for a passport to leave for Louisiana with her two young children, together with her slave Martine and her daughter, "in order to arrange her affairs in Louisiana." Sara declared that she was thirty-two years old, and that she was a refugee from Saint-Domingue. Nothing further has been discovered about Sara or her fate.[173]

More suggestive, however, is Daniel Lopes Dias' application in Bordeaux, at about the same time, for a passport for his son Abraham to travel to Louisiana to be near his family. Nothing further is known of Abraham or his family; diligent searching in New Orleans notarial records and other manuscript sources has failed to uncover a single reference to any member of the family—but Benjamin Monsanto had died recently, and he and Gracia had left money to their Saint-Domingue relatives. Perhaps this Lopes Dias family was related to Rachel Lopes Dias, Judith's daughter-in-law. If all of the members of the

Monsanto family in Saint-Domingue had been wiped out, then members of Rachel's family could legitimately regard themselves as her heirs, with a justified claim on the inheritances from the Monsanto family. All of this is pure surmise—and the probability is that no members of this Lopes Dias family remained in Louisiana for a very long time, unless they lived in some rural area whose manuscript records have not been consulted.[174]

If, however, the Lopez Pardo and Lopes Dias families did settle in Louisiana, outside of New Orleans where their names do not occur in any census or directory, they were quietly absorbed into the dominant French Catholic environment without a ripple to mark their disappearance. This may offer additional evidence that, though there were Jews in colonial Louisiana, there was no Judaism.

II

Judah Touro—An Overview

New England-born Judah Touro was the first Jew known to have arrived in New Orleans after 1800, and the most famous for his contributions to the life of his adopted city. (Judah Benjamin's greatest renown was achieved through his service to the Confederacy; his residence was then in Richmond). When Touro died on January 18, 1854, lavish praise was accorded to the record of his life:

> "New Orleans has lost one of her best citizens, charity one of her sincerest devotees and humanity one of its truest friends. . . . Though earnest and successful in the prosecution of business, Mr. Touro was never a selfish or close man. On the contrary, he has for many years been the foremost of our rich men in all contributions to charitable objects. Some of his donations have been on a scale of magnificence and liberality scarcely paralleled in our country. . . ."[1]

Seven years previously, however, the R. G. Dun and Company's confidential agent in New Orleans referred to him as "the old rat." That this agent envied Touro's wealth is obvious: "I sh^{d} like to have his note for a *million*," was his comment on his subject's financial standing.[2] This agent may well have been animated by antipathy against Jews. He almost invariably called attention to their ethnic background when he commented on the credit standing of Jews, and frequently made such a sneering reference as, for example, "stand well for Jews."[3] But it was not only so prejudiced an observer as this anonymous reporter who had negative reactions to Touro. His closest Jewish associate, an executor of his noted will, regarded Touro as an eccentric, indecisive, difficult, peculiar person: "Mr. Touro is the very impersonation of a snail, not to say of a crab whose progress (to use a paradox) is usually backward . . . I must be very careful to humor him . . . he is very *slow* . . . You know he is a strange man. . . ."[4]

The public acclaim granted to Touro following the publication of the terms of his munificent will, and the position of eminent philanthropist which has been awarded to him by hero-worshipping Americans, and particularly American Jews, have interfered with any earnest effort to comprehend the character of the whole man. This is a difficult task, in view of the destruction of his files, accounts and papers after his death, on his explicit instructions.[5] Without attempting to essay a full biography which perhaps can never be accomplished successfully, in view of the paucity of personal data, we shall try to underline some salient and revealing characteristics and experiences which have not previously been given their appropriate weight.

Touro was born in Newport, Rhode Island, on June 16, 1775, the son of Isaac Touro, the Dutch-born *hazan* (minister-cantor) of Congregation Yeshuat Israel, and his native American wife, Reyna Hays. The following year the elder Touro refused to take the oath of loyalty to the Revolutionary cause which was required by the Rhode Island Assembly, on the grounds that he was a Dutch subject, and that such an oath was also against his religious principles. That there was more to his feelings than he then revealed is indicated by his decision to remain in Newport after the town's capture by the British. He was given subsistence by the British commander, since most of the Jews had fled town and there was no way in which he could support himself. In 1780 he moved to New York City and petitioned "His Excellency Major General [William] Tryon Governor and Commander in Chief in New York" for relief, pledging "his loyalty and attachment to His Majesty's Government," and referring to the "persecution and distress" from which he had suffered. He was granted an annual allowance and daily rations by the British. On December 12, 1782, he requested and was given an advance on his stipend so that he might move to the island of Jamaica. Isaac Touro presumably officiated in Jamaica for a brief time prior to his death on December 8, 1783, after which his widow returned with her four children to New England, where she made her home with her brother, Moses Michael Hays, in Boston, until her death on September 28, 1787.[6]

Hazan Isaac Touro's decision to ally himself with the Tories is not recounted here to cast any stain on his son's patriotism, but rather to demonstrate one aspect of the stress and insecurity in which Judah's early years were spent. He had lived in four different places by the time he was eight years old: Newport, New York City, Jamaica and Boston. In Newport and New York City the family lived on military handouts; they had hardly established themselves in Jamaica before the father died and they were compelled to become refugees once again. In Boston they were poor relatives living on charity. Judah was fatherless when he was just past seven, and an orphan when he was twelve. These experiences with privation and grief must have left indelible marks on young Judah's character. No matter how kindly and generous Uncle Hays may have been, Judah cannot have helped feeling lonely, insecure and afraid.

Of Touro's youth in Boston, hardly anything is known. He probably received little formal education; years later, Gershom Kursheedt—who knew him very well—said that Touro's "great misfortune was in his want of education."[7] This probably meant, at the very least, that Touro evinced no interest in cultural matters. Moses Michael Hays was a prosperous merchant and insurance broker; Judah and his younger brother Abraham seem to have been apprenticed in their uncle's counting house at a fairly young age and to have learned there the ways of commerce which they followed for the rest of their lives. In 1798, according to report, Judah was sent as supercargo on a voyage to the Mediterranean. More significant, personally, is the legend of his falling in love with one of his cousins, and Uncle Hays's refusal of permission for the marriage. Stories about the romance were in circulation before Touro's death; Rabbi Isaac Leeser had heard them on visits to New Orleans. He thought that Touro had been in love with Rebecca Hays; other sources say it was Catherine. How much truth may underlie the legend cannot be ascertained at this late date. Certain it is that Judah did not leave Boston because of Rebecca's death; she died nine months after his departure. Nor is there any evidence that he maintained contact with Catherine throughout the years; a letter which Catherine's niece wrote to Touro two days before her death and which his own death prevented his receiving seems to imply that there had been little or no contact between them. One specific fact contradicts the romantic notion that Judah and Catherine languished for love of each other throughout their lives: Moses Michael Hays died in 1805—just four years after Judah went to New Orleans. If it was Uncle Moses' opposition which stood in their way, that was the time for Judah to have returned to Boston for his beloved, or to have sent for her to come to New Orleans.[8]

If we have no definite knowledge of Touro's motivation for leaving Boston, we are equally in the dark about his choice of New Orleans as his destination. He appears not to have gone South as a representative of his uncle's business; this may indicate that there was a falling out between them. There is no evidence, either, that he had received assurances from other New England firms that they would use him as a New Orleans agent, though naturally he must have solicited their shipments either before his departure from Boston or after his arrival in Louisiana. Touro certainly had no way of knowing, when he left Boston in October, 1801, that within a brief time Louisiana would be ceded by the Spanish to France, and then purchased from Napoleon by the United States. Whatever Touro's feelings and motivations, the kind of man who was adventurous enough to leave the familiar Yankee surroundings of Boston in order to seek a home and livelihood in so distant and exotic a clime as New Orleans was not the shy, retiring personality of later years. The story of his unhappy romance has been highlighted by writers who recognized how little color there was in Touro's life, but even if he was fleeing from a painful personal relationship, his choice of New Orleans as his future home reflected a positive strength in his character worthy of emphasis. New York, Philadelphia, Richmond or Charleston would have been more natural locations if he was only looking for another port in which to settle. But if he had really quarrelled bitterly with his uncle, who possessed important commercial connections in each of these cities, perhaps he chose New Orleans because Mr. Hays had no contacts there, although his uncle does not seem to have been so vengeful a man that he would maintain a vendetta with his nephew. But all this is surmise. The fact is that it took courage to move to New Orleans, still under Spanish domination, plagued by disease, riddled with commercial restrictions, peopled by citizens whose languages he probably did not know.

Fortunately for Touro and the economic future of the Crescent City, Louisiana came under American rule in a short time. There is no record of Touro's business life immediately after his arrival, but within a few years he was acting as a commission merchant—that is, he served as an agent for the sale in New Orleans of consignments of merchandise shipped from New England or from Europe, assisted the captains of ships in attending to their business, and solicited outgoing cargoes for his correspondents' ships. Touro's earliest printed advertisement which can be found dates from 1805; the wares which it lists are a good example of the variety of merchandise which he handled:

> "Now Landing
>
> From on board the Schooner William, Abraham Waters Master, From Boston, lying opposite the old Custom House, the following articles: 130 Boxes Cod Fish, 28 half barrels of 1st quality beef, 2 do [ditto] Neats Tongues, 10 Casks Cheese, 19 do Potatoes, 2 do French Hair Powder, 60 Boxes Mould Candles, 18 do Castile Soap, 60 do American brown Soap, 4 do Chocolate, 5 Cases Britannias, 2 do Platillas, 6 Kegs Butter, 2 Pipes Holland Gin, 6 Barrels Nuts, and a quantity of Pickled Fish in Kegs, in excellent order, consisting of Salmon, Mackeral, Herring, Tongues and Sounds, Soused Lobsters, &c.—ALSO—A few thousand Joice [joists] and Boards, which will be sold reasonable for cash. For particulars apply to the master on board, or to
>
> J. TOURO"[9]

A few weeks later Touro advertised that his ship would soon leave for Antwerp, had half her cargo signed up, and had space for additional freight and for passengers.[10] The schooner *William* had brought a large assortment of foodstuffs and other products to Touro; possibly the entire cargo was consigned to him. Sometimes, however, only a few items on a ship were sent to him. His handling of a small order, sent to him in 1809 by the

Boston merchant, John Hancock, nephew and namesake of the Revolutionary leader, will indicate his role in miniature form. The consignment consisted of four pipes and two hogsheads of gin, which Touro sold for $484.75. From the proceeds he paid the captain of the Brig *Sally* $30 for freight charges; he also deducted $1.50 for cartage, $10 for storage of the gin for two months (probably in his own store), and a five percent commission of $24.25 for his services. He sent the net amount of the sale, $418.50, in Spanish milled dollars, to Boston, on the same ship which carried his report of the transaction to Hancock.[11]

Touro's report of a later transaction, on behalf of Christopher G. Champlin, the former Senator from Rhode Island, offers evidence of the difficulties which were involved in some consignments. On June 3, 1820, he wrote to Champlin that his ship had arrived, and acknowledged receipt of bricks and iron which had been consigned to him—"both of which articles, am sorry to say, have come to a very bad market—have only been able to sell about 15 m of the former at $5½—the iron have been obliged to store—considerable quantities has been imported here direct from Gottenburg, Stockholm &c this last season—so that the place is at present completely overstocked with it—you may however rely, I shall endeavor to do the best with both articles for your Interest . . . the Bricks are too small for this market—they will not work in with any other brick whatever, not even the Boston brick." Touro also reported that the ship's captain had been ill, justified his decision to ship a cargo of cotton rather than tobacco to the Liverpool market, and gave his estimate of the ship's probable date of departure.[12] A year later, on June 23, 1821, Touro had to admit to Champlin that he still had not sold the iron: "I am, my D^{r} Sir, as anxious as you possibly can be, to close the thing, in order that you might be enabled thereby, to wind up the concerns of the ship for that voyage—however as I think the market is now getting better for the articles, am in hopes to do something with it ere long—as soon as I do you shall be advised thereof—and you may rely that no exertions has been, nor shall be, wanting, to expedite the same as speedily as possible."[13] Champlin had obviously sent the bricks and iron to Touro without prior notification; Touro could not very well have rejected the consignment without losing the good will of this correspondent, and possibly of others. But it was not his capital which was tied up; Touro spent his time and energy, but the most he could lose in this sort of transaction was his commission. The client was responsible for storage costs.

In view of the destruction of Touro's business papers, and the absence of any substantial records of his correspondents, other than the Thwing Company's letter books in the Massachusetts Historical Society which date from the late 1840's when he was already an old man, it is impossible to present a fully detailed description of his commercial activities. He seems, however, to have restricted himself to a brokerage business, acting as the agent for New England, primarily Boston, merchants who sent consignments to him. Beginning in 1820, the *Louisiana Gazette* regularly printed itemized lists of ship arrivals and clearings, including the consignees of cargoes. During this and the following few years he received frequent shipments, but many other merchants were far busier than he. The cargoes which were sent to him included a wide variety of merchandise and foodstuffs: linens, glass, brandy, soap, olive oil, brandied fruits, almonds, wine, gunpowder, candles, beef, tongues, medicines, grass seeds, brimstone, paving stones, sulphur, lead, herring, furniture, dry goods, boards, mackerel, whale oil, codfish, rum, onions, cordage, cheeses, leather, salt and gin. Ships for which he acted as agent took on cargoes of sugar, tobacco, cotton, skins, logwood, molasses, books, beeswax and calcutta goods. He was also part owner of a number of ships, on and off throughout the years. In 1809 he purchased a one-third interest in the *Cabinet*. In 1815 he bought one-half of the *Highlander* for $4,500. Beginning in 1817, he invested in shares of various steamboats. He was not, however, a large-scale owner of shipping vessels; practically all of these ventures were in partnership with other merchants who probably took the major responsibility for these shipping activities.[14]

Most of Touro's business was in the wholesale consignment line; his customers in New Orleans were merchants, storekeepers and plantation owners, rather than the general public. One commodity which he did sell at retail was ice. He began to import this luxury from the North in 1828. In 1837, when rumors of an impending ice shortage were at large, Touro took the unusual step of sending a letter to one of the newspapers in which he assured the public that there was "sufficient ice now in the old and regularly established Ice Houses in Chartres, Conde and Commerce streets, and at the Pontchartrain R. Road; also at the house at the corner of Robin and Religieuse streets to satisfy the wants of the city and vicinity during the season, even should not another pound be received from the North." The 1838 *New Orleans City Directory* lists him as the owner of only two ice houses, those at 74 Conti and 23 Elysian Fields; he was, therefore, probably speaking for all of the owners of such establishments in his letter to the *Bee*.[15]

Touro was certainly not the most important businessman in New Orleans, nor even the most prosperous or successful Jewish entrepreneur. During the sixteen months beginning in January, 1818, for instance, Rochelle and Shiff, whom we will meet later, received twice as many consignments as did Touro, according to newspaper reports. Nor is there any evidence that Touro was a pioneer merchant venturer or high risk business leader comparable to the real-life Vincent Nolte whose story is told so dramatically in *Anthony Adverse*. But neither did Touro go bankrupt as Nolte and most of the other speculators did. He seems to have resisted the temptation of high profits and limited his transactions to conventional commission work, letting others take the high risks and suffer their consequences. He did not, so far as we can tell, buy or sell merchandise for his own account, except perhaps the ice. He invested very little of his money in the bank and other stock company ventures in New Orleans which collapsed during the panic of 1837–42. He did not speculate in the volatile cotton futures market as did most of his competitors, nor did he purchase a plantation in the style of prosperous Crescent City businessmen, and thereby fall victim to the economic ills of Southern agriculture and the slave system. In short, he held himself aloof from most of the dangerous aspects of New Orleans commercial life.

Touro's manner of living, to the end of his days, was simple and frugal, again in contrast to the usual New Orleans style of elegance and extravagance. At first, when he could not afford a home of his own, he lived with a number of other bachelors at 35 Conde street. Taking rooms in the same house in 1805 were the Chaplain of the Ursuline Convent and Vicar-General of the Diocese, the Very Reverend Jean Baptiste Olivier; the young merchant Richard Clague; and Alexander Milne, the Scots speculator who built the pleasure resort of Milneburg.[16] In later years, Touro lived in the same building as his store or warehouse; still later he lived, as we shall see, in a few rooms in the former rectory of Christ Church. But never did he build the sort of mansion which less successful men felt compelled to do in order to satisfy their social aspirations, let alone the kind of castle on which Alexander Milne lavished his fortune. It would be unfair to imply that Touro was a miser in the conventional sense, but it is instructive to observe that of the total assessed value of his estate of $928,774.74, probably a very low evaluation, only $1,960 was assigned to his personal possessions and furnishings—and this included silverware valued at $805 and about $600 worth of wines stored in his cellar. His carpets, chairs, hat stand, bedstead, crockery and glassware, and office furniture, were listed at $550 in the inventory. No books, jewelry or other valuables were included among his possessions.[17] It is not an occasion for surprise that a moderately successful businessman, who had no family and few personal friends, who indulged himself in no pleasures so far as we know, who was shrewd enough to invest his income wisely, should have accumulated the kind of wealth which Touro owned at the end of his life. Rabbi Isaac Leeser was writing from personal observation when he reported on Touro's style of living and saving:

> "Mr. T. was not a man of brilliant mind; on the contrary, he was slow, and not given to bursts of enthusiasm, as little as he was fond of hazardous speculations; and he used to say that he could only be said to have *saved* a fortune by strict economy, while others had spent one by their liberal expenditures . . . he had no tastes for the wasteful outlay of means on enjoyments which he had no relish for. He [had] thus the best wines always by him, without drinking them himself; his table, whatever delicacies it bore, had only plain and simple food for him. . . ."[18]

Touro's wealth was not secured through commercial genius, or through skyrocketing profits, but gradually, through unremitting attention to his work, and through strict economies in his personal life. Perhaps he was always haunted by the private fear of a repetition of the penury in which his early years had been spent, when first his family existed on the meager dole provided by the British army, and when later he himself had to live on his uncle's charity.

Perhaps, too, it was his homeless childhood which led him to invest most of his savings in real estate. By 1812, he had already purchased a tract of land eighteen leagues below New Orleans. His earliest acquisition of a lot and building in the city itself which we have been able to discover in the notarial records took place in 1818. Property which he bought in 1821 was still among his holdings when he died. Confident in the future of New Orleans, he purchased lot after lot, virtually all in the commercial center of the city, paid cash, erected buildings, and collected rents. He appears not to have mortgaged any of his property; hence he was unaffected by the periodic economic slumps and panics which at one time or another drove most of New Orleans' businessmen into bankruptcy. Almost three-quarters of the assessed value of his estate was invested in these properties and buildings which he had bought and developed over the long years. He had indeed, as Leeser reported, "*saved* a fortune," and it in turn increased in real value because the growth of New Orleans continued throughout the years. His net assets continued to increase because he never retired from business activity, as the Thwing papers demonstrate; at the very end of his years he was still giving directions to his Northern agents about the ventures in which he was engaged, mostly far away from New Orleans by that time.[19]

During his early years Touro was an interested participant in matters of civic, political and business concern.[20] In 1804 he signed petitions which recommended candidates for the federal posts of port collector and port inspector.[21] In 1807 he served as a member of a grand jury which denounced military excesses in New Orleans, and criticized the city fathers for permitting too many taverns and gaming houses to flourish in town.[22] In March of the same year he joined one hundred and forty of the "most wealthy and respectable inhabitants of this city" in congratulating Governor Claiborne and General James Wilkinson on the discovery of the Aaron Burr plot, expressing confidence in Wilkinson's motives.[23] A month later Touro and forty-four other merchants petitioned Governor Claiborne to reappoint George T. Ross to the office of sheriff from which he had resigned during the Wilkinson-Burr controversy.[24] In 1812 Touro served on a special grand jury with some of the leading citizens of New Orleans including Angélica Monsanto's son David Urquhart, who acted as foreman, the banker Beverly Chew, Touro's former neighbor Alexander Milne, and his friend R. D. Shepherd. This grand jury submitted some very strongly worded presentments on such important subjects as the Baratarian smugglers and pirates, buccaneering vessels in New Orleans, and the neglect of patients in the local marine hospital.[25] In 1812 and 1813, Touro and Shepherd were elected to the board of directors of the Bank of Orleans.[26] But the Battle of New Orleans seems to have drawn a veil over his willingness or ability to participate in civic activities. Thereafter he appears to have withdrawn from positions of public responsibility; he did not again sign political petitions, serve on grand juries and public committees, or join the boards of commercial institutions.

Well known is Alexander Walker's florid description, in his book on Andrew Jackson and the Battle of New Orleans, which was published just two years after Touro's death, of Touro's service in carrying ammunition for the Louisiana Militia, his being wounded and left to die on the field of action, and his friend Rezin Shepherd's courage in carrying him off to New Orleans in order to secure medical care for him at the risk of being charged with desertion.[27] Touro was so grateful to Shepherd that he appointed him "the universal legatee of the rest and residue of my estate," identifying him as "my dear, old and devoted friend . . . to whom, under Divine Providence, I was greatly indebted for the preservation of my life when I was wounded on the 1st of January, 1815." Shepherd's share of the estate amounted to at least a half-million dollars and may have been as much as $750,000.[28]

Rezin Davis Shepherd (1784–1865), the great-great-grandfather of Senator Leverett Saltonstall, was a Virginian who came to New Orleans in 1802 as the representative of the Baltimore merchant William Taylor, whose niece he married a few years later. Rezin and his brother James were, apparently, more venturesome merchants than Touro, dealing in far larger sums than he, but this did not prevent Judah's participation in some of their transactions. The friendship which had been established between them in the early years was cemented by Shepherd's rescue of Touro. Although Shepherd was away from New Orleans for many years, during the period 1817–37, they remained close; Touro gave Shepherd his power of attorney in connection with the settlement of the affairs of both his brother Abraham, who died in Medford, Massachusetts, in 1822, and his sister Rebecca, who died in New York in 1833. When Rezin's brother, James Shepherd, died in 1837, the deceased was indebted to Touro for $138,752. James's estate was the subject of a bitterly contested suit which lasted beyond both Rezin's and Judah's lifetimes. Rezin's relatives accused Rezin of forgery, fraud, violation of confidence and utter rapaciousness. Nonetheless, Judah maintained his belief in Rezin's integrity, continued to take part in business dealings with him, and gave Shepherd rooms in his home from 1837 on. The relationship was not one-sided, motivated only by Touro's gratitude to Shepherd; Shepherd had many reasons to be thankful for his friend's confidence, hospitality, financial backing in business ventures, and his moral support in the controversies over James's estate.[29]

Was Touro's wound of any significance other than the strengthening of the friendship with Shepherd? Walker says that Touro was "struck on the thigh by a twelve pound shot, which produced a ghastly and dangerous wound, tearing off a large mess of flesh . . . Mr. Touro long survived this event, never marrying because of the wound." There is an oral tradition in New Orleans, supported by at least one published account, that the wound included damage to Touro's sexual organs, and that this was why he never married. But in 1815 Touro was already forty years old. Is it not more likely that he had already become accustomed to bachelorhood, and that the wound had nothing to do with his failure to marry? Perhaps the hardships of childhood days had implanted something in the emotions of Judah and his brother Abraham which denied both of them the warmth and comfort of marriage. Although tradition reports that Judah did participate in the gay social life of New Orleans prior to 1815, there is no record of his ever having served on the public ball committees which were so popular during the period. But we are still faced by the problem of his apparent withdrawal from public affairs after 1815: this might be explained by shame over the wound, if indeed it made him less than a man, or by a psychic trauma which resulted from his brush with death in the searing cauldron of battle—many another man has been emotionally crippled by the shock and fear of war. But all this is guess-work. We can only note that there was an apparent change in Touro's personality after the battle.[30]

Deferring a consideration of Touro's record of support for Christian churches, until we discuss his relationship to the establishment of a Jewish congregation, we shall now attempt to evaluate Touro's record as a philanthropist. It may well be true that he was secretly generous to individuals in need of help, as has frequently been asserted. Touro's pensioner, Parson Theodore Clapp, estimated that his patron gave away more than $20,000 in private charity.[31] One hopes that Clapp was more accurate in this report than in his assertion that Touro ordered his inheritance of about $80,000 from his sister Rebecca to be distributed to charity. No such instructions have been found among the legal papers relating to Rebecca's estate, nor in the powers of attorney which Touro gave to Rezin Shepherd. It is entirely possible that Shepherd was given private instructions to dispose of the money after the estate had been completely settled, but that was still going on seven years after Rebecca's death, and it seems unlikely that there would be no publicity attached to the contribution of so large a sum of money to public institutions.[32] Jewish tradition encourages the giving of charity in secret—but not as a substitute for the support of public institutions and agencies. If Touro was indeed a philanthropist, it is indeed strange that he was more than sixty years old before he made his first dramatic contribution to a public cause, the fund for the completion of the Bunker Hill Monument, about 1839, and that it was only two years before his death that he established the Touro Infirmary, his single significant contribution to the people of New Orleans during his lifetime.

The so-called Touro Free Library Society for which he was supposed to have offered to erect a building never became an actuality. Organized in 1824, perhaps to spite the directors of the New Orleans Library Society which had been in existence as a stock company since 1806, the Library was housed in Parson Clapp's Presbyterian Church and the books were available for use only for one hour on Saturday afternoon and for two hours on Sunday morning before services. One cannot escape the suspicion that the men who constituted the board of directors of the Touro Library—such leading citizens as Parson Clapp, Judge James Workman, Beverly Chew and Maunsel White—had named the institution for Touro in the hope of wheedling a large sum of money from him. It is peculiar that Touro's own name was not listed among the incorporators of the library, that he was not elected a director, and that no mention of his name was included in the public appeals for contributions of money and books. Touro seems to have been a victim of the library proposal rather than its benefactor or sponsor, to judge from the available information.[33]

New Orleans did not develop until quite late the philanthropic and social service agencies which were so characteristic of the Protestant-oriented cities of the North; its Catholic tradition tended to place responsibility for works of charity on the shoulders of priests and nuns. But there were occasional appeals in the press for support for worthy causes. During the 1830's, for instance, a number of campaigns for funds were publicized, to which other Jews contributed and for which they worked on committees. Among these were a fund for the assistance of victims of the July, 1830, Revolution in France; a subscription to help people who had lost their homes in a fire in Fayetteville, North Carolina, in 1831; a collection for the relief of the victims of the great cholera epidemic in New Orleans in 1832; and a fund for the victims of the Charleston fire of 1838. Touro's name did not appear in the newspapers even once in the lists of sponsors of these appeals, or in the tabulations of donors and their contributions; nor was he ever active in the work of the well-known Howard Association, organized in 1837 by a group of dedicated men (including some Jews) in order to render personal service to the victims of the periodic epidemics which made life in New Orleans so dangerous during the summer and early fall. Since the only anonymous contributions to these causes which were listed in the newspapers were of the five dollar variety, it is unlikely that Touro's retiring nature compelled the omission of his name from these lists; indeed, as in the case of the Bunker Hill Monument, the names of the donors of large anonymous contributions generally became known to the public—such news is too important to remain secret for very long.[34]

So far as can be discovered, the amounts which Touro contributed for public purposes, other than sectarian religious institutions and projects, which we defer discussing, were as follows:

1839–40:	$10,000	to the Bunker Hill Monument
1843:	$1,000	to the Redwood Library of Newport, plus whatever sum would be necessary to pave the sidewalk
1852:	$40,000	as payment for the Paulding estate which he converted into the Touro Infirmary; he retained title to this property, however, until his death.[35]

It would be inappropriate to include in this list of philanthropic activities the check for $1,000 which Touro gave to the Firemen's Charitable Association in 1852 following a fire in which the prompt appearance of several volunteer fire companies saved "a considerable portion of my property;" this was more a reward than a disinterested beneficence.[36]

As we review the record, the conclusion seems inescapable that Touro's reputation as a philanthropist stems largely from the munificence of the bequests which were included in his will—approximately $483,000, incomparably larger than the sums he gave away during his lifetime.

Another aspect of Touro's philanthropic way of life is said to be revealed by his aversion to slavery. He is reported frequently to have purchased slaves "for the sole purpose of liberating them," and to have set some of them up in business.[37] A close search of the New Orleans notarial records and newspaper advertisements does indeed demonstrate that Touro did not deal extensively in slaves, unlike other commission merchants in New Orleans. He did own one slave at the time of the 1805 New Orleans census[38] but information about the disposition of that slave has not been uncovered. The very fact that Touro was in business in a slave society brought him into constant contact with the system. In 1809, for instance, fifteen slaves belonging to a bankrupt firm, of which he was a creditor, were sold at auction; some of the proceeds of the sale came to him.[39] More to the point, in 1812 he advertised rewards for the apprehension of seven Negro runaways from the plantation of one of his clients. If he was to serve his customers he had no choice but to participate in such activities as these.[40] Much of his merchandise was, of course, sold for use by slaves, including dry goods imported to New Orleans from the cotton mills of New England to be made into clothing for slaves.[41] Neither Touro nor any other New Orleans merchant could escape involvement in the daily workings of the slave system.[42]

Two very intriguing pieces of information have recently come to light, however, which relate to Touro's friendship with free Negroes. One was Ellen Wilson, a f.w.c. (free woman of color, in the terminology of New Orleans), for whom Touro purchased a home in his own name. Found among Touro's effects, after his death, was a note for $4,100 due to the same woman from J. G. Osgood. There is no way of identifying Ellen Wilson; she may have been one of Rezin Shepherd's slaves whom Touro is reported to have set free. Enough, however, to know that she is the only person for whose property and financial affairs Touro was willing to assume responsibility, so far as we can judge from the inventory of his estate. If we were dealing with anyone other than Touro, we would suspect that Ellen was his mistress; but all of the insight which we have been able to gain into his character contradicts such a suggestion. Just as little significance should attach to the presence in New Orleans of a John Touro during the period 1855–65.[43]

Far more significant is the fact that Pierre André Destrac Cazenave, one of the executors of Touro's will, and a beneficiary to the amount of $10,000 was a mulatto. In 1853, when he was thirty years old, Cazenave was a commission merchant. Identified in the R. G. Dun and Company records as the former confidential clerk and "pet" of Touro, he was reported to be worth $20,000 in 1854, and $100,000 in 1864, when he conducted an undertaking and livery establishment with his four sons. The 1866 R. G. Dun and Company report says that the Cazenave family were "Quadroons—Creoles, more properly now called colored persons." One of the Cazenave sons was Recorder of Births, Marriages and Deaths in 1875. Strange that none of the writers of the newspaper articles about Touro saw fit to comment on the fact that Touro had appointed a mulatto as an executor of his will, and described him, together with Rezin Shepherd, Aaron Keppel Josephs (a well-known Jewish attorney of New Orleans) and Gershom Kursheedt (Touro's adviser on Jewish affairs), as "my trusty and esteemed friends." Far more than any traditions or undocumented reports of Touro's interest in Negroes, does his regard for Cazenave demonstrate a remarkable spirit of dedication to the principle of human equality in an absolute and practical manner.[44]

Even if Judah Touro was not the heroic figure who has been glorified in order to feed American Jewry's well-known craving for "great men," he should still be recognized for what he was, a good, loyal, industrious human being. In a city like New Orleans, where simplicity was rare, Touro lived "a life remarkable for its monotonous simplicity."[45] He was not a leader of men in any sense, either communal or economic, but he was a decent man who pursued his own quiet, sober, moral way without participating in the extravagance, high fashion, conspicuous consumption and frenzied speculation which were so characteristic of life in New Orleans during his period of activity. Perhaps his noblest quality was his dogged loyalty—to Cazenave, the mulatto, to whom he offered a rare kind of friendship; to Rezin Shepherd, whom he supported in the bitter legal feuds over James's will and estate, despite Touro's aversion to law courts;[46] to the city of his birth, to which he was so generous in his will; to the memory of his brother Abraham, to whose three favorite charities he left bequests in his own will; to his cousin Catherine and the children of two other Hays cousins, whom he remembered in his will; and to the few close friends and supporters in New Orleans and elsewhere to whom he left token bequests in the will drawn up in the closing days of his life. These fine personal qualities should not be overshadowed by the heroic proportions of the philanthropic aspect of his bequests.

III

Jewish Settlers from 1803 to 1815

During the 1790's, as thousands of Americans poured across the Appalachians from the Atlantic seaboard, to establish farms in the Ohio and Mississippi valley areas, it became obvious that the swiftest outlet to the most desirable markets for their produce was down the Mississippi River and through the port of New Orleans. In 1795 the Spanish authorities reluctantly granted the right of commercial deposit to American citizens, but they were never happy about the arrangement and withdrew it in 1802. When Spain's cession of Louisiana to the French in 1800, at first kept secret, became public knowledge, some Americans became so agitated that they began to talk of war with France in order to secure American control over the port of New Orleans. President Thomas Jefferson's original intent in pursuing the more pacific course of undertaking discussions with the French was not to bargain for the vast Louisiana area, but only for New Orleans. Jefferson believed that the city would be the most important commercial center in the world: "with Boston, Baltimore, New York and Philadelphia on the left; Mexico on the right, Havana in front, and the immense valley of the Mississippi in the rear, no such position for the accumulation and perpetuity of wealth and power ever existed." Jefferson's instructions to James Monroe, who assisted Robert Livingston, the American Minister to France, in the negotiations, related specifically to the purchase of New Orleans and the assurance of free navigation on the Mississippi River. Napoleon's decision to dispose of the entire territory, on the other hand, was motivated by his fear that the colony would be seized by the British, upon the anticipated outbreak of war, and that British imperial resources would then be increased by the wealth of the productive Mississippi Valley. Napoleon preferred to sell the area to the inoffensive Americans than to permit it to fall into the hands of the British; the Americans for their part were willing to pay fifteen million dollars for this colonial empire because they regarded it as the key to the broader expansion of their commerce and trade.[1]

A similar dream of wealth and success drew thousands of Americans and Europeans, every year, to this Creole town which began its history under the government of the United States in 1803 with something less than 8,000 white residents. By 1810, ten thousand additional white inhabitants had swelled the population; new immigrants already outnumbered the French and Spanish Creoles. Later proportionate increases were equally large. New Orleans continued to exert the fascination of an El Dorado, an economic gold mine, on the imagination of bold, ambitious men throughout the ante-Bellum period. It was a boom and bust town, the most exciting, most cosmopolitan and exotic city in the United States. We shall, in this chapter, describe the background and experiences of those Jews who came to New Orleans and its environs in the period before the Battle of New Orleans.[2] Each one had his own personal emotional motivations for traveling so great a distance, whether from older settlements in the United States, or farther afield, from Europe. But all of them made their livelihood in some form of commerce. It was, therefore, the same lodestar of economic opportunity and personal success which drew them to the Crescent City in the years following the Louisiana Purchase, which had motivated the American government to acquire the city in the first place.

1. Benjamin S. Spitzer and David G. Seixas

By September, 1804, when he signed a petition which recommended a candidate for the position of Collector of the Port, Benjamin S. Spitzer had come to New Orleans to try his luck. Ben was probably the son of Barend Moses Spitzer, who arrived in America in 1770 and became a prominent Mason, a close friend of Haym Salomon, and a loyal member of Mikveh Israel Congregation of Philadelphia. The father died on Sullivan's Island, near Charleston, in 1796. Spitzer's partner in this New

Orleans venture was Israel Baer Kursheedt of New York City, who arrived in the United States the same year that Spitzer's father had died. So far as we know, Kursheedt did not himself come to New Orleans; he must have invested some money in the business, and may have been responsible for purchasing goods in New York City and supervising their shipment to Louisiana. But his interest in the business was represented on the spot by his seventeen-year-old brother-in-law, David G. Seixas, a son of the Revolutionary War patriot *hazan*, Gershom Mendes Seixas.[3]

Spitzer and Seixas lived at 21 Rue St. Louis; they owned three slaves, a woman who cooked their meals and kept house for them, and two males who worked in their store. B. S. Spitzer and Company, as the firm was called, dealt in dry goods, notions, foodstuffs such as coffee and sugar, liquor and other commodities. They also invested in the schooner *Nancy*, and owned the building on Condé street where the Public Baths were located. Their business was soon in trouble. Kursheedt dissolved the partnership in April, 1806, and Seixas tried to sell the Public Baths. He obviously failed to do so, because in September, 1806, suits were entered against Spitzer, and, eventually, everything—merchandise, furniture, the slaves, the ship and the Public Baths—was sold at sheriff's auction. Spitzer had not gone broke, however; in June he purchased the ship *Jane* for $6,000, and this ship was not seized for the creditors' benefit. How long Seixas remained in New Orleans is uncertain; the final notice of his presence refers to testimony which he offered at a trial in October, 1806. All of the firm's debts were not met by the sale of the property, and, as late as November, 1807, judgments were still being sought against Spitzer. Nothing further is known of him. Once he had done his best to straighten out his affairs, he probably left town for more promising horizons. On the other hand, David Seixas returned to town in 1829 and again in 1832 to sell the printers' ink he was manufacturing in Cincinnati. Three of Israel Kursheedt's children came back to the scene of this early failure, thirty years afterwards; one of them, Gershom, became the champion of Jewish vitality in the city during the 1840's, as we shall presently see.[4]

2. JACOB HART, WITH SOME INCIDENTAL COMMENT ON JEAN LAFFITE

Although they may have hoped to become permanent residents of the city, Spitzer and Seixas remained in New Orleans for little more than two years. So far as we can tell from newspaper and notarial records, Jacob Hart of New York City was probably the next Jew to come to New Orleans, in the fall of 1804 or the spring of 1805. Hart, who lived in New Orleans until his death on December 20, 1849, was born in Philadelphia on March 29, 1781, the son of Jacob Naphtali Hart and Leah Nathan.[5] The father had emigrated to America from Germany in 1775, stayed briefly in Baltimore, then moved to Philadelphia where he married, established himself in business, made financial contributions to the Revolutionary cause which were acknowledged by Congress, and took an active role in the affairs of Congregation Mikveh Israel. After the war he settled in New York City and held office in Congregation Shearith Israel, whose school young Jacob attended. The son was still in New York City in the summer of 1804, when he and his father attended services and made an offering.[6]

Young Jacob Hart was in New Orleans before June, 1805, when he shipped a cargo worth $3,600 to the West Indies on a schooner which ran into foul luck and was captured by a British man-of-war which in turn was taken by a Spanish ship. Hart's vessel ended up in the Mexican port of Campeche. In October, 1805, Hart accepted a settlement of $2,400 for his losses from the New Orleans Insurance Company.[7] It is probable that Hart's father and family were using their money and influence to help him get established, because his business grew much more rapidly than Touro's did. During 1806, for instance, the newspapers record the names of only two ships for which Touro was agent, but four for Hart; only one cargo was consigned to Touro, while Hart received eight. In 1806 Hart was already the owner of the schooner *President*.[8] Over the next few years, his own ships and those for which he acted as the New Orleans agent, made voyages to Kingston, Charleston, Baltimore, New

York City, Pensacola, Havana and Santiago, Cuba, and one was advertised as being available for any port in the United States or Europe. His cargoes included the usual variety of imports: dry goods, furniture, wines and liquors, brandied fruits, logwood, mahogany, gunpowder, bagging, playing cards, soap, paper, anchors, paints, candles, gigs, salt, codfish, vinegar, olives, raisins, sugar and coffee. A typical advertisement of Hart's goods appeared in the *Louisiana Gazette*, on February 10, 1807:

> "JUST RECEIVED AND FOR SALE,
> By the subscriber, at his store, No. 16, Chartres street
>
> Superfine red ground and fancy calicoes
> Brittanias and Dowlas
> Long lawns
> Checks and stripes, chintz shawls
> Printed pocket handkerchiefs
> Toweling, table cloths and napkins
> French broad cloths blue and black
> Crapes assorted colours
> Estopillas, French and English
> Men's beaver gloves
> Morocco skins, blue pulicat hdks.
> 45 Tons Campeachy logwood
> 22 Hogsheads Codfish
> 6 Pipes Madeira Wine
> 300 Boxes Marseilles Soap
> Brandy and Gin
>
> JACOB HART"

Hart bought and sold ships and real estate, advertised the availability of bills of exchange on New York, and fulfilled the usual responsibilities of a shipping agent and commission broker.[9] Hart had more to do with slaves than Touro. In July, 1808, he advertised three Saint-Domingue slaves for sale, a female cook and two fishermen; and, in November, 1808, he offered the public an opportunity to buy a twenty-four-year-old Negro who spoke English and French fluently, was a good tailor and also "has been accustomed to take care of horses." In 1810 he bought two slaves for 1,400 pesos from Captain Christoval de Armas of the Baton Rouge settlement in Spanish West Florida.[10]

Hart was the only Jew who was included in the directory of merchants which was published in B. Lafon's *Louisiana Yearbook* of 1809—but perhaps this was only because others were not interested in paying the fee which was required for the inclusion of a name.[11] At any rate, Hart was accorded some of those evidences of recognition which symbolized a man's acceptance into the mercantile community of New Orleans: during 1807–1808, he served twice as a representative of the creditors of bankrupt merchants; and in June, 1809, he was a member of the monthly committee of the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce. He took an active interest in the issues of the time: in 1807, he and Touro signed complimentary addresses to General Wilkinson and Governor Claiborne; on January 25, 1808, he was the only Jew who added his name to a petition which urged President Jefferson to appoint Captain Thomas Pollock to the command of the revenue cutter of the port.[12] Hart was also one of the young men who promoted the fancy balls which enlivened the social season: during the winter of 1806–1807 he served on the board of managers of the Tuesday night dances, and in 1807 he was one of four men who were in charge of the arrangements for the Washington's Birthday Ball.[13]

The strategic location of New Orleans made it a natural focus for a host of political and military plots designed to foment revolutions throughout the Caribbean area. The arrival of large numbers of refugees from Saint-Domingue, and of opponents of Napoleon's domination of Spain from Spanish colonial possessions in the area, stimulated a number of conspiracies during the first decade of the nineteenth century similar to the filibustering plots of later years. In 1809 the Mexican officials heard rumors from Louisiana that an expedition was being formed in New Orleans for the invasion of Mexico. An informer in New Orleans sent word to Mexico that Jacob Hart's schooner, the *Célestine*, which was cleared from New Orleans in the spring of 1809 for Laguna de Termión in Yucatán, was really one of the vessels being fitted out for participation in the invasion. Upon arrival in Mexico, the ship was confiscated and Hart's supercargo, Jean Robert, was arrested. Governor Claiborne protested to the Governor of Yucatán, in a letter dated July 17, 1809, that "there is no expedition preparing in this Territory against the Spanish Dominions . . . ," and denied that Robert and the others were "spies in the service of the American Government." Nonetheless, Robert and the officers and crew of Hart's ship were held in Yucatán for another six months. In November, Hart conferred with Claiborne and gave him a letter which the Governor sent on to Washington:

> New Orleans 16th Novr. 1809
>
> "His Excellency Wm. C. C. Claiborne
> Governor of the Territory of Orleans.
>
> Sir,
>
> I honoured myself by addressing your Excellency on the 17th July last acquainting you of the seizure of the Schooner Celestine & her Cargo belonging to me & the Imprisonment of the Supercargo Mr. John Robert Junr the Captain & Crew all Citizens of the United States of America, in consequence of a Letter received there & supposed to be written by a person in this City—purporting the arrival of an expedition here destined to act against the Spanish Possessions & I entreated your Excellency to address yourself officially to the proper authorities at Laguna—in contradiction of such nefarious reports & I had every expectation that your representations would eventuate in the restoration of my property & the release of the Supercargo Captain & Crew of the Schooner but experiencing a disappointment (which may have arisen from the miscarriage of your Letters) I am again compelled to trouble your Excellency as an opportunity presents itself which may be depended upon for the carriage of any further representations which you may see fit to make upon this subject.—
>
> I have the honour to remain
> Your very obedt Servt
> Jacob Hart"

Claiborne's second appeal to Yucatán was successful. The schooner returned to New Orleans, and, on April 14, 1810, Hart announced that Robert had become a partner in his business. In less than five months the partnership was dissolved;

the reason did not become clear until November 5, 1810, when Robert and his friend Ange Michel Brouard were charged by a grand jury with piracy. One of the writers on the Baratarian smugglers reports that Robert and Hart began a career of piracy in order to seek revenge "not upon French imperialists but upon their Spanish captors. They entered into the trade of French piracy that within the next four years gave a permanent celebrity to Barataria and its smuggler gangs." This historian is certainly mistaken in believing that Hart had been on the *Célestine* and had been imprisoned; and it has been impossible to find Hart's name mentioned anywhere in the records which concern Laffite's exploits. Of course, the New Orleans merchants who dealt with Laffite and bought his smuggled and pirated goods for resale in their stores were not likely to advertise the fact, nor did Governor Claiborne ever take any action against them. Still, consideration must be given to the fact of Hart's partnership with Robert. There are only two explanations for the sudden breakup: that Hart took Robert into his business, on his return from Mexican captivity, as a reward for his loyalty and as recompense for his unpleasant experience, but discharged him as soon as he discovered that Robert had become involved with Laffite; or, that Hart had known all along about Robert's activities, but, in order to protect himself, announced public dissolution of the partnership when he heard that Robert had been apprehended, while he continued secretly to participate in the profitable business end of Barataria. Either of these possibilities may be factual; unfortunately no further evidence has been discovered which may cast light upon Hart's relationship to Laffite's exploits. But he was the only Jewish businessman who seems in any way to have been connected with Barataria.[14]

This is probably a more logical place than any other to digress for a report on Laffite's Jewish antecedents and connections. Most authorities on Laffite accept as authentic the account that, after his mother's death, he was reared by his grandmother, and that his grandfather had been done to death by the Inquisition or, at least, had died in prison while in the custody of the Inquisition. One authority gives the grandmother's name as Maria Zora Nadrimal. Another says that she "planted a deep hatred of Spain in her grandsons."[15] A controversial document which purports to be Laffite's journal and autobiography refers to this grandmother's tales as the root of Jean's hatred of the Spanish:

> ". . . My mother died before I can remember and my maternal grandmother, who lived with us, became a mother to me . . . My grandmother was of Spanish-Israelite descent . . . My mother's father had been an alchemist with a good practice and patronage in Spain. He was a free-thinking Jew with neither Catholic faith nor traditional adherence to the Jewish synagogue. But this did not prevent him from dying of starvation in prison for refusing to divulge the technical details which the Inquisition demanded from all Jews. Grandmother told me repeatedly of the trials and tribulations her ancestors had endured at the time of the Spanish Inquisition . . . Grandmother's teachings . . . inspired in me a hatred of the Spanish crown and all the persecutions for which it was responsible—not only against the Jews. . . ."

Anyone who knows anything of the history of the Jews of Spain realizes that unconverted Jews could not live in Spain after 1492, and that synagogues ceased to function at that time. The grandfather could only have been a Marrano "new" Christian, a secret Jew who outwardly conformed to the Catholic faith while retaining his conscientious allegiance to Judaism; that he may have been an alchemist is possible, since such theories were still in vogue. But Laffite was not expected to be an historian on such matters; his garbled description of his family's Marrano background need not be regarded as evidence that the volume is a forgery.[16]

Another interesting Jewish reference in the alleged Laffite autobiography is the report of a discussion with the well-known Jewish merchant of New York City, Isaac Moses:

> "I had a conversation with Isaac Moses about three years before his death. In 1815 he dissuaded me from trying to recover some of my profits. He states that he had never been reimbursed for his financial aid at the time of the Revolution against the English. He stated also that S. H. Solomon likewise had never been reimbursed for the economical assistance which he gave to General Washington. That conversation with Mr. Moses in 1815 weakened my constancy of purpose in Washington at that time. . . ."[17]

Isaac Moses, who was seventy-three years old in 1815, is not known to have been in New Orleans at that time. But he was indeed a patriot who had supported the Revolutionary cause with money and trade goods; he was one of that band of Jewish merchants which also included Haym Salomon (not S. H. Solomon as the "Journal" has it) who figure largely in Robert Morris' record of the new government's financial tribulations and transactions. But, if Moses had not been in New Orleans, and Laffite was never in New York, how would the latter ever have heard of Moses and Salomon? Some of Haym's children and grandchildren were in and out of Mobile and New Orleans in later years; one son, Ezekiel, as we shall see, died in New Orleans in 1821. But we know of no opportunity which they might have had to meet Laffite. The possibility suggests itself that Jacob Hart might have told Laffite about Haym Salomon and Isaac Moses, for he knew both families: Jacob's father and Isaac Moses were active at the same time in the affairs of Shearith Israel Congregation in New York City, and Jacob's sister Ella or Ellen married Haym Salomon's son, Haym M., in 1809. If, on the other hand, the diary is a forgery, its actual author must have had some special reason to be aware of Isaac Moses' financial support of the Revolution, and of his death in 1818. Isaac Moses' patriotic activities were far less publicized than Haym Salomon's; but in 1827, Jacob's brother-in-law, Haym M. Salomon, instituted a campaign to regain from the federal government the large sums of money his father is supposed to have loaned to Congress.[18]

Whether or not Jacob Hart gained added profits through participating in Laffite's illegal trade, he became quite prosperous. One after another, he brought his brothers to New Orleans from New York City to work with him. David, four years younger than Jacob, was in New Orleans by 1810, for the brothers were living together on Royal street when the federal census was taken that year; David, not Jacob, is listed in *Whitney's New Orleans Directory for 1811*. The youngest Hart brother, Joseph, died in New Orleans on August 19, 1817. Nathan must have joined Jacob and David no later than 1819, for in June of that year, before a trip to New York City, Nathan gave Jacob his power of attorney. Benjamin and Leon, two other brothers, may also have been there at that time. In the 1820 census, Jacob, living then on Chartres street, listed as members of his household two males between sixteen and twenty-six (Benjamin was twenty; Nathan and Leon, twins, were twenty-three); two males between twenty-six and forty-five (David was thirty-five and Jacob himself was thirty-nine); the two males over forty-five were probably relatives or clerks of whom we have no precise information. Also listed in the census report were seven male slaves.[19]

We would not have any precise knowledge of Jacob Hart's holdings and resources if he had not gone bankrupt in 1823, a catastrophe from which he seems never to have recovered. He was the first of the prosperous Jewish merchants of New Orleans to go through the wringer, a victim of overextension and speculation, high living and incautious investments. From what we know, he was probably worth more on paper, when he was sold out by his creditors, than Touro was. The auctioneers' advertisement of the sheriff's sale listed Hart's major possessions:

> "One Half of the schooner Marsouin, measuring about 25 tons burthen.
>
> A double Hydraulic, or Water [Cotton] Press, situated at the corner of St. Charles and Gravier streets.
>
> A Horse Press and a Hand Press [also for cotton], situated at the same place.
>
> A quantity of Sugar Pans, &c. viz:—40 sugar Pans, 2 Pivots and 1 Cylinder, at the corner of Custom-house and Rampart streets; 10 sugar Pans in the Fauxbourg St. Mary, on land belonging to Mr. [Millaudon].
>
> Three Horses and two Drays.
>
> An Admission Ticket to the French Theatre.
>
> Three Lots of Land, situated in the Fauxbourg St. Mary . . . in front of Poydras-street . . . together with the Two Houses erected thereon . . . weather boarded, and covered with short pickets.
>
> A Lot of Land, situated on the left side of the Bayou St. John, measuring about 120 feet, in front of the Bayou, and 132 feet on Mississippi street, together with the Buildings thereon erected, viz:—
>
> A House on Sills, filled between the posts, measuring 50 feet front by 50 feet in depth, containing four rooms on the ground floor,

> with a front and back gallery, and two closets on the back gallery.
>
> A Log Kitchen divided into two compartments.
>
> Also the following Property on the joint accounts of the said Insolvent and Mr. Charles Parent, viz:—
>
> The undivided half of a Lot of Land, situated on the further side of Lake Pontchartrain, in the parish St. Tammany . . . measuring superficially 2,657 arpents or thereabouts, together with all the Buildings and Offices thereon erected . . .
>
> Together with a moiety of the Stock, consisting of 4 horses, 5 oxen, 10 cows, and 15 sheep.
>
> Also the undivided half interest in [fourteen slaves listed by name and age.]
>
> Also, one half of the crop of Cotton, and one half interest in the boy Adam, aged about 15.
>
> Also, the undermentioned [thirteen slaves and a five-year-old slave child] employed in the Presses described above . . ."[20]

This inventory was incomplete in that it did not include Hart's cash assets, or the shares of stock of the Louisiana Insurance Company which he had purchased in 1820, or his personal effects.[21] But it does demonstrate the extent of his business activities and investments. In addition to the import-export business which he conducted with his brothers and which was not affected by this bankruptcy, he had built up one of New Orleans' indispensable cotton presses, was engaged in sugar refining, owned some income-producing property, and was half-owner of a plantation, of which his partner was probably the resident manager. Jacob had done well, indeed, for himself and for his brothers, but now eighteen or nineteen years' effort and hard work had gone down the drain. He had come to New Orleans to find his fortune, succeeded, and now had failed.[22]

Jacob Hart did not amount to very much after the 1823 bankruptcy. Shipments of merchandise came to him occasionally, but in 1831 and again in 1832 he was in such straits that sheriff's sales were conducted to dispose of some sugar kettles that he owned, and of a steamboat of which he was part-owner with his brothers Leon, Benjamin and Nathan.[23] He was probably supported by his brothers rather than through his own efforts. For many years, from 1826 into the 1840's, he held his brother Leon's power of attorney for investment purposes, and bought and sold slaves and part-interests in steamboats.[24] Meanwhile, Nathan and Benjamin conducted a cotton press business as Jacob's successors. Nathan, who in 1820 had been able to buy a slave only because of Jacob's countersignature and guarantee,[25] was listed in the 1830 census as owning fifteen male slaves (workers, probably in the cotton press), while Jacob owned none. The press and storehouse, constituting a number of buildings in the block bounded by Gravier, St. Charles, Common and Camp streets, burned to the ground in 1830. The estimate of the loss of the buildings, and of the twelve thousand bales of cotton which went up in smoke, amounted to three hundred thousand dollars, of which only forty thousand was covered by insurance. One newspaper reported that "the flames were discovered to burst out almost simultaneously on all sides of the square which leaves no doubt of its being the work of malicious design." There is no certainty that the brothers ever reestablished themselves in the cotton press business; within a few years they had left town. Only Jacob remained, continuing to manage affairs for Leon and Nathan; once in a while he conducted a little business for himself, as in 1839, when he advertised the availability of three houses for rent, but they too may have belonged to one of his brothers.[26]

Jacob was getting along in years, and was probably too tired and discouraged to undertake anything very substantial. It must have brightened his days, however, when he was joined by another member of his family after his brothers left. In the early 1840's his sister Hetty (Esther) and her husband Alexander Marks moved to New Orleans with their children and first grandchild. (Another granddaughter, named Ida, born in 1865, years after Jacob's death, eventually married Rabbi Max Heller of Temple Sinai in New Orleans. Their son, James, became one of the luminaries of the American Reform rabbinate, a distinguished leader in Zionist circles and gifted musicologist). Alexander and Hetty's son Isaac N. Marks was a well-known New Orleans civic leader in the ante- and post-Bellum years. It was Isaac Marks and another nephew of Jacob's, Ezekiel Salomon (son of Haym M. Salomon), who signed the invitation to Jacob's funeral in 1849. On balance Jacob's business career in New Orleans was fairly typical—ambition and success, disappointment and failure; it was illustrative of the high risk of commercial ventures in the town, of overexpansion, and of the danger of giving in to the temptation to invest in a plantation. But Jacob's career spanned the years from the early days of American occupation to the eve of the Civil War, when New Orleans had become the fourth largest city in the United States and its second busiest port.[27]

3. Maurice Barnett

Touro, Spitzer, Seixas and Hart were all native Americans; but hard on their heels came a number of foreign Jews who left Europe for a variety of personal reasons, yet all of whom were drawn to Louisiana by the promise of economic opportunity in their new home.

It is difficult to ascertain a specific date of arrival for most immigrants. The earliest references to them in local records may have been entered months or even years after their actual arrival. Maurice Barnett, for instance, first appears in the records of Baton Rouge, still part of Spanish West Florida, on April 13, 1806, when he witnessed the will of F. Bertin. But he may have been in the town somewhat earlier, for by July 30, 1806, he was sufficiently established to be married by Fray Juan Brady to Marie Céleste Trahan, daughter of Juan Trahan and Mara Josefa Le Jeune. Eight days prior to the wedding, Maurice purchased a lot of ground, twelve arpents below the fort, for 130 pesos; the document of sale does not refer to a building on the lot, but Barnett may have thought of erecting a home at that location.

This was probably not Maurice Barnett's first American experience. The likelihood is that he was the son of Lazarus Barnett, a Dutch broker, who settled in Philadelphia in late 1782 or early 1783, went into business with another Dutch Jew, Lyon Moses, joined Mikveh Israel Congregation, had business reverses and took off for London some time in 1784, leaving his creditors with the impression that he had not turned all his assets over to the syndics. Bankruptcy in Philadelphia was not enough trouble for Lazarus; he had similar problems in London in 1785. It has not been possible to discover anything else about his life in Great Britain, other than the record of his death on March 26, 1797, in the burial register of the Great Synagogue of London. Maurice had been born in Amsterdam on September 22, 1776, and was therefore six or seven years old when the family moved from Holland to Philadelphia, and twenty-one years old when his father died. The Barnett family has preserved the tradition that Maurice served in Napoleon's Grande Armée before coming to Louisiana. But in view of the years of residence in London, it would seem far more likely that any military experience which Maurice had undergone was in the British army. Maurice probably brought to Louisiana his younger brother Edward, who had been born during the family's brief stay in Philadelphia; Edward later married Modeste Ledoux of Opelousas.[28]

In Baton Rouge, Maurice Barnett was a typical merchant of the time. He was willing to trade in anything that a customer might want to buy. His accounts with one neighbor became the subject of a dispute, and are, therefore, much to our edification, listed in a court record. They cover the period from November, 1808, to April, 1810. This customer, an innkeeper and merchant, purchased the following merchandise from Barnett: food-stuffs—cheese, vinegar, salted mackerel, cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt, coffee; liquor—rum, gin, anisette, cider and wines; dry goods—three and a half ells of cloth, sewing thread, one-quarter ell of black velvet, one-half ell of another kind of velvet; miscellaneous—hardware, crockery, corks, buttons, furniture, cigars, nails, paper, pots, brooms and oars.[29] Barnett obtained most of his merchandise from suppliers in New Orleans, and sometimes fell behind in his payments to them; cash was always hard to find because much of his business was on the barter system.[30] Occasionally he was unable to collect any payment at all from a customer. One such recalcitrant was the fascinating Jean Fremont who had been teaching in Baton Rouge and left town suddenly; his effects were sold on December 19, 1806, and Barnett was one of the creditors who shared in the proceeds of the auction. Jean Fremont then found his way to Norfolk, Virginia, where he fell in love with a young married woman who divorced her husband, married him and became the mother of his son, the adventurer-explorer John Charles Fremont.[31]

On June 7, 1807, Barnett's first child, Maurice junior, was born. At this time, the Barnetts may have been living with Marie's family, but during the next year, Maurice bought and sold additional real estate, including a house which he purchased in June, 1808. It may have been this house which was repaired, or a totally new home which Barnett ordered Ralph Bell to construct for him. During 1807–1808, Barnett was employing a carpenter and brick-mason, buying and storing lime, and purchasing a pick-axe. All of this activity later became the subject of a greal deal of litigation but, presumably, resulted in the completion of Barnett's new home and store.[32]

Barnett had an excitable temper. In April, 1808, Frederick Arbour, the merchant-innkeeper at Fort San Carlos in Baton Rouge, came to court with the complaint that he had asked Barnett to work out an agreement for the settlement of their accounts, but Barnett "abused and insulted me, stating that he did not wish to settle any accounts with me." Governor Carlos Louis Boucher de Grand-Pré ruled that both parties should appoint representatives who would together compare the records of indebtedness and payment. Barnett's agent was given full and free access to Arbour's records, but when Arbour's arbitrator came to Barnett to examine his papers, Barnett "denied, without any reasonable excuse, the whole of the account . . . and moreover he flew into a rage, and it was impossible . . . to continue [the] work." Barnett was then compelled to come to court and to accept the recommendation of the intermediaries, namely, that he had to pay Arbour for one hundred stakes, four pots, a hoe, a quantity of lard, some empty bottles, and some wine and gin . . . everything else in both ledgers being cancelled out. We have already examined the record of Arbour's extensive purchases from Barnett. The latter, in turn, had been indebted to the innkeeper for sums of cash advanced to him, for meals, wine and liquor served at the inn, for the entertainment of guests at Barnett's expense (perhaps customers or business associates), for boarding the carpenter and bricklayer, and especially for meals, foodstuffs and even cash given to members of Marie's large family—"oranges . . . [and] apples given to your father [in-law];" "For the ball of his mother-in-law;" "For Joseph and Louis;" "Dinner for Louis;" "For account of David;" "For pancakes with Señor Trahan;" "For Young Trahan." The high cost of supporting his wife's relatives was reason enough for Barnett's temper, but he himself seems to have enjoyed fine food: he had a dinner for four "for the Mardi Gras," was a member of "la Société du banquou"—probably an eating club—for which he was host on occasion, and enjoyed crêpes and coffee at Arbour's many times. He was also indebted to Arbour for the rent of a pirogue, the hire of a skiff for eleven days and eight ferry passages. One fact worth noting is that Barnett was in greater need of hard money than Arbour; many guests at the inn must have paid cash for their rooms and meals, but Barnett's customers bought his merchandise on credit, or paid him in kind.[33]

Barnett was evidently not only a man of hot temper, but also of some strength and capacity for leadership. In August, 1808, the Governor was told by an informer of the projected scheme of three deserters from the United States Army, who were lurking in the area, to rob a New Orleans merchant who was coming upriver to Baton Rouge. Grand-Pré appointed Barnett leader of a posse to apprehend the criminals. Although his detachment included only four Negroes and a white man, Barnett swiftly located the deserters, and "I had the three of them tied together and delivered them at three in the afternoon in the Fort of Baton Rouge without any further happening worth mentioning." Barnett is described in the record of the ensuing trial as "commandant of the military expedition." This title was a trifle high-sounding, perhaps, but Baton Rouge was a frontier post without a military establishment. The Governor had to depend on a civilian militia, and who better to call upon than this British or French veteran?[34]

Barnett may have farmed some of the land he acquired, but since he did not invest heavily in slaves—there is only one slave purchase on record—it is unlikely that he had any serious intention of becoming a planter. Most of the records of his activity in Baton Rouge concern purchases at auction, and investments in and sales of real estate. In 1811, he joined eight neighbors in forming the first corporation in the area's history, a company whose sole purpose was to erect buildings on four lots which had been purchased at the auction of an estate. The investors probably had little faith in the future of the venture, for they named their corporation "Société de la Folie."[35]

The "Société de la Folie" was supposed to last twenty years. If it still flourished in 1831, Barnett had long since moved away from Baton Rouge. According to young Maurice's recollections in later years, the family was in New Orleans by 1812. The father had been, until then, the only permanent Jewish resident of Baton Rouge, probably its first, although the Monsanto brothers had lived and worked and traveled in and out of the area for a number of years, and, as we shall see, other Jewish merchants came to Baton Rouge, and one even may have had a branch store there. But Barnett was the only one who actually lived in the community for an extended period of time. Now he left for the big city, probably for economic reasons. A merchant would have far more opportunity in New Orleans than in Baton Rouge, especially since Baton Rouge no longer possessed the economic advantage of being a Spanish colonial outpost; in 1810 the local settlers had revolted against Spanish rule and established their own "Republic of West Florida," but the area was quickly annexed by the United States. If Barnett was to be an American, he probably thought he would be a more prosperous one in New Orleans.[36]

What the elder Barnett did for a living between the time of his move to New Orleans and 1830 is a matter of doubt. His name does not appear in newspaper advertisement or reports; if he was in business in New Orleans he was very quiet about it. His name continues to appear in a few Baton Rouge records, but these offer no evidence of his residence or full-time occupation.[37] It is possible that he worked for another merchant, or that he was learning the auction business in someone else's employ, or that he was traveling on the frontier. Young Maurice gives no clue, in his reminiscences, of his father's activities during this period. He reports only that he himself attended the College of Orleans when he was ten or twelve years old (it was really not even a high school), but left because of hazing by older boys, and was enrolled at Visigne's private school, where he was a student from 1817 to 1822. Maurice, Jr., was not the only son to receive a good education; two other sons—Edward (born in 1816) and Alphonse (born in 1823)—were trained to become members of that elite group of New Orleans notaries who were held in as high esteem as attorneys because Louisiana still followed the French system of legal practice.[38] In 1822, after he left school, young Maurice was apprenticed to a local merchant, then clerked with the dry goods firm of Solomon Soher and Daniel Goodman, whom we shall meet later, and, in 1825, opened his own retail store. Five years later the elder Maurice Barnett's name appears in the newspapers as a ship agent and as recipient of a shipment of specie from Mexico.[39] That same year, according to the son's recollections, "my father and I went to San Antonio, in Texas, on a trading expedition which proved to be a very profitable one, as we sold all the stock of nankeen, platillas, silks, satins, large silk shawls, etc., that we took with us. That region was, at that period, without stores." Perhaps this was what the elder Barnett had been doing throughout the years, traveling in the hinterland. Whatever his business, he had prospered. The 1830 census credits the family with eight slaves, five male and three female. Maurice's daughter Hélène, who was married to Sol Audler by then, had three female slaves and one male.

In 1831 the father opened an auction business which in time became one of the best-known in New Orleans. His sales were advertised in the newspapers almost every day. He was particularly active in the marketing of Louisiana and Texas real estate. In addition, he sold furniture and other household equipment, ships, houses and almost everything else imaginable. He was especially noted for his slave sales. The slaves were not his own property, of course; he was the agent for their owners. But, in time, his auction mart at the St. Louis Hotel—with his sign above it—"M. Barnett./ Office 40 St. Louis St."—came to be pointed out to visitors as a relic of slave days; and picture postcards of "The Old Slave Block," as it was called, were sold to the tourists who flocked to the exotic French quarter.[40]

Between 1836 and 1849, the Maurice Barnett father and son team conducted the auction business together, while Alphonse and Edward shared offices as notaries. After 1850, the elder Maurice retired from business, but young Maurice continued auctioneering, in association with his brother Lewis, with dry goods as a sideline.[41] Longevity was a distinction of the Barnett male line. The elder Maurice died just after his eighty-ninth birthday. The newspaper said that he had "enjoyed remarkably good health, and retained his mental powers until within a very short period of his death." Maurice the younger lived past his ninety-first birthday; "up to the very day of his death," reported a journalist, "his mental faculties were in nowise clouded, and his wonderful memory enabled him to recall the reminiscences of this city and state when this century was still young." Lewis, the youngest son, who was born in 1828, lived to the age of ninety. It was strong stock which Maurice Barnett Sr. had brought to Louisiana to merge with the French Catholic Trahans of Baton Rouge.[42]

4. Samuel Hermann

Much as Maurice Barnett first established himself in the Baton Rouge area before moving permanently to New Orleans, so Samuel Hermann made his earliest home on the German Coast, in St. John the Baptist Parish. The precise date of his migration to Louisiana is not given in any document, but it was some time before April 21, 1806, when he was married to Marie Emeronthe Becnel Brou in the St. John the Baptist Church at Edgard. Marie Emeronthe was a young widow whose first husband, Pierre Antoine Brou the younger, had died in April or May of 1802 after a marriage that lasted less than three years, but produced two sons. Samuel's first child, Samuel Edmond Hermann, later referred to as Samuel Hermann, Jr., was born on January 9, 1807. The elder Hermann was a native of Roedelheim, near Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany, the son of Louis Hermann and Eva Hirsch.[43]

The Becnel and Brou families had been in the German Coast area for several generations. Marie Emeronthe's great-grandfather, Ambrose Haydel or Heidel, had come to Louisiana as early as 1721, from the German Electorate of Mainz. The Becnel family arrived from London in the next generation. Thomas Becnel married a Brou girl in 1742; they were Emeronthe's grandparents. Her parents, Pierre Antoine Becnel and Madeline Haydel, were married in 1772. These people were modest farmers. We have no information about the reason for Hermann's decision to settle there, rather than in New Orleans. Perhaps he peddled among them, and thus met Emeronthe. She and Pierre had lived with the Brou family, so there was no farm for which Samuel had to take responsibility after their marriage. Since the German Coast is not too distant from New Orleans, it is possible that Hermann acted as agent for some merchant in New Orleans, perhaps Hart Moses Shiff, at whose wedding in 1813 Hermann acted as witness, and with whom he was on close personal and business terms for many years, or R. L. Rochelle, Shiff's partner, who served as godfather at the baptism of Samuel's second son, Louis Florian, who was born on February 27, 1810. When the 1810 census was taken, Samuel was living on the right bank of the German Coast, with four male children under ten years of age—Florestan and Valsin Brou, Emeronthe's two sons by Pierre Brou, and Samuel Edmond and Louis Florian,—in addition to four slaves. The only extant records of Hermann's early commercial transactions are slave sales in 1809 and 1811—these, together with his later banking and financial operations in New Orleans, lead to the conclusion that he was in some kind of trade during his residence on the German Coast.[44]

Samuel Hermann's earliest appearances in the notarial records of New Orleans also relate to slave trading. On May 14, 1813, he purchased a slave for $400; on April 19, 1814, he bought eighteen slaves from George Weinbrenner of St. John the Baptist Parish, for $10,000. In the latter bill of sale, Hermann is described as a "merchant, of this city." The previous year, Weinbrenner had borrowed $5,000 from Rochelle and Shiff, giving them a mortgage on his plantation as security for the loan. Plantation owners were always notoriously short of cash; only merchants and bankers could have five or ten thousand dollars available for loans. Hermann had probably begun his life on the German Coast as a petty trader, saved some capital, perhaps conducted a store in the area, and then moved on to New Orleans where there was greater opportunity for business expansion.[45]

Emeronthe and Samuel lost an infant in New Orleans on February 25, 1814. A third son, Lucien, was born late in the Edgard years or early in the New Orleans period of the family's residence, but no baptismal certificate can be located in either place. A daughter, Marie Virginie, was born on September 28, 1816. One of the witnesses at Virginie's baptism in St. Louis Church in New Orleans was Asher M. Nathan, with whom Samuel was in partnership from 1818 to 1823.[46]

Samuel Hermann concentrated on finance more than the typical import-export business of the time. He dealt extensively in loans, mortgages, bank stocks, bills of exchange and real estate. He acted as a broker for planters who needed advances on their future crops, and arranged for shipments of merchandise to them, but he appears to have been less concerned with wares and commodities than with credit. He was a merchant banker of the period, a private banker, who engaged in financial transactions locally and throughout the world. But at one time or another he owned ships, two of which were named the *Hermann* and the *Florian.* His field of operations ranged from Lisbon to Hamburg and Gothenburg, from Liverpool to New York City, and from Tampico to the islands of the Caribbean. Hermann managed the affairs of other merchants, and, while Hart M. Shiff was away from town, took care of his interests. As quickly as he could, Hermann trained his sons and set them up in business. In 1828, when young Samuel was twenty-one, his father made him a partner; in 1833 they enlarged their operations by taking in two additional partners, F. W. Schmidt and John F. Oetzman. In 1834 the firm imported large amounts of specie from Mexico, $45,000 in June and $50,000 in November. By 1833 Lucien had become a partner in John Hagan and Company and earned $18,750 his first year; he later became a partner in the successor to Hagan's, Thomas Barrett and Company. Florian was a partner in Byrne, Hermann and Company, which made over $100,000 profit in 1833; in 1836, Florian was a member of a new firm, Hermann, Briggs and Company.[47]

The Hermann family was extremely prosperous. Already, in 1820, according to the federal census, ten slaves had served the household. In 1831, Samuel tore down the house at 820 St. Louis street in which he had lived since 1823, and built one of the showpiece homes of New Orleans. This mansion still stands today, and is used by the Christian Women's Exchange as a residence hall for single girls. It followed Yankee architectural patterns, rather than those of the French-Spanish Creole tradition. The elaborately carved Georgian doorway opens on a broad center hall which reaches back, beyond several high-ceilinged parlors on either side, to a gracefully curving stairway leading to the second floor. Past the stairs are doorways which lead from a broad veranda to an open courtyard, planted with shade and fruit trees and formal gardens. Among the outbuildings are a narrow, three-story structure which was used for bachelor visitors, the usual slave habitations and a large stable, the latter used now as a gift shop. Characteristic New Orleans galleries appear in front of the home over the entrance way, and at the rear of the second floor. Hermann paid $15,205 for the construction of the home, and an additional $5,000 for the three-story quarters in the rear. In this luxurious home, Carl Kohn, the nephew of Hermann's friend, Samuel Kohn, attended a party which he described in a letter dated March 7, 1833:

> ". . . By the by I must not forget to tell you of a most magnificent soiree M. Hermann gave last week, but was unfortunately very much thwarted by the weather, which that day, and that only one for a fortnight before and after proved most wretchedly bad, he was thus prevented of illuminating his court, and showing his Fireworks, which had already been prepared. But nevertheless out of three hundred and fifty persons invited, very few failed to come—it was no doubt the finest party that had ever been given here, his commodious house, splendid Furniture, and Mr. Hermann's own good *nack* giving him every facility of making it as agreeable as it could possibly have been made. . . ."[48]

A few weeks later Carl complained to his uncle Samuel, who was then living in Paris, that Marie Virginie was showing great coolness toward him. Samuel had sent Carl some music from

Paris, in response to Carl's importunate request, and Samuel sent two sets.

> "... I have communicated to Miss Hermann, that you wished her to play a duet with me, which you chose expressly to do in which she *acquiesced*, but only acquiesced—the fact Miss H. behaved most unaccountably cold to me ever since my return from Mobile, which rather startled me in the beginning and made me think that I must have made myself guilty of some gross neglect toward her. However I am now convinced that I could never have given Miss Hermann any serious cause for treating me with such marked coldness ... Were [she] a man, I would long have asked for an explanation but with a lady it is a delicate business. I may however yet question her about it, should I have an opportunity to play that duo with her. Mr. & Mrs. H. are as kind to me as ever, but you may well think that I can not visit the house as frequently and with as much pleasure as I otherwise might do. ..."

If the Hermann and Kohn families were hoping for a match between Carl and Virginie, they were disappointed. Virginie married Dr. Joseph Ursin Landreaux in St. Louis Church on January 28, 1835. Less than three weeks later, Samuel, Jr., married Eugénie De Buys, widow of Henri Hypolite Tricou. Florian had already been married, on December 25, 1830, to Adèle Longer, whose mother was a De Buys.[49]

A number of surviving portraits enable us to study members of the Hermann family at close hand. Dr. George de Tarnowsky of Wilmette, Illinois, owns a portrait of young Samuel which was painted by Vaudechamp in 1833; it portrays a handsome, cultivated, sensitive man. Dating from about the same time is a portrait of Emeronthe, dressed in the height of fashion, the property of another great-great-grandson, Mr. Pierre A. de Tarnowsky, president of the Armour Pharmaceutical Company of Chicago. Emeronthe stares with a sour frown at the stranger who stands before her; there is no grace or charm or warmth in her glance. Perhaps she had been beautiful when Samuel Hermann married her, but there is no touch of loveliness in this portrait, nor, indeed, in another which is in the possession of Mr. James Reiss of New Orleans, which probably dates from the late 1840's, after havoc had been wreaked in the family fortune; here, Emeronthe is an old, frowning woman, somewhat sad, resigned and weary. Her appearance makes one wonder if she ever felt any joy or love. Mr. Reiss's portrait of the elder Samuel, on the other hand, brings the onlooker into direct contact with a strong, virile, masterful man, who has worked and played hard, who grins at the world and its follies and pitfalls, and probably at his own illusions as well.

The Hermann men were fairly active civic leaders. In 1830, Samuel, Sr., was a member of a committee which raised a fund for the widows and orphans of the victims of the July revolution in France; his firm gave the highest amount, $100. In 1832, Samuel Hermann and Son contributed $50 to the cholera epidemic relief fund. In 1838, Samuel, Jr., served on a committee which solicited donations for the relief of those who were rendered destitute by the disastrous fire in Charleston. In 1833, Lucien was a manager of the Washington Birthday Ball which was held at the Orleans Ball Room, and the following year he served as one of twelve masters of ceremonies of a parade in memory of Lafayette, a cherished hero of the New Orleans population. In 1839, Lucien was appointed an aide-de-camp for military affairs by the Governor, but this was largely an honorary position which recognized social prestige rather than military training; the following year he served as a member of the Central Committee of Correspondence of the Louisiana Whig Party. In 1836, young Samuel was a member of a special grand jury which concluded its deliberations by recommending the construction of a new custom-house, and the establishment of a permanent military force in New Orleans to stand guard against the possibility of an abolitionist uprising. Florian's social and equestrian interests resulted in his election as a steward of the New Orleans Jockey Club in 1837. The elder Samuel does not seem to have taken any role in such matters, other than his membership in an anti-duelling society in 1834—probably more for the sake of his sons than for himself.[50]

Such public activities as these were clearly of secondary significance to the Hermann men. Business was their major concern. Despite their comparative youth, all three of the sons served as directors of banks and other financial enterprises. In

1832, Samuel, Jr., was nominated for a seat on the board of the City Bank; in 1834–36 he served as a director of the New Orleans Gas Light and Banking Company, and, in 1837, both he and Florian were members of its board. Lucien was nominated to the board of the Western Marine and Fire Insurance Company in 1832; in 1836 he served simultaneously on the boards of the Carrollton Bank, the Orleans Navigation Company and the new Exchange and Banking Company of which he was an organizer and commissioner. The Governor appointed Lucien to the board of the Union Bank in 1835, and in 1836, he and another Jew, Joachim Kohn, were elected directors of the Louisiana State Marine and Fire Insurance Company—two out of seven. Each of the brothers took his turn on the Arbitration Committee of the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce. Samuel, Sr., does not seem to have been interested in offices; those honors he turned over to his sons. But we may be certain that he enjoyed the uses of power.[51]

This prestige, prosperity and popularity did not erase the memory of his European family from Samuel's mind. In 1835 he returned to Germany to visit his relatives and to make provision for their maintenance. This is the report of a German magazine about his wealth and generosity:

> "RICHES—AN ORNAMENT OF THE RIGHTEOUS.
>
> Grand Duchy of Hesse, Sept. 3. A young Israelite, native of Roedelsheim, near Frankfurt, had gone to America as a commercial clerk 31 years ago, as the circumstances made it very hard for him to get on at home. Though arriving utterly destitute in the New World, he succeeded in amassing a great fortune by diligent industry, so that at present he finds himself at the head of the first commercial firm in New Orleans, Herrman [*sic*] & Co., and in possession of several million dollars. Some weeks ago he paid a visit to his old home for the purpose of providing for his numerous relatives. He has transferred to them each a sum of as much as 150,000 florins as capital so that they may expand their business activities, and in addition has made arrangements for those of his family's members, who need a rest on account of advanced age, to be given a considerable allowance regularly during their lifetime by a Frankfurt banking house. He has now gone back to New Orleans."[52]

Let us hope that all of Hermann's gifts were in cash, rather than promises, for soon he had no surplus funds to distribute to admiring German Jewish relatives. The financial excesses of the early years of the decade gave way, in 1837, to panic and depression; stability did not return to New Orleans' economy until 1842. Land speculation, the enormous increase in the state debt, an unreasonable expansion of the number of banks and the availability of banking credit, and the precipitous fall in the cotton market in England, conspired to make New Orleans one of the hardest hit of all of the financial centers of the United States. The shock waves of fiscal crisis began in England, traveled swiftly to New York, and then shook the foundations of wealth and commerce in New Orleans, foundations which were at least as insecure as those of London and New York. Lucien's firm, Thomas Barrett and Company, was one of the first to collapse; it was shattered by the bankruptcy of the New York City Jewish bankers, J. L. and S. Josephs, who in turn were destroyed by the tightening of their credit in London. S. Hermann and Son, and Hermann, Briggs and Company (Florian's firm) suffered some losses in the Josephs debacle, but both had worse problems. Theirs had been the only New Orleans firms to enjoy open credits of £10,000 with Barings for the purchase of cotton; this credit was withdrawn in 1837. In addition, the two firms had endorsed each other's notes, and had overdrawn their credit with the Gas Light and Banking Company, the most notoriously manipulated bank in the city, in which all four of the Hermann men wielded influence. Florian was in deeper trouble than his brother and father. The elder and younger Samuel Hermanns had liabilities of only $5,592.67 on their own notes, and $23,289.03 on notes which they had endorsed; but Florian's company had a deficit of $428,640.71 on its own notes, and $74,922.67 on notes which carried its endorsement. Both young Samuel and Florian had used their position in the Gas Light Bank to join everyone else in milking its resources.

It is not possible, because of the paucity of reliable information, to discover how much money each member of the family lost in this upheaval. Hermann, Briggs and Company, in which Florian was a partner, was in debt for six million dollars when it suspended payment in 1837. Their paper assets amounted to more than that figure, but the partners refused to drive their own customers into bankruptcy by pressing for payment. Month after month, Florian and his partner gathered in whatever funds they could, and transmitted them to the creditors; by June of 1839 they succeeded in reducing their indebtedness to two million dollars. But that September the bottom dropped out of the New Orleans financial structure again, and all of Florian's hopes disappeared in the ruins. He lost everything he possessed. The elder Samuel had reorganized his company in 1837 in an effort to stave off the plague of bankruptcy, but by 1840 he was in such dire condition that some of his real estate and stock holdings had to be sold at auction, for only a fraction of their value, and, in 1841, his beautiful home was also sold to satisfy his creditors. He had given some money to Emeronthe; she bought the home at a price far below its value, but it was too expensive to maintain, so she and Samuel decided to let it go. It was purchased by the notary Félix Grima, in whose family's possession it remained until 1921.[53]

The Hermann family's experiences following this financial disaster are difficult to trace in any detail. The elder Samuel and his wife probably had to live on the little they had saved from the debacle. Young Samuel and Florian must have gone to work for relatives or friends; they never again occupied business positions of importance or responsibility. Lucien became a notary, and used his knowledge of finance in his office of secretary of the Board of Presidents of Banks, which attempted to reorganize the shattered economic life of the city. Lucien remained active in Masonry, and served two terms as Grand Master of Louisiana, 1849 and 1850. Emeronthe died on March 11, 1851; the elder Samuel on June 3, 1853. It has not been possible to locate Samuel Hermann's will anywhere in the New Orleans area; perhaps his possessions were so few that he saw no point in framing any legal document. Virginie's husband died a few months after her father. She and Florian remained in New Orleans, Florian making a living in the cotton brokerage business. Lucien and the younger Samuel and his family moved to San Francisco about 1854—perhaps they had only been waiting for their father's death. Both of them worked as notaries in San Francisco. Lucien was a bachelor, but young Samuel's family grew from generation to generation. Two of his granddaughters married men who matched their great-grandfather in dynamic vigor, intellectual perception and personal charm: Chauncey Depew, Senator from New York, 1899–1911, and President of the New York Central Railroad, and Francis Griffith Newlands, brilliant attorney and Senator from Nevada, 1902–1917.[54]

5. SAMUEL KOHN, INCLUDING REFERENCE TO THE HEINE BROTHERS

We possess more information about the precise circumstances of Samuel Kohn's departure from Europe than about any other European Jew who came to New Orleans in this early period; this good fortune is due to the fact that Samuel's sister Resie married an uncle of Lucien Wolf, the distinguished British Jewish historian, who wrote about Samuel Kohn in one of those intimately personal essays which historians so rarely publish. The Kohn family lived in the village of Hareth in Bohemia; Sam, says Wolf,

> "was known all over the country side as a good-hearted, hare-brained ne'er-do-well, fond of the tavern and the lassies, and fonder still of a game of cards . . . One day the news ran through Hareth that Samuel Kohn had disappeared. He had last been seen drinking and gambling with strangers in the *Gast-haus*, and, after some high words, had tramped off . . . a picture of abject misery . . . It seems that he had been cheated of everything he had in the world by a gang of cardsharpers. When he left the tavern with empty pockets, he felt he could not again go home to the poverty-stricken cottage in the wood and confess his follies to his long-suffering mother, so he turned his steps in the direction of the county town, and thence tramped northward all the way to Hamburg. He worked his way on a sailing vessel to New Orleans. . . ."[55]

It was not auspicious that Samuel's earliest appearance in New Orleans was as co-owner of an inn at Bayou St. John, in July, 1806, where the public was promised "the best of liquors." Sam and H. Labruère, his partner, announced that "separate rooms may be had for private parties" in their "house of ENTERTAINMENT," and that "every care and attention will be observed to render the house agreeable to those who may visit it." But perhaps this was the only thing that Sam knew how to do—and instead of frittering away his time with boon companions in drinking parties and gambling sprees, he had determined to earn his living by putting his experience to work in an establishment in which others could enjoy such pleasures.[56]

But Kohn must have been in Louisiana for a number of months and even possibly years to have accumulated enough capital to have become Labruère's partner. No information is available about his prior activities in the area, and nothing is known about his life during the next few years other than that by 1808–1809 he had earned enough money to purchase property in Rapides Parish to the northwest of Baton Rouge. Two parcels of land which he had bought at that time brought $1,200 and $1,600 when he sold them in 1816. Even allowing for a dramatic rise in the value of land, the young Bohemian had done very well during his first few years in Louisiana. Unfortunately the parish records have been destroyed, making any investigation of Kohn's other transactions in the area impossible; the only surviving notation of these land investments of 1808–1809 is the record of their subsequent sale in the New Orleans notarial archives. Kohn's next appearance in the archives is in 1810, when he contracted with a builder to construct two houses in the Faubourg Marigny of New Orleans, of a design similar to that of the adjacent structures which Kohn had recently purchased. Kohn was to pay the contractor $1,200 and transfer to him a lot in Alexandria. Later in the same year Kohn loaned out $1,112 in exchange for a mortgage on a house and lot on Bienville street. In 1812 his name appears in the records as the endorser of two notes for a total of $402.[57]

These early transactions established the pattern of Kohn's role in the commercial life of New Orleans until he moved to Paris in 1832. He was a banker—money lender—investor—real estate promoter—financier. He lent money on interest, but frequently had to sue to get it back, or had to put his creditors in the hands of receivers. The courts often designated him as the trustee of the property of bankrupted merchants. He endorsed notes for clients, and thereby earned a commission for himself. He built dwellings and business structures throughout New Orleans, and was one of the major promoters of suburban construction. From a penniless Bohemian immigrant, a wastrel in his village, he became, through wit, grit and acuity, one of the wealthiest financiers in New Orleans, worth more than $400,000 at the time of his death in Paris on May 18, 1853—and this was the residue after more than twenty years of retirement, and the sharing of his substance with his many relatives. Whether it was the humiliation of being unable to face his family, or the hardship of coming to a strange new country as a friendless immigrant, Sam had learned his lesson well. He was obviously a man of native talent; once he made up his mind that he would not again bear the burdens of shame and privation, he promptly found the road to success. Kohn's portrait on wood, now in the possession of his great-great-grandnephew, Maunsel White Hickey of New Orleans, reveals a strong, firm, determined countenance—that must, of necessity, have been his personality. Kohn was single-minded in his pursuit of fortune; only a few records point to his participation in community affairs. He served as treasurer of a Masonic lodge in 1823, and acted as a member of the committee of arrangements for a political dinner in 1831. His name appears in a published list of philanthropists only once, but on that occasion, when a fund was being raised to assist families whose bread-winners had died during the cholera epidemic of 1832, he gave more than any other citizen, $1,000. In 1829 he served as president of the Orleans Navigation Company; but this was primarily business, because he was the leader of a group of stockholders who voted the incumbent officers out of power and supported the idea of selling the business to the state. These are the only references to Samuel Kohn's public interests which we have been able to discover.[58]

Lucien Wolf did not record when Samuel first notified his family that he had come to New Orleans, and succeeded in establishing himself on a firm footing, but it was probably fairly early in his career. In view of what we know about his generosity towards his family in later years, he probably began sending funds to them as soon as he could. When his brother Joachim was nineteen or twenty years old, in 1819 or 1820, Samuel brought him over to New Orleans. Either because Joachim was not interested in finance as much as in mercantile pursuits, or because Samuel wanted him to obtain experience in various forms of commerce, Joachim was set up in the commission brokerage line with a series of partners, ending up with J. A. Bordier in 1826.[59] Kohn and Bordier was a characteristic business of the time. It was the New Orleans agent for some shipping lines, owned a number of ships in its own name, and handled cargoes to and from ports near and far, on the Mississippi River, in the Caribbean area, on the Atlantic seaboard and in Europe. Among its imports were wines, coffee, cigars, beeswax, dry goods which were "suitable for the Mexican market," mahogany, logwood, tobacco, straw hats, beef hides, deer skins and specie. Trade between Mexico and New Orleans, during this period, was basic to the city's economy: in exchange for consumer goods of every sort, ships brought back mahogany, logwood and Mexican coinage in huge amounts. Kohn and Bordier did not have to grow as gradually as other firms; although Samuel was not a working partner in the business, he undoubtedly invested large sums of money with Joachim.

After Samuel Kohn moved to Paris in 1832, Joachim held his power of attorney and acted as his agent, buying and selling property, building more homes and stores, suing debtors; he also seems to have continued Samuel's business, although, in 1835, he organized a new firm. Joachim represented Samuel's interest in the expanding suburb of Carrollton, of which Laurent Millaudon, Touro's one-time associate, was also a major developer. During the booming thirties Joachim was a member of more boards than any other Jew; he was a director of the New Orleans and Carrollton Rail Road Company, the Carrollton Bank, the Louisiana State Marine Fire Insurance Company, and the Mechanics' and Traders' Bank. Obviously Joachim did not need to follow in his brother's footsteps; he began life in New Orleans without having to undergo any of the hardships which stood in Samuel's way. His portrait by Vaudechamp, painted in 1836, which Mr. Hickey has presented to the Louisiana State

Museum, reveals little of Samuel's rugged strength; Joachim's face is handsome and sensitive; his eyes are thoughtful and compassionate; his appearance is that of the romantic dreamer, or a scholar.[60]

On June 22, 1834, Joachim was married to Marie Thalie Martin, the nineteen-year-old daughter of a fashionable French physician. The wedding was solemnized in St. Louis Church by Abbé Moni, "with the dispensation of the impediment of mixed religion given by Msgr. Antoine Blanc, Vicar General Administrator of this diocese."[61] Joachim and Marie had three children. Little is known of the eldest, Samuel Arthur (probably named for Uncle Samuel), other than that he was born on November 13, 1835, although he was not baptized until May 9, 1838, and that he lived most of his life in Paris where he died in 1909 or 1910. The second son, Joseph Gustave (March 18, 1837–September 7, 1906), was a distinguished student of Louisiana natural history who gave Tulane University his magnificent collection of more than 6,600 specimens of birds, fish, reptiles, mammals, crustaceans, mollusks, insects and plants. The third child, Amélie, married Armand Heine (a cousin of the poet Heinrich Heine), who came to New Orleans with his brother Michel in 1842 to open up a commission and banking business which was, in 1854, estimated to be worth as much as $600,000.[62]

Armand's brother Michel also married a New Orleans girl, Marie Céleste Amélie Miltenberger, who grew up in a home on Royal street next to Joachim Kohn's—perhaps it was in Joachim's home that they met. They were married in St. Louis Church on April 5, 1853, "dispensation obtained from ecclesiastical authority for the difference of worship." Both Heine families moved to Paris about 1866. In 1875, Michel's daughter, Marie Alice Heine, married the Duc de Richelieu; after his death she married Alberto, Prince of Monaco, Duke of Valentinois, Marquis of Baux and Baron of Bois and Calvinet, to name a few of his titles. This marriage of Grace Kelly's predecessor on the throne of Monaco lasted from 1889 until 1902, when it was dissolved by divorce. Marie Alice, one of the first American-born women to marry into European nobility, was a Catholic, not a Jewess, but her father remained a Jew all his life and, even after he moved to Paris, maintained his interest in the Jewish Children's Home of New Orleans.[63]

Samuel Kohn left New Orleans before the panic of 1837; most of his funds seem to have been safely invested in real estate. Joachim's business survived the worst of the storm, but his firm was in some difficulty in 1842. After his wife's death the following year, Joachim seems to have abandoned business pursuits in his own name, and to have devoted himself mainly to the conduct of his brother Samuel's affairs in New Orleans, and to the education of his children. He moved back and forth across the Atlantic between New Orleans and Paris, and died in France in 1886. Whatever Joachim had to give his children, Uncle Samuel left each of them $66,500. Samuel died in Paris on May 18, 1853, and was buried there, although his name appears on the family tomb in New Orleans. He also left money to three other persons of interest.

One of these was Delphine Blanchard Marchegay, formerly of Saint-Domingue, who was Samuel's housekeeper in New Orleans, and probably his mistress. She remained in New Orleans for a little while after his move to Paris, then joined him there. His bequest to her was an annuity of $800 a year, which Marie Amélie Kohn Heine undertook to pay each year so that the property in New Orleans could be sold, and the estate distributed. Delphine lived to the age of eighty-five; she died in Paris on January 8, 1877, twenty-three years after Samuel.[64]

Another important heir mentioned in Samuel's will was Edouard Kohn, son of Samuel's brother Simon, whom Samuel brought from Bohemia to Paris in 1847, at the age of twenty-two, and helped establish in the banking business. Edouard became a distinguished Frenchman, a member of that remarkable circle of Parisian Jews—wealthy, cultured and philanthropic—led by the Rothschild family, of whose hospital he was a director. Edouard himself married into the powerful banking family of Von Embden (who were also related to the Heine family), and his children married into the Weisweiller, Meyerbeer and Bischoffsheim families—one almost feels required to refer to them as dynasties, although all of them originally began much as the Kohn family did, in abject poverty. Edouard was the only member of the Kohn family to become a leader in Jewish and nonsectarian philanthropies; these activities were one reason that the French government conferred the Legion of Honor upon him in 1873.[65]

A third heir of Samuel Kohn carried on the family tradition in New Orleans. He was Carl Kohn, another nephew, who was brought to New Orleans by Samuel in 1830 or 1831. Maunsel White Hickey, his great-grandson, owns Carl's letter book, from which we have already quoted; this manuscript volume contains fair copies of letters which Carl wrote to his Uncle Samuel in Paris from June 10, 1832, to December 18, 1833. They reflect the bright, eager, ambitious and attractive personality of this youth of sixteen or seventeen who had grown up in the crude, unsophisticated environment of a Bohemian village where, he says, his "younger years were passed unworthily and in ignorance." Apparently without any secular education before he was brought to New Orleans, in a very brief time he became conversant with English, French and Spanish, learned to play the flute and fire the pistol, developed the social graces of an old-line New Orleans aristocrat, and voraciously devoured everything he could discover about merchant banking and commission brokerage. In the style of the time, he went to work for Merle and Company as a junior clerk, and spent long hours at tedious tasks, but when summer came, unlike other young men who had to earn their living, he was able to take a vacation in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, for several months, so that he could escape the heat and the ever-threatening epidemics. He developed a strong interest in politics and included information about important public events in his letters to his uncle. Because of his Uncle Joachim's social position, he gained entree into the finest homes, but it was his own gift of warmth which secured for him a host of friends among younger and older people alike, and constant invitations to the fashionable balls and parties.

Carl took himself very seriously, for all his desire to taste every aspect of the social life of New Orleans. He admitted that his ambition could be regarded as selfish, but he believed that it was his primary responsibility to take advantage of every opportunity "of getting along in the world." And get along he did. In 1835 Joachim dissolved his partnership with Bordier and took Carl into his business. In 1839 Carl was elected to the board of directors of the Atlantic Insurance Company, the first of a series of steps which brought him, ultimately, in 1871, to the presidency of the Union National Bank. During the intervening years, he engaged in a variety of enterprises which involved trade with Mexico, the marketing of western produce, cotton, sugar and molasses, and diverse forms of investment. He was an example of the nineteenth-century capitalist who sought opportunities for profit in many forms of raw materials. Through depression, panic and war, he continued to build his fortune; there was always a place in the economic scheme of things for this clever, personable man.

On June 27, 1850, in a ceremony performed by the famous Parson Clapp, Carl married into one of the "finest families" of New Orleans; his bride was Clara White, the daughter of Maunsel White, a wealthy commission broker turned planter, and Héloïse de La Ronde, daughter of Pierre Denis de La Ronde II, a distinguished Creole who had been a major general at the Battle of New Orleans. When Carl died on August 27, 1895, the newspaper reported that he was "one of New Orleans' most respected citizens . . . a man of fine intelligence, thoroughly educated, widely read, and transparently honest." After his retirement from business, the reporter said, he had spent his time in his "elegant home on the corner of St. Charles and Julia streets, surrounded by the best and most cultured society, and in the companionship of his beloved books." The emphasis on learning, culture and books is worthy of comment; Carl had come a long way from the untutored origins of the Bohemian village in which he was born and spent his early years.[66]

Samuel Kohn returned to that village in 1833, after he had established his residence in Paris. His father had died on January 18, 1831, but his mother may still have been alive. There were large numbers of relatives to greet him on his arrival. Carl responds ecstatically, in his letters from New Orleans, to his Uncle Samuel's description of his generosity to the members of the family, and to every detail of the visit: "I take a lively interest as you may well think in all your details about our dear relations, your dispositions with regard to them, & that they are now comfortably settled." Lucien Wolf's description of Samuel's arrival, probably interlaced with some fancy, reflects some of the feeling of wonder which the former "ne'er-do-well" created in the village:

> "One morning in the 'thirties the whole of Hareth was thrown into a paroxysm of the most intense excitement by a story which a peasant had brought into the village. Late in the preceding night he had been passing the widow Kohn's cottage, when there suddenly drove up to the door a capacious travelling carriage drawn by six horses, and attended by four black servants in gorgeous liveries. A 'gentleman of noble presence'—so said the peasant—had alighted and entered the cottage, and the black servants had followed with the baggage, which included a mysterious hogshead. The yokel had afterwards peered through the window and had seen—so he averred—the hogshead opened in the presence of the widow, and—he swore it by all the saints—it was full to the brim of newly-coined gold. . . ."[67]

Even if there was no hogshead full of gold, there could have been one, or for that matter, several. Whether Samuel Kohn dazzled his mother and relatives with real gold, or merely made arrangements for regular payments of cash to them, so that their need for food, clothing and shelter would be met, really makes no essential difference. Some happiness was brought to his poor Jewish family eking out its life in that remote Bohemian village through the opportunity for wealth and success which New Orleans had offered to Samuel Kohn.

6. Ruben Levin Rochelle and Hart Moses Shiff

On October 19, 1807, the *Orleans Gazette and Commercial Advertiser* carried the following notice:

> "Received by the late arrivals from Philadelphia, and for sale by the subscribers, An Assortment of black silk velvet Ribbons, figured, striped and plain, suitable for the Spanish market. Also VIOLINS and VIOLIN STRINGS, assorted.
>
> R. L. Rochelle & Co.
> No. 9, Bienville street."

Rochelle had been in New Orleans for at least four months, probably longer, for on June 16, 1807, he had sold a slave to two French Louisianians. Rochelle was a peppery fellow. In 1810, the report was circulating that he was about to go bankrupt. He demanded to know the name of his slanderer from Mossy, the auctioneer who was quoted as having repeated the story, but Mossy refused to divulge it. Rochelle thereupon wrote an advertisement for the newspaper, and publicly denounced "the person acting in this base manner" as "a wretch devoid of feeling" and "a scoundrel." "The epithets of a liar and a base man are justly his attributes," said Rochelle, "and the midnight robber, is innocent when compared to him, who, under a mask stabs a man's character." To prove to his creditors that he would not leave them in the lurch, he invited them to present their bills to him for immediate payment. Rochelle also had an opportunity to demonstrate his courage in personal combat. The newspaper reported, in 1810, the details of this event:

> "PROTECTION!
>
> "Last night one of the City Watch was using very insolent language to a gentleman's family, Mr. Rochelle was passing, and on hearing such outrageous abuse, he ordered the fellow to be silent and to go away; in place of obeying Mr. R. he turned his abuse upon him. Mr. R. provoked at his insolence, gave him a gentle chastisement and sent him off; soon after, Mr. R. having returned to his own house, the same fellow and another of the City Watch, both armed with *dirks* and *swords*, knocked at his doors and demanded admittance, threatening him with *death*—he fastened his doors and armed himself with a sword—they forced open the gate and attacked him—he defended himself against them both, until his neighbors flew to his assistance . . . Had Mr. R. been a weakly small man, in all probability, he would have [fallen] by the hands of these assassins."

The next issue of the paper retracted the statement that the attackers were city guards; all the more did Rochelle have reason to be grateful that he was not a "weakly small man," if they were just ordinary ruffians.[68]

How does a Jew in the first decade of the nineteenth century come to have a name like Rochelle? Every sort of possibility had occurred to this writer: that he was a Sephardic French Jew; that he had passed through La Rochelle on his way from Europe to America; that it was his wife's maiden name. Rochelle never married, however, and with the first name Ruben could not have been Sephardic. Had he not left bequests to his brothers in Europe we might have known nothing of his origins. His will presents us with enough information to hazard a guess about his change of name; his brothers were "Maritz & Bernahard Rothschild now Residing in the City of Hamburg in Germany." According to his estate papers, Ruben himself was born in Hamburg on August 15, 1780, the son of Levin Jacob Rothschild of the "English Plank in this City, merchant," and his wife Handel, daughter of Joseph Heilbut, who were married on June 1, 1775. The name Rothschild is very difficult for French-speaking people to pronounce, unless it happens to be the name of a family of wealthy bankers who are elevated to the aristocracy. But Ruben came to Louisiana too early for people there to have heard of the financial wizardry of *the* Rothschilds; they must have pronounced it "Rochelle" so often that he decided to change it for convenience' sake. This is all supposition, of course, and the change of name may have taken place in France, if indeed Ruben worked there for any period of time before coming to New Orleans.[69]

At the time of Rochelle's first business activity in New Orleans, it was standard commercial procedure for a firm's public name to be that of its owner; if he had an active partner, both names were used. But if he had a silent partner, or had secured the financial support of someone in another town, the words "and Company" would be added to his name. We do not know who Rochelle's partner or partners were. Perhaps his father and brothers had invested in his venture. Perhaps it was the "Worthy old Friend Charles H. Rodbertus, now a residence near Rostock in Mecklenburg," to whom he left ten thousand Spanish dollars in his will—although this man may not have been a merchant at all, but the professor of Roman law whose son Johann Karl became a famous economist. Perhaps it was a relative or friend in Philadelphia where he had many suppliers and where he died on September 1, 1824. This partner may even have been the man who, in 1810, became his publicly known associate, Hart Moses Shiff.

Shiff was in New Orleans by February 17, 1810, at the latest; on that date he and Rochelle paid off a debt to Leonard Wiltz.[70] Shiff was a member of one of the most distinguished Jewish families of Europe; its lineage is traced back, in Frankfurt-am-Main, to Jacob Kohen Zedek Schiff, a fourteenth-century rabbinical judge. The name "Schiff" probably came from the German word for "vial," possibly used as a sign for the shop of an apothecary. The family was renowned for its rabbinic scholarship—the greatest merit in European Jewish life. Among its men of note were Rabbi Meir Schiff, known as Maharam, author of a widely used Talmudic commentary, who lived from 1608 to 1644; David Tevele Schiff, who was Chief Rabbi of England from 1765 to 1792; and David Tevele's nephew, Nathan Adler, another Chief Rabbi of England. The Schiff family lived in the house in the Frankfurt ghetto which had the sign of the "Green Shield" on it; they sold their half of the building to the Rothschild "Red Shield" family as late as 1784. Our Hart Moses was born in Frankfurt, probably in that "Green Shield" house, in 1779 or 1780, some little time after the death, on March 15, 1779, of his grandfather Herz Joseph Schiff, for whom he was named. Hart's parents were the merchant Moses Herz Schiff and Brainle Schwab. Moses Herz Schiff, the father, had a brother named Jacob Schiff, who died on October 20, 1843, for whom a grandson was named Jacob Henry Schiff. This Jacob Schiff emigrated from Frankfurt to the United States after the Civil War, and became the outstanding American Jewish leader of his time. Grown wealthy through the success of Kuhn, Loeb and Company, the banking firm which he headed, he gave lavishly of his means to the Hebrew Union College, the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, Temple Emanu-El of New York City, and the Jewish Publication Society of America, whose first English translation of the Bible was endowed by him.[71]

All of that, however, was past or future. Family relationships, traditional Jewish scholarship, and strong religious values obviously had no hold on a young man who was willing to travel so far as the Louisiana frontier to make a new life. Hart Shiff's anglicization of his last name was probably symptomatic of his impatience with the past and his determination to find a more rewarding life than that of the crowded Frankfurt ghetto with its still galling restrictions on its Jewish inhabitants. In New Orleans, Shiff and Rochelle swiftly established an active and prosperous business. From the time their partnership began, they were altogether inseparable in business—no independent ventures or interests are recorded in their names. They followed the sort of commission brokerage-merchant banking pursuits with which we have already become familiar: ship agencies; mortgages on property; advances to planters; cargoes of imports for retail and wholesale trade; shipments of Louisiana cotton, sugar and tobacco to the Atlantic ports and Europe. They endorsed notes, represented European merchants, erected their own tobacco warehouses, bought and sold real estate, and owned shares in steamboats, banks, insurance companies and other capitalist ventures. Their cargoes came to New Orleans from Liverpool, Hamburg, Altona, Bremen, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, New York and Philadelphia. They were prosperous and respected enough to hold a seat on the board of the Louisiana State Bank between them.[72]

The partnership might have gone on for many years, but Rochelle fell ill in 1824, and, in hope of regaining his health, retired from business and left New Orleans. Whether he intended to return to Europe or to live in Philadelphia cannot be ascertained, but it was in the latter city that he died on September 1, 1824. When the news arrived in New Orleans, the newspaper made haste to transmit it to the public:

> "DIED—At Philadelphia, on the 1st of September, MR. R. L. ROCHELLE. He was buried from Mrs. Carr's, and every requisite honor paid to his remains. The Exchange of New-Orleans will miss him much—on all public exigencies his purse was open—active and industrious in business, his acquirements enabled him to contribute to public amusement—and there were none who contributed more freely. We shall leave it to his particular friends

> to write his obituary. We only express the feelings that his loss excites at the moment."

What contribution he made to public amusement was never described in any detail, nor did any friend offer a more personal tribute. Perhaps Rochelle had been a violinist or pianist—he advertised an inordinate number of musical instruments in his early business years. The names of his closest friends are revealed in his designation of three of the most prosperous Yankee merchants in New Orleans as his executors—William Montgomery, Stephen Henderson and Judah Touro. To "my Old and worthy Friends Wm. Montgomerys youngest son August," he bequeathed $10,000. Perhaps he was particularly attached to this boy because he had no children of his own.[73]

The main burden of settling Rochelle's estate fell on Shiff's shoulders, because so little time had elapsed since their decision to divide their property. The reports of Rochelle's assets in the probate papers were drawn up in Shiff's countinghouse. It was several years before everything could be wound up; one debt which took years to collect involved the bankrupt Vincent Nolte of *Anthony Adverse* renown, the French firm of Charles Martineau and Son, and Senator Josiah Stoddard Johnston. Rochelle's brother, Maritz Rothschild, was forced to sue in the Louisiana courts for the settlement of other outstanding accounts. When Rochelle's affairs were finally brought to a conclusion, the estate was valued at $147,283.91, and included some slaves, a brick house and four lots on the Batture at the Faubourg St. Mary, and $127,980.41 worth of stocks and notes for loans. In that period before the frenzied speculation of the 1830's, Rothschild/Rochelle had amassed a modest fortune in New Orleans in less than twenty years, and he was spared the misery and humiliation which were the lot of so many of his friends who were destroyed by the thundering financial crisis which began in 1837.[74]

Shiff had been married on December 11, 1813, in St. Louis Church, to Marguerite Basilique Chessé, daughter of Jean Jacques Chessé and Marie Madeleine Plauché. They had at least eleven children, of whom four died in childhood. After Rochelle's passing—although he continued the business for some time—Shiff gradually withdrew from daily commercial activity, and began to travel with his wife and children. They were in New York City and Philadelphia in the summer of 1827, and in Europe in 1828. In May, 1830, they again went to Europe by way of Baltimore, stayed in Frankfurt until the following May, and then moved on to Paris. Shiff and Evariste Lauve were partners in a plantation in Iberville Parish, but Hart never worked at farming. His interests tended more in the direction of the North and beyond, to Europe. Perhaps it was Ruben's early death from the debilitating effect of living too long in the New Orleans climate; perhaps Shiff had owned a larger share of the business and therefore did not need to give his constant attention to business matters; perhaps it was Basilique's yearning for the glamor of life in Paris; perhaps it was Shiff's desire to take advantage of the educational opportunities which France would afford to his children; perhaps it was simply that all wealthy Creole families in New Orleans regarded France as their true homeland. It may have been a combination of these factors which led Hart away from New Orleans and helped him escape the debacle of 1837. Carl Kohn wrote to his Uncle Samuel, on December 18, 1833, that "Mr. and Mrs. Shiff have taken rooms at the American Hotel—I do not think Mrs. S. will enjoy much her residence in this place again, separated as she is from her children & the amusements and excitements of Paris." At any rate, by the early 1840's, Hart's son Edward, now become a notary, had assumed total responsibility for his father's affairs. He held his power of attorney and bought and sold property in his name; in 1844–45, after the economic life of New Orleans was again on an even keel, Edward, acting for his father, and Joachim Kohn, on behalf of Samuel Kohn, sold so much real estate which the two men had owned jointly, that they used specially printed notarized forms to save the work of filling in all of the details in the usual documents.[75]

Hart Shiff died in New York City on February 26, 1851; he and his wife had probably chosen that city for their home because it was a half-way point between New Orleans and Paris, in both of which cities their children lived. Shiff was worth more than $800,000 at the time of his death. His estate listed $86,141.34 in cash; $383,125 in real estate, mostly in New Orleans and vicinity; and $225,387 in stocks and bonds. This was all quite aside from many thousands of dollars worth of uncollectable notes from bankrupted friends and associates, and worthless shares of stock in companies and banks which had collapsed during the late 1830's and early 1840's. Unfortunately, his affairs were so complicated, and his children and children's children so numerous, that the estate had still not been settled when the Civil War began; this, of course, reduced its value in many ways.[76]

The Civil War created other problems for Hart Shiff's family. His son Henry volunteered for service as an Assistant Surgeon with the 10th Regiment of Louisiana Infantry, and was captured at the Battle of the Wilderness. He was taken to the old Capitol Prison in Washington, and, after he took the oath of allegiance, was given his parole, and joined his mother in Paris. By October, 1864, Basilique had somehow prevailed upon Orville Browning, the former Senator from Illinois, to intercede with President Lincoln to permit Henry to withdraw his oath. Browning wrote up the problem in his diary:

> "Henry's father, who is now dead, once lived in New Orleans and had invested in Southern stocks, and loaned money on mortgages, and there is a large indebtedness from the rebels to the family, who are now in Paris. Shiff himself is in Paris with his mother. She is afraid if the rebels find out that her son has taken the oath of allegiance to this government they will confiscate her large interests in the South, and that she will be unable to collect any portion of the debts due the family there, and, therefore desires leave for him to withdraw his oath. . . ."[77]

Lincoln favored going along with Basilique and Henry; Secretary of State Seward was violently opposed to the accommodation. Browning records that Seward was "very much excited and was boistrous and profane." But Lincoln insisted that the request be granted, and so it was done. But there was trouble in New Orleans anyway. Henry's sister-in-law, Edward Shiff's widow, was accused of disloyalty to the Union. Her plantation was so close to Confederate territory that it was constantly raided by rebel bands, and the Federal officials suspected that she was encouraging the Confederate marauders to seize her harvested crops. After a lengthy trial, Emilie Shiff was cleared of the accusation.

Fortunately, Hart Shiff had not lived long enough to be compelled to decide whether he was really a European, a Southerner or an American. Nor did he leave any personal papers which might give us a clue to his feelings. He had spent close to thirty years in Frankfurt; less than twenty-five in New Orleans making his fortune; more than twenty years moving between New Orleans, New York and Europe. Although he was an American citizen in a technical sense, and probably never wished to be considered a German, the cosmopolitan atmosphere of New Orleans encouraged him to feel that America was too provincial, and that the real capital of the civilized world was Paris. He and Basilique would have felt a close affinity to the members of today's jet-set who move so freely from one continent to another and participate in a culture of wealth and pleasure which transcends national boundaries.[78]

7. Salomon S. De Jonge

Some of these personalities registered their activities and experiences in hundreds of newspaper advertisements, notarized deeds and personal documents. Others left only the briefest record of their passage. One of these was Salomon S. De Jonge, a Dutch Jew who first appeared in the New Orleans press in 1808 as a constable, signing a notice that he was about to seize some property, and would sell it at auction to pay its owner's debts. The work of a constable was only one aspect of the "Commission and Collection Line of Business" that De Jonge advertised. On July 13, 1808, he listed some of his stock as "200 barrels of coarse Salt, first quality, 100 of cargo Beef, 500 barrels of Rice, first quality, 65 fine Flour, 60 Pork, good quality." He also had for sale a "smart Negro wench, 17 years of age, warranted, with her child." He made his office at the Public Baths which Spitzer and Kursheedt had owned. "Through the medium of a respectable mercantile house of Philadelphia," he announced, he was able "to procure every article not to be found in this place," and solicited orders for all types of merchandise. He did some trading in Baton Rouge in 1812, which may indicate that he was busy traveling in the country as well as keeping his store in New Orleans.[79]

De Jonge's name does not appear in any of the census records; he apparently never owned a home where he would be listed as head of the household. He is listed, however, in the 1822 *City Directory* as a commission and exchange broker at 22 Toulouse street. The same year, J. S. De Jonge, who was probably his brother, died at the age of twenty-three, and was buried in the Protestant Girod Street Cemetery.[80]

In 1823 De Jonge was in business with Solomon Soher, a Jew from New York City whom we will meet again; this association did not last very long. De Jonge's next appearance in our sources was in 1838, when he became an incorporator of the New Orleans Philharmonic Society. The following year he signed an advertisement offering for sale a two-story home, a summer residence in Carrollton, a "fine young servant girl . . . handy at everything," and a French piano.[81]

We lose sight of De Jonge again until his death on July 7, 1852, at 229 St. Philip street. One friend testified that De Jonge was seventy-two years old, and was a native of Amsterdam; another reported to the Probate Court that Salomon had said about three years previously that he had not heard anything from his mother for a while. The friend guessed that De Jonge's mother had been dead for some time; this information was necessary before the estate could be settled. It amounted to about $7,000 and was divided into equal portions among the three heirs: the executor, Richard Fear Nichols; Alfred Hennen, a well-known attorney; and a woman named Rosalyn Eleanore. Salomon De Jonge was buried next to his brother.[82]

8. Asher Moses Nathan

The available source materials are not very enlightening about the business activities of early country merchants like Maurice Barnett, Samuel Kohn and Samuel Hermann. Luckily for us, but unfortunately for him, another Jew, Asher Moses Nathan, in partnership with Alexander Hart, was unable to pay his creditors in 1810. The papers relating to his case include a meticulous inventory of his property. Nathan and Hart had come up the Mississippi River to Baton Rouge from their headquarters in New Orleans, in early 1810, loaded with merchandise for sale in the surrounding rural area. They had with them twenty-eight trunks, seven bags, six boxes, five chests and some additional merchandise including a bolt of cloth. Once in Baton Rouge, Nathan sought out Maurice Barnett, and arranged for transportation to Bayou Sara in a pirogue which belonged to Barnett. Nathan or Hart, together with a number of clerks and helpers, stayed for twenty-two days in Bayou Sara in a building owned by Barnett, and then returned to Barnett's place in Baton Rouge. It was there, in March, 1810, that all of the merchandise was seized by the sheriff on the claim of the creditors, and sold at auction. They had begun this trip with $8,083.93 worth of goods. This traveling stock included a wide assortment of dry goods and notions to attract the attention of the farmers and their wives: blankets, flannel, cotton shawls, handkerchiefs, Madras, linen, cambric, muslin, towels, remnants, bombazette, cassimere, gingham, nankeen, gauze, cotton shirting, blue cloth, black velvet, brittany cloth, corduroy, worsted binding, calico, muslin robes, silk handkerchiefs, dimity, bed ticking, Marseilles cloth, silk suspenders, platillas, cotton hose, lace, night caps, silk gloves, cotton shirts, silk shawls, silk hose, ostrich feathers, ribbon, ticklenburg, red flannel, bagging, chambray, printed muslin, hats, parasols, umbrellas, wicks, looking glasses, shoes, ornamented combs, horn combs, metal and silver buttons, pins, needles, pocket books, watch seals, perfume, penknives, razors, fans, razor cases, and gold watches.

Whether the value of $8,083.93 which was placed on this tremendous quantity and variety of merchandise was wholesale or retail is unclear, but it was probably wholesale, since the goods were being inventoried for auction in quantity. Nathan and Hart's bills payable, dating back to May, 1809, amounted to a total of over $16,000. But with this great amount of merchandise in their possession, plus goods worth $6,052 in their store in New Orleans, and over $2,200 in accounts receivable, they were in no real difficulty. What had probably happened was that the partners had begun their ambitious operation with too little capital—some of their debts were simply loans of money—and too much merchandise to sell in a brief time. They therefore lost all their investment of money and time and energy. Not so Maurice Barnett: he did not have to wait for his payment, like the other creditors, until well into 1811. He was on the spot, and collected the $108 owing to him for services rendered to Nathan and Hart during the venture to Bayou Sara, as well as the $97 expense of conducting eight days of auctions at his store: the expense included two cases of gin, fourteen bottles of wine and two flasks of rum, which were dispensed to the prospective customers to stimulate their bidding.[83]

Asher Nathan had been born in Amsterdam about 1784, the fourth of seven children of Moses and Milko Nathan, on his father's side a descendant of that Nathan Nathan who was known as the *sofer*, the ritual scribe, of Amsterdam. Asher may have come to the United States about 1800 with his sister Catherine and her husband Hyam Harris, who were married in London in 1799. Asher was with them in Charleston no later than 1804. It may have been there or in London that he met his partner Alexander Hart, who was born in Portsmouth, England, in 1777. Hart and Nathan's accounts with their creditors in New Orleans go back only as far as May, 1809. We do not know how much earlier they had arrived there. Hart must have been frightened and dismayed by the failure, because he disappeared from view immediately. Nothing is known of his life until 1831, when he began his service as the cantor of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun of New York City. By then he had been married and widowed, and had at least one child, a son named Isaac. On July 26, 1836, in New York City, Hart was married to a New Orleans woman who was known as "the widow Kokernot," Betsy Levy Kokernot, who had come to New Orleans no later than 1820. Alexander gave his Hebrew name, to be inscribed on the religious certificate, as "Alexander the son of Master Yehudah who is called Hart," and Betsy, as "Billah the daughter of Master Nachman." Two officers of the New York congregation witnessed the wedding, which Alexander presumably conducted for himself. The couple set out for New Orleans, the scene of Alexander's disastrous venture of twenty-six years before, where, with Isaac's help, they enlarged Betsy's dry goods business. At the time of their marriage, Alexander was fifty-nine; the bride was forty-six. But New Orleans was not a lucky place for Alexander. He died in less than three years, on February 12, 1839, leaving Betsy a widow once more. We shall have reason to refer to Betsy later.[84]

Asher Nathan was less easily discouraged than Alexander. He continued to do business in and around Baton Rouge. Perhaps he stayed there because he had fallen in love. On March 24, 1811, he was married by Fr. Juan Brady (who had already married Maurice and Marie Barnett) to Margarita (or Marguerite) Dalton, the twenty-three-year-old daughter of Ana Burke and Valentine Thomas Dalton. Dalton first appears in the Spanish West Florida records in 1799 as a part-time interpreter and minor governmental functionary. A farmer and petty storekeeper at the time of his death on February 6, 1807, he owned three tracts of land to which the title was not clear, a few cabins, some merchandise of a trivial character (rolls of paper, padlocks, pencil cases, fans), an eighty-year-old slave and some livestock. Maurice Barnett had been appointed an appraiser for the estate. The livestock (eleven hogs, six cows and four bulls) and farm implements brought 167 pesos at auction; the other property went for 1,627 pesos. There was no purchaser for the sick, old slave. Dalton's debts ate up the proceeds of his estate.[85] But Marguerite had apparently been left some money by her mother. The day before she and Asher were married, they went before the Parish judge to record Marguerite's dowry of $5,000, and Asher promised that the sum would always be kept separate from his own property. In the record of Marguerite's estate, after her death on July 15, 1854, in Pass Christian, Mississippi, this amount was still listed as her own.[86] Antonio Gras, who had been chosen by Marguerite as her guardian after her father's death, sold her a lot of ground on July 26, 1811, for $300 and "in consideration of the natural love and affection" which he bore her. During the period from May, 1811, to August, 1812, Asher was busy buying and selling land and merchandise in the Baton Rouge area, but he was also traveling to and from New Orleans.[87]

Nathan had not lost everything in the venture with Hart, or he was using money provided by his Charleston relatives to reestablish himself. How else explain the fact that by December, 1812, accounts due to him totalled $2,354? We know this because his store in Baton Rouge was robbed, and, in his notice offering a reward for the return of his property, he listed, in addition to two damask table cloths and a piece of checked goods, a "Red Morocco Pocket Book" which contained business papers of that value. Among the notes, due bills and accounts were the following: notes for $202 and $200 executed by one Major Milton in favor of Samuel Kohn, endorsed by Rochelle and Shiff, who in turn endorsed them over to Nathan; an account of Maurice Barnett in favor of Jacob Hart for $56; a note from Maurice Barnett for $12; an account of David Hart against some merchants for $353, endorsed to Nathan; and a due bill from S. S. De Jonge for $54. Only Judah Touro and Samuel Hermann, among the early Jews in the area, are missing from this list of Nathan's commercial contacts, which includes, also, many non-Jewish merchants and customers.[88]

Beginning no later than 1813, Nathan's major interests were in New Orleans, although he continued to make business trips to Baton Rouge, where he kept a branch store, over a period of years. He set himself up as a commission and exchange broker, in partnership with D. C. Williams for a year or two, alone after Williams took a post with the state government. Nathan's office was in Chartres street. There he conducted the sort of business which was characteristic of the time; he loaned money on interest, gave advances to planters, listed property for sale and auction, bought and sold slaves and shares of stock, took merchandise on consignment, and accepted responsibility for the affairs of ships which docked at New Orleans. During the early 1820's he was, for a time, in partnership with Samuel Hermann. He did not rival Hermann or Samuel Kohn in the height of his success, but, like Hermann, he did go into bankruptcy during the depression of 1837–42.[89]

Asher's sister Catherine and her husband Hyam Harris, together with their ten children, or at least most of them, moved to New Orleans about 1825. Asher probably supported them in whole or in part during their stay in New Orleans, because when Hyam died on June 1, 1828, the value of the furniture and stock of his small store amounted to just $463; his only other possession was a seventy-year-old slave, Lucretia, who brought $72 at auction. At the inventory of Hyam's estate, Catherine reported that the silver plate in their home was her own private property, a gift from her brother Asher. The children, Levy Judah, Alexander, Isabelle and Aaron Harris, were still minors who required a male guardian; Henry M. Hyams, who had recently come from Charleston and had known the family there, agreed to act in that capacity. Rebecca, Abraham Hyam and Moses Harris were already adults, as was Amelia, who had married Daniel Goodman just a few months previously, on February 26, 1828. Asher Nathan set Moses Harris up in business in Mobile in 1837; sometimes Moses represented his uncle's interests, sometimes he acted on his own account.[90]

Asher Nathan's losses during the depression of 1837–42 were not serious. In the R. G. Dun and Company report of 1853, Asher was described as "an old resident & one of the most respectable Brokers in the city belongs to the old school. Is rich and a sup[erio]r bus man." Alexander Harris, his nephew and partner, was called an "intelligt yg man." The firm was said to be worth $50,000. In 1854 Nathan and Harris put in the successful bid for marketing $600,000 worth of 1857–58 bonds of the New Orleans, Jackson and Great Northern Rail Road Company. In 1859 Nathan retired and the business was named Alexander Harris and Company, but Nathan continued to give his financial support to Alexander and two of his brothers who were in the firm with him. Marguerite's estate, probated in 1854, listed $12,000 in real estate, $3,900 in slaves owned jointly with her husband, and $2,000 worth of furniture. Asher's will, written in 1862 and probated after his death on December 18, 1864, included charitable gifts of $11,000, and personal bequests of $5,000 to Amelia Harris Goodman and $3,000 to Alexander. He also left portraits of himself and his wife to Alexander. The remainder of the estate, which was apparently quite large, although the succession records cannot be located, was bequeathed by Asher to Achile Lion, a young man whom he adopted as his son by a special act which the Louisiana Legislature passed on March 12, 1859. To Anna Lion, about twenty-seven years old in 1862, "who resides in Paris now under the Protection and care of Madame De Blimère," Asher Nathan left the income from a fund of $8,000; after her death this additional amount was to go to Achile.

Who were Achile and Anna Lion? Achile was presumably a grown man, or he too would have required the designation of a guardian. Was Anna mentally incompetent, therefore requiring "Protection and care?" A French Negro artist named Jules Lion was active in New Orleans as a lithographer beginning in the late 1830's; one Achille Lion appears in a notarial record in 1844 as Jules's son. But there may not have been any relationship at all between Achile and Anna Lion and the artist. The feeling is inescapable that Achile and Anna were Asher Nathan's mulatto children who had been sent to France for their education. Why else would Asher leave them his fortune, in view of the tremendous number of his nieces and nephews who lived in New Orleans? Why else would Asher have waited until after Marguerite's death to adopt Achile? Why, indeed, unless Achile was a mulatto, would Asher not have his "adopted son" with him in New Orleans? Asher Nathan was not a unique figure if he had fathered these two mulatto children; such occurrences were frequent in ante-Bellum New Orleans.[91]

9. Alexander Phillips

In Baton Rouge, the Carmelite priest Juan Brady performed almost as many ritual ceremonies which involved Jews as did Père Antoine in New Orleans. On December 10, 1811, Brady married Alexander Phillips to seventeen-year-old Rosina Thomas, who had been born in Natchez, the daughter of John Thomas and Elizabeth Macough. Phillips, a native of Amsterdam, had come to the United States at the age of sixteen, about 1791, perhaps as an indentured servant. A report which was published in the first decade of the twentieth century, but which was probably based on Alexander's recollections of his early experiences, describes his wanderings:

> "After having received the trade of a whitesmith [tinsmith], and enduring the numerous privations always attendant upon poverty, he emigrated to the United States . . . He settled at first in the

> State of Pennsylvania. There he was obliged by necessitous circumstances to take employment in the capacity of a farmer's boy. For two years he served in that humble capacity. In 1794 . . . he enlisted under Gen'l Anthony Wayne, to quell the 'Whiskey Insurrection.' . . . He then secured employment from Gen. Hennen of Harrisburg, Pa. With this gentleman he remained until 1799, when, removing to the city of Philadelphia, he procured, under the advisement of a friend, a small quantity of merchandise, and thus equipped, girded up his loins and marched through the country as an itinerant, always finding a ready market . . . [A]t the end of a few years he became master of his own establishment and settled in the Quaker City . . . [H]e, in the year 1808, removed [to] the city of New Orleans, and immediately entered into the mercantile business."

The only record of Phillips' stay in Philadelphia annals is the mention of his partnership in 1804 with two other Jews, Lyon Cadet and Abraham Gumpert. He went first to Baton Rouge, however, rather than to New Orleans; in her will, written in 1876, Rosina said that she and Alexander remained in Baton Rouge for about one year after their marriage, "when we removed to this city where I have remained ever since." In December, 1811, Alexander Phillips, Maurice Barnett and Asher Nathan, the only Jews in the area, joined their neighbors in signing a petition of the inhabitants of Feliciana County (part of the territory formerly known as Spanish West Florida), which asked for special favors from the federal government in order that they might be integrated into Louisiana.[92]

Phillips' business ambitions were more modest than Samuel Kohn's and Samuel Hermann's. While he began his activity with shipping agencies, part ownerships of vessels and real estate dealings, he gradually restricted himself to wholesale and retail trade in groceries. An active Mason, he also participated in politics and served three terms as an alderman, in 1826 and 1827, and again in 1836; he was probably the first Jew to hold elective office in New Orleans. Phillips was prosperous, but he was not a wealthy man; in the 1820 census he is listed as owning four slaves; in 1830, ten. In 1824 he sold his home on Bienville street for $13,000, and built a more elegant one on Chartres.[93]

Alexander brought two brothers to New Orleans from Amsterdam. The first to come over was Isaac, who was in New

Orleans by 1814, when he purchased a slave. Isaac's wife, Martha Cline, was probably a Methodist. In 1817 he was managing a "house of entertainment" in the Baton Rouge Hotel, but he spent most of his life in New Orleans, where he later conducted a clothing store. His only daughter, Rosina, probably named for Alexander's wife, died two years after her marriage in 1839 to Nathaniel Jewett Merrill.[94]

The third brother, Asser or Asher, arrived in New Orleans about 1819. He and Isaac probably were in the clothing business together, although each had other separate commercial interests. Asher named one of his sons Alexander in honor of his brother; Alexander did not return the compliment, but did name one of his sons for Isaac. Asher was the first of the brothers to die. Alexander signed the death certificate on March 5, 1839, and reported that Asher was sixty years old, while he himself was sixty-three. Asher's estate was valued at $11,674, and included three slaves worth $900. Asher's wife was Johanna Marie Debott, a native of Rotterdam; she was single, twenty-six, when she arrived on the brig *Planter* from Amsterdam, on January 1, 1820. Perhaps they had already been engaged in Holland, and he came ahead to establish himself before sending for her.[95]

Several of Alexander's eight children occupied significant places in the life of New Orleans. One, Alfred, became a prominent attorney. John B. Cotton, a well-known judge in the middle years of the nineteenth century, first married Alexander's daughter Sophia, and after her death, her sister Rosina, the widow of Nathan Haber. Elleonora was married to Simon Newburger, a successful merchant.[96]

10. Benjamin Levy[97]

An advertisement in the *Louisiana Gazette* of April 8, 1811, marked the beginning of the career of a pioneer New Orleans stationer, bookseller, bookbinder, printer and publisher:

> "The subscriber having opened a Book and Stationery store in Chartres street opposite Mrs. Fourage's boarding house begs

> leave to inform the public that he will always have on hand a large and general assortment of Stationery of every description, together with an extensive assortment of Law and Miscellaneous books, which he will dispose of on the most reasonable terms: he will also keep Blank Books of every description or can rule and bind to any pattern with Spring Backs, Russian Bands or plain on the shortest notice. From his knowledge of the business in general and the unremitting attention he intends bestowing thereto, he hopes to meet with a share of their patronage.
>
> B. LEVY"

Born in New York City in 1786, Levy had gained experience as a bookbinder by the time he was twenty-two; two years later he became the partner of James Olmstead in a New York stationery store. He was a third-generation American, named for his grandfather who had emigrated from London to Newport, Rhode Island. Benjamin's father, Simeon (1748–1825), left that famed Jewish community, where Judah Touro's father officiated as *hazan*, and moved to New York City, where he became the teacher of Hebrew, English, arithmetic, and other subjects in the school of Shearith Israel Congregation; David Seixas and Jacob Hart were no doubt among his many pupils.[98]

It was probably his family's penurious circumstances which sent young Benjamin on the venturesome voyage to New Orleans, so far from home. There were five or six other children, and the father earned little from school-teaching, and had failed in business when he tried that. But the education which he had received from his father, and the bookish atmosphere which he absorbed in their home, marked him for life as one who would always be involved with books. Benjamin's departure from home did not signify a break with his family. He visited them several times before and after his father's death; he later brought his sister Mary to live with him in New Orleans; and he remained in contact with his sisters Hannah and Julia, mentioning all three in his will as his "Dear Sisters."[99]

In 1817 Benjamin married Emilie Prieur, daughter of Prosper Prieur and Marie Jeanne Casenauve. His bride, who had been born on November 2, 1799, was thus almost nineteen when she gave birth to their first child, Alexander, on September 7, 1818. Alexander was baptized in July, 1819, by Père Antoine, who also baptized the second child, Isabel Mathilda, who was born April 2, 1820. Although his children were reared as Roman Catholics, this seems merely to have been a matter of convenience. Isabel married a Protestant, the notary Albert Childe Ainsworth.[100]

Levy was not, of course, the first bookseller in New Orleans, but he was one of the first to concentrate his energies on this cultural-commercial field, and was certainly the first to remain in it for an extended period of time—more than forty years. Within a few weeks of his first business announcement, Levy formed a partnership with Michael Reynolds, but this relationship lasted only about three years. In August, 1814, the firm's creditors entered suit, and bankruptcy proceedings resulted. But that did not deter Levy; in 1815, he opened another store under the name of "Benjamin Levy & Co.," advertising books, stationery, binding and subscriptions to the popular literary journals. It is entirely possible that his silent partner as early as 1815 was his old New York associate, James Olmstead, for after the latter's death on September 9, 1823, Levy announced that their partnership was now dissolved and that he would continue the business alone.[101]

Throughout his years as an active bookseller, Levy advertised profusely in the New Orleans and Louisiana newspapers, taking as many as nine separate notices to announce the receipt of new novels, biographies, literary annuals and gift books, volumes of history, memoirs, classical literature, home-remedy guides, works of drama, law and politics. But beyond the more general stock he carried and constantly replenished, he specialized in law books; this appears to have been a major personal interest—catering to the needs of attorneys. Other aspects of Levy's work were the sale of various types of stationery supplies, and the printing of business forms and the like. The range of his wares was as varied and extensive as today's stationery stores': pens, pencils, writing paper, notebooks, ink, knives, albums, writing desks, and all of the other odds and ends which a business man or housewife would want. In addition to the stock of "Books, Pamphlets, Cards, Checks, Bills of Lading, Bills of Exchange, Steam-Boat Bills, Posting Bills, Hand Bills, Labels, Custom-House and Notarial Blanks, &c, &c, &c."

which he printed and had for sale, he also sold theater and lottery tickets.[102]

But bookselling, stationery printing and selling, and bookbinding (Levy's first occupational proficiency, which he continued to advertise throughout his career), were less unique than his pursuits in the publishing field. He was one of the most active and productive publishers in New Orleans during the period 1822–41, and was probably the first Jewish printer-publisher not only in the South, but in the entire country. Jews had been active in bookselling and publishing in New York City for a number of years before Levy's first imprint appeared—Benjamin Gomez and Naphtali Judah were well-known booksellers and publishers during the 1790's, but their volumes were farmed out to professional printers, while they devoted their activity to selling, and most of their publications were ordered jointly with other booksellers. Levy was the first American Jew to combine printing, publishing and selling.

Levy's name first appeared on the title-page of a book in 1817, when Olmstead published the second edition of William Darby's popular *Geographical Description of the State of Louisiana*, and listed "B. Levy & Co. Booksellers, New-Orleans," as the sole distributor of the volume. This was in the Gomez–Judah tradition. Levy first announced his new venture as a printer-publisher in 1821, and, characteristically, advertised the publication of a legal volume, one of François-Xavier Martin's *Louisiana Term Reports . . . Cases Argued in the Supreme Court of the State of Louisiana*. In 1822 he published three volumes by Martin, another legal imprint, an almanac and the second New Orleans city directory (the first in eleven years). Throughout the following nineteen years, he continued to publish a wide variety of books and pamphlets. The largest proportion of the one hundred and thirty-three identifiable imprints of his press were of a legal character. If we count each of the eleven parts of Edward Livingston's *Penal Code* as a separate entity (which is justified because they were printed and distributed at different times over a five-year period), the legal items constitute almost half of his publications. These were compilations, reference volumes, appeals, briefs, and attorneys' courtroom pleadings. A few were published at the expense of the state or city—but Levy was never an official governmental printer despite the fact that his wife's brother, Denis Prieur, served seven terms as Mayor of New Orleans, more than any other chief officer of the city. The interesting point is that Levy was the first New Orleans printer to publish legal treatises. Legal scholars probably turned to him because he took a particular interest in the practice of law, maintained a good stock of legal texts, and got along well with attorneys. A list of the authors of legal volumes published by Levy reads like a roster of the outstanding legal talent of the city: François-Xavier Martin, James Workman, Edward Livingston, Louis Moreau-Lislet, Pierre Derbigny, Samuel Livermore, John Slidell, Meinrad Greiner. (How ironic that Levy did not publish anything by the two leading New Orleans attorneys of Jewish birth, Judah P. Benjamin and Myer M. Cohen—but both were involved in his bankruptcy in 1842–43, Benjamin as assignee, and Cohen as United States Commissioner!)[103]

Approximately a quarter of Levy's publications were of a business nature, including acts of incorporation of banks and other institutions. Only twelve were political; ten were of literary or general interest; five were almanacs, and two were city directories. Because of New Orleans' diverse population, many were printed in French, or in both French and English, and one was printed in Spanish. Only three were printed by other firms, the 1817 Darby volume, and the 1841 *Louisiana Digest*, the first and last to bear his name, and, in addition, a book on *The Law of Slavery*, by Jacob D. Wheeler, published in 1837.

Comparatively few of the products of Levy's press were of permanent general interest and worth, although the *Term Reports* of the Louisiana Supreme Court decisions, and some of his other legal volumes, have a reference value which has required their reprinting throughout the years. Among the exceptions are J. C. Beltrami's *La Découverte des Sources du Mississippi et de la Rivière Sanglante* (1824); Charles Gayarré's *Essai Historique sur La Louisiane* (1830–31); and especially Edward Livingston's *Penal Code* (1822–27) which, while never adopted by the Louisiana Legislature, has had an enduring influence on concepts of criminology here and abroad. It was reprinted a number of times, both in the United States and in France, and is still the subject of frequent comment and evaluation.[104]

Another of Levy's publications which was of great utility in its time was the *New-Orleans Price-Current and Commercial Intelligencer*, the first business journal to appear in the city, which Levy established on June 27, 1822, and continued to publish on a weekly basis until December 28, 1839, the final issue to bear his name. This newspaper, which Levy printed for seventeen years, and even seems to have edited for a brief time in its early years, listed wholesale and retail prices not only for New Orleans, but also for Mobile, New York City, Philadelphia, Baltimore and other cities; it was a business man's guide to the present and the future. Associated with it was a *Price-Current Letter Sheet*, with the printed matter on two pages, leaving the last two pages blank for correspondence and comment; this handy business report seems to have been published by Levy from 1822 on. These publications and other commercial imprints demonstrate that Levy's connection with mercantile interests was second only to his relationship to attorneys.

Perhaps it was these same contacts which brought about Levy's business failure. It is difficult to make sense out of the many reports and listings of debits and assets compiled for Levy's bankruptcy proceedings in 1842–43, but this much is certain—it was neither his book and stationery store nor his printing business which drove him into court, but a combination of mortgaged real estate investments, bank debts, and bad notes which he had endorsed. Had he been content to manage his thriving business, in which he had prospered, he would not have run into trouble. But his intimate acquaintance with business growth and speculation undoubtedly enticed him into risks and associations beyond his competence. In 1835 he became a Commissioner of the Ocean Insurance Company, and around the same time was elected a director of the Mechanics' and Traders' Bank. This was a bad time for anyone to become involved in these reckless and unbridled financial operations. The panic of 1837 was soon upon the town and Levy was trapped. Although he owned only 245 shares of Mechanics' Bank stock, less than any other director, he had borrowed $8,530 and endorsed notes amounting to $4,605.62. In addition, he owed $3,640 to the Louisiana State Bank. He had made other investments, too: 130 shares of Union Bank stock; 400 shares of Nashville Railroad stock; 5 shares of Merchants' Exchange stock;

5 shares in the Barataria and Lafourche Company; and a number of heavily mortgaged parcels of real estate, some of which he owned in his own right, or in his sister Mary's name, others jointly with Francis Cook, who had been the foreman in his printing plant since about 1831. Had he maintained a liquid cash position, he might at least have weathered the storm and kept his business intact.[105]

In 1839, in an effort to retrench, Levy leased his printing plant and the *Price-Current* to his son Alexander and to Francis Cook, and moved his store from Chartres street to the corner of Camp and Gravier, but this only helped to stave off disaster until 1842. According to a declaration of credits and debits which he drew up on December 20, 1842, he owed a total of $75,347.20 in unpaid bills and $37,588 in notes. The first sum was owing to suppliers and publishers in New York City, Baltimore, Philadelphia and Cincinnati; the second included $18,000 to Francis Cook, $17,000 to Levi Pierce, a wealthy New Orleans attorney, and $863 to his son-in-law. His assets amounted to $56,465 in stock and $14,799 in bills receivable. The stock in his store, his store lease, his real estate and even his home at 15 St. Charles street, which he had purchased in 1831 for $14,500, were sold at auction for bargain prices. The final imprint bearing Benjamin Levy's name, of which no copy seems to have survived, is the catalogue of the auction sale of his merchandise, printed by Alexander. The text of the bill which Alexander Levy presented to Judah Benjamin for his services read as follows:

"Alexander Levy—
19th April 1843—

Printing 500 Catalogues of Books and Stationery for Sale at Auction, B. Levy's Estate, on Best Royal Paper 78 Pages made up into Pamphlets, for	$218.50
My Services, with a Clerk, to make the above Catalogue and to arrange Stock for the Auction	$100.00
Paid Cash for Negro Hire, in Hoisting Up and Down, Carrying, &c. &c.	$23.50
Three Weeks extra services, for myself and one Clerk, in attending the Auction, promoting Sales, Collection &c &c	$150.—
	$492.00"

We may be certain that Benjamin Levy preferred that if this Auction Catalogue had to be printed at all, it be printed by his son.[106]

Benjamin Levy never reestablished himself in business following his bankruptcy, but he did take an active role in Alexander's business ventures. During the period 1839–42, while Alexander and Cook were partners in the printing business, their firm issued ten publications under their imprint. After that partnership was dissolved, Alexander went into business as Alexander Levy & Company, under his father's guidance and assistance, but it was no longer the flourishing, successful operation of old. The firm concentrated on stationery and lawbooks, and published only nineteen items, all in pamphlet form, none big enough to be called a book, or of any literary or historical significance. One, however, is the fascinating license form which was issued by the New Orleans city government in 1857 to prostitutes who observed the law which prohibited their occupying ground level quarters. The firm went bankrupt again, in 1858. Ben simply had no luck at all.[107]

Within a period of seventeen months in 1851–52, Levy had suffered great sorrow. Emilie died on February 21, 1851; A. C. Ainsworth on May 5, 1851; and Mathilde (she used that name rather than Isabel) on July 22, 1852. Benjamin's grandchildren, Aline Mary, Annie Elizabeth and Martin Luther, were only eleven, seven and five when their mother died. We do not know whether they were reared in Benjamin and Alexander's home, which was tended by Benjamin's sister Mary, but they were his moral and legal responsibility—a heavy one for a sixty-six-year-old man. Fortunately he lived until 1860, and Mary seems to have remained in New Orleans for a few more years before crossing through the Confederacy to Washington, where she made her home with her nephew, Adolphus Solomons, another printer-publisher.[108]

What kind of man was Benjamin Levy? Gullible and attracted by the vision of quick profits, certainly, to judge from his ambitious investments. But modest also; note his comment about the value of his household possessions: "Much of this furniture I bought when married in 1817. It is almost impossible for me to name its true value now." One catches a glimpse of his affectionate, tender nature in the provision of his will which related to his grandchildren; he bequeathed to them his "whole Library & Book Case, hoping they will profit by this, my only Legacy to them. I wish it was in my power to leave them more Substantial proofs, of my strong & tender Affection, but indeed it is not, I hope they will be enabled by their own industry, and ability, to not regret this bequest So very small." Efforts to locate this "Library & Book Case," if indeed it is still in existence, have been unavailing. What further imprints it might contain, and how many other indications of Levy's nature and character! The children had no doubt inherited something from their parents' estates, and probably also had received gifts from prosperous Prieur relatives, for most of Levy's possessions and cash assets (amounting to a total worth of only $1,760, including the value of a slave) were divided between his son and his sisters. Touching were his comments about slaves:

> "Item, I give and bequeath to my Dear Son, Alexander Levy, my Black Slave Man, Richard or Dick White, a Barber, for his use During Life, unless the Slave Richard or Dick White can buy his Freedom, for the amount of Five hundred Dollars in cash. But in case the afore said Slave cannot buy his freedom during the Life of my Son, as afore said, the said Slave Richard shall be sett [*sic*] Free, in the usual forms by Law,—
>
> "From the tenor of the foregoing, My Wish and direction is, That the above named Slave Richard, is never to be sold, Mortgaged, or hired out for a Longer term than one Year at a time, and never to be hired out of the State of Louisiana . . .
>
> "I should like (if it is possible,) to give to each of the coloured people, Born into my family, viz, Richard[.] Harry[,] Samuel, Ellen, Joseph, Martha and Horace, and Millee likewise (belonging to my Dear Grand Children,) Some Small Memorial of their old Master, and to whom I have always been strongly attached, this wish, my family will carry out, in the best way, they may choose to adopt.—"

Benjamin Levy devoted more words in his will to these slaves than to the members of his family: indication enough of a warm and kind spirit.[109]

Not many deaths warranted newspaper editorials in those days, any more than in our own. The editors of the *Daily Crescent* got some of the facts twisted in their sketch, but they expressed respect not only for a journalistic colleague who had printer's ink in his veins, but for the man Benjamin Levy, in their eulogy of January 11, 1860:

> "DEATH OF AN OLD CITIZEN.—Benjamin Levy has been called hence; he departed this life yesterday morning at his residence on Canal street, in the 74th year of his age. Mr. Levy was a native of Long Island, New York, and arrived in this city about the year 1812. His profession as a book-binder and printer led him to be largely concerned with the art preservative of all arts—printing. In the year 1818 he opened a large and extensive book and stationery store on Conti street at about the intersection of Exchange Alley . . . In the year 1822 he established the New Orleans Price Current, which has attained so high an eminence in the commercial world, and now located on Camp street. His connection with the Price Current was of many years' duration. He was one of the pioneers of journalism in our city . . . For a long period of time—over a quarter of a century—Mr. Levy stood the highest of the high in his vocation. Like thousands of others he had to undergo the viscissitudes [*sic*] and revulsions of commerce and trade. He met the adversities and disasters with courage and rectitude. In the many relations of life and as a good citizen he stood high and unblemished. Over forty years ago he became connected, by marriage, with the old, respected and ancient family of Prieur. His descendants enjoy high social position in our community. In fine, our departed friend was emphatically a good man; he was universally respected by all our citizens. And thus, one by one, the men of other days are called from this sublunary sphere."

11. JEWS IN THE BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS

We have thus far traced the personal, familial and business careers of all but two of the Jews who had settled in New Orleans by the time of the battle that saved the city from capture by the British. One of these two was Manis Jacobs, whose story we defer until later. An obituary at the time of his death in 1839 said that he had lived in the city for thirty years, but the earliest reference to him which we have discovered is a newspaper advertisement of 1812.[110] The other person unmentioned thus far was Simon M. Cohen. These two round out to fifteen the number of Jewish men definitely known to have been in New Orleans by 1814–15. Of these, at least ten, and possibly eleven, served in the armed forces under Andrew Jackson on the fields of Chalmette Plantation on January 8, 1815. Two-thirds of any group is a large proportion, but it is important to recall that all of these Jews were comparatively young men, some of them single, who were not only willing but able to take part in the defense of their new home.

The records of the military units which took part in the campaign, particularly the home guard, the Louisiana Militia, are scanty and incomplete. In addition to Touro, whose service we have already noted, a contemporary roster, dated December 20, 1814, lists four of our men: S. Coh[e]n, a member of the Compagnie des Dragons, Plauché's Battalion of the Louisiana Militia; another "Cohn" who served in the Compagnie des Carabiniers, and who is probably to be identified with Samuel Kohn; Maurice Barnett, listed as a Dragon in the Compagnie des Francs; and J. Hart, of the Compagnie des Dragons (à pied). These are the only early references to military service by our men which we have been able to uncover.[111]

With a number of men named Jacob Hart in New Orleans at the same time, two of whom were known to be military figures, and the third a policeman, it would be difficult to state with any assurance that it was our Jacob Hart who served as a private in Plauché's Battalion, were it not for a list which was published at the time of the 34th anniversary celebration of the Battle of New Orleans, on January 8, 1849, designating those who were still known to be living at the time. So far as we know, our Jacob Hart was the only man bearing that name who was still alive and in residence in New Orleans—he did not die until December of that year. Another name on that list was Maurice Barnett's. When he died in 1865, an obituary in the *Picayune* said of him: "A veteran gone. We are once again called on to announce the demise of one of the small but highly honored class of our old citizens, the veterans of the Battle of New Orleans, so few of whom remain to us. Mr. Maurice Barnett, Sr. died yesterday. . . ."[112]

Of the others, the evidence is less conclusive. An obituary of Isaac Phillips which was published in 1851 reports that he "fought in the Battle of New Orleans, January 8, 1815—defended his adopted country. A Jew by birth."[113] Our other men are listed in a recent compilation of the names of men who served under Jackson, which was painstakingly assembled from various sources, including those in Baton Rouge and in the National Archives in Washington; unfortunately, sources are not cited for each specific individual. The following names are of particular interest to us: Rochelle and Shiff (no first names), both privates in Dejan's First Regiment; Samuel Hermann, a private in De Clouet's Regiment; Dejonge, Sergeant of Musicians and Chief Musician, Plauché's Battalion; Alexander Phillips, 2nd Lieutenant of Dejan's Regiment.[114] All of these pieces of information, although far from definitive, mesh well with facts already at our disposal. It would be natural for Rochelle and Shiff to have enlisted together in the same regiment, since they were partners; we would expect Rochelle to have served, in view of what we have already learned about his physical courage and prowess with the sword. S. S. De Jonge was so interested in music that he was an incorporator of the New Orleans Philharmonic Society in 1838; as Chief Musician he may even have conducted a band. Alexander Phillips, we recall, was a veteran of the military forces which were assembled to quell the Whiskey Rebellion. In view of the tremendous amount of effort which has been expended on research on this subject, it seems unlikely that any new, dramatic sources of information will be discovered to give further details about the activities of these men. We shall have to be content with the meager evidence at our disposal, sufficient to indicate that this small number of Jews shouldered their share of responsibility, accepted the burden of fear and danger, and achieved whatever of glory and satisfaction were in store for those who followed Jackson to victory. Of only four of our men is there a total absence of evidence of participation in the battle: A. M. Nathan, David Hart, Benjamin Levy and Manis Jacobs.[115]

Only one of these citizen-soldiers maintained an interest in military matters. Simon Cohen's name occurs frequently in the newspaper advertisements which the New Orleans military units utilized, beginning in 1829, to announce their drills, reviews and parades. From April, 1829, to May, 1830, he was Sergeant Major of the Artillery Battalion. In October, 1830, he was elected 2nd Lieutenant, and another Jew, Joseph Lasalle, replaced him in his former post. Cohen held this rank until 1833.[116]

Little is known about Cohen's earlier years in New Orleans. His obituary in the *Bee* reports that he had come to the city from Amsterdam about 1810. In 1818 he bought a slave and her two-month-old baby, but the sale was annulled when it was discovered that they were mortgaged to someone else. That same year Cohen leased all of the rooms in his house, other than his tobacconist's shop and his living quarters, to two men who apparently set up a billiard parlor; when they failed to pay the specified sum of $1,200, he confiscated the billiard tables. In the 1820 census, Cohen is listed as the owner of four slaves.[117]

After a long illness, Cohen died at the age of fifty-five, on August 21, 1836. A friend wrote a long and emotional tribute to him for the French section of the *Bee*; he berated Cohen's former friends who had neglected him during his illness, when he was in need of funds as well as good cheer, and criticized the Artillery Battalion for its failure to provide military honors at Cohen's funeral. Jews were apparently not among those friends. Less than four months before Cohen's death, he was baptized a Roman Catholic by Abbé Moni, who also gave him the last rites and conducted his funeral. But it would seem as though this deathbed conversion may simply have been the result of the insistence of his importunate and loyal friend. He had been in New Orleans for twenty-six years, or thereabouts, without feeling any need to renounce Judaism and adopt a new faith. The last words of his anonymous friend's French tribute are full of pathos:

> "Adieu Cohen! . . . adieu! puissent ces faibles lignes, tracées avec la plus vive émotion, adoucir l'amertume des chagrins de ceux qui le chérissaient sur cette terre, et attester le souvenir d'un ancien ami."[118]

IV

From the Battle of New Orleans to the Formation of the First Congregation

French settlement of the site of New Orleans had begun in 1718, but the city did not enter its American period until 1803. The early years of the nineteenth century were late in the day for old American cities like Boston, New York and Philadelphia, but they were just the beginning for New Orleans. French-Spanish Creole influences have persisted to this very day; New Orleans is still a different kind of American city. But the period from 1803 to 1815 was a pioneering age, and those European and Yankee immigrants who came to the city then were participants in the living drama of the transformation of a colonial port into a vibrant, dynamic, enterprising, though still Creole, metropolis. Our Jews who settled in New Orleans before the battle which saved the city from British conquest (even though the peace treaty had already been signed before the first shot was fired) were forerunners in the same sense as all others who immigrated to this new frontier. During the second decade of the nineteenth century, for the most part after 1815, another 10,000 white settlers swelled the population—that was larger than the entire number of residents at the time of the Louisiana Purchase. Almost 20,000 more entered the city during the 1820's, but the 1830's were the years of greatest growth; the white population more than doubled from 46,082 in 1830 to 102,193 in 1840. A large proportion of these were European immigrants, quite aside from at least an equal number of foreigners who landed in New Orleans, stayed for a brief while, and then fanned out through the South and up the Mississippi. New Orleans was so popular a port of debarkation partly because the fare was cheaper than to New York City—ships which transported cotton to Europe did not always fill their holds with cargo for the return voyages to New Orleans; human cargo was better than none. But not all of the newcomers were

Europeans. Many were native-born Americans who left cities like New York or Philadelphia because they believed fortunes were to be made in New Orleans, or who forsook the states of the "old" South, like Virginia and South Carolina, because business conditions in those areas had become stagnant. New Orleans, regarded by Europeans as an American city, was to Americans themselves a city on the frontier of the "new" South, or, rather, the Southwest as it was known in that day.[1]

To establish the precise number of Jews in any location at any specific time is extremely difficult. No questions relating to religious affiliation or preference may be asked by census-takers. We are therefore dependent on the use of names and other identification indices if we are to reach even an approximate number. But the manuscript census returns are hard to use: the handwriting is frequently difficult to decipher; names are spelled incorrectly; information is inaccurate. In the case of New Orleans, two separate and independent studies reflect some of the problems inherent in the utilization of the census records. Ira Rosenswaike, who has spent much time on the examination of the census records of 1820 for information about Jews in various cities, located a total of ten Jews in the New Orleans returns; this writer identified an eleventh Jew. But altogether missing from the census data are the names of seven other men whose experiences we have already sketched.[2] The 1822 *New Orleans City Directory* includes the names of seven additional Jews, but omits a number of those whose presence is confirmed by other sources. The *Directory* listing is quite helpful, however, because of the occupational data which it reports. With twenty-five Jews listed by name, the occupational distribution is as follows: six merchant-bankers and brokers; three commission merchants; two traders; one liquor dealer (who dealt more in slaves than in liquor); six clothing and dry goods storekeepers; one hotelkeeper; two brothers in the Hart cotton press; one grocer; one bookseller; one watchmaker; one cigar manufacturer. Those names omitted from the *Directory* belong largely to petty shopkeepers whose business activities were probably so limited that they did not consider it worthwhile to enter their names. The most exhaustive list of Jews in New Orleans during this time was published in the constitution of the first congregation, in 1827; it includes thirty-five members and thirty-three contributors—but some in both categories lived outside of New Orleans, and a number were in town only for a brief time and then left for other horizons. Thirty-five Jewish heads of households are listed in the 1830 census, as best we can read them, but probably more than that number are omitted.

At any rate, it is not our intention to compile a list of every Jew who resided in the city temporarily or even permanently during the period following the Battle of New Orleans. The pioneers, as we have called them, were a special breed, and we have studied them exhaustively for reasons which will become more apparent in another chapter. We have made no effort, however, to trace every Jew who came to New Orleans in the years after 1815. But some of these American and European migrants to New Orleans are especially interesting or important, and it is to these that we now turn.

1. Visitors, Transients and Victims

Any port like New Orleans was bound to have a large transient population. People were forever coming and going, because ships were the fastest and most convenient method of transportation. Anyone traveling from the Atlantic seaboard or from Europe to the lower and middle Mississippi Valley areas was more likely to go to New Orleans by ship and then up the Mississippi, than to undertake the arduous journey across the Appalachians. But there was yet another reason for so much traffic in and out of the city: the climate made New Orleans so uncomfortable during the summer, and the summer epidemics made it so unhealthy, that many permanent residents, let alone transients, left the city for long months at a time.

There were probably dozens of Jews like Samuel Mordecai, of Warrenton, N. C., who stopped in New Orleans for a brief time. He was in the city in May of 1815, while his ship was unloading and taking on cargo. This was only one stop on a trip which he was making from New York City to Europe. Sam bemoaned his lack of letters of introduction to local people;

time rested heavily on his hands while he was waiting.[3] Sam's brother Solomon, the physician, made a similar stopover in New Orleans in 1823 on his way from Virginia, via Baltimore, to Mobile, where he intended to open his medical practice. But he was in too much of a hurry to send his impressions of the town back to his family in North Carolina.[4]

A visitor who stayed longer, and returned several times, was the actor Aaron J. Phillips, the son of the well-known Jewish leader of Philadelphia, Jonas Phillips, and the uncle of the dramatist-politician, Mordecai Manuel Noah. Aaron Phillips arrived in New Orleans in March, 1819, fresh from the "Theatres of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore & Charleston," and announced that he would make his first appearance on the stage of the Orleans Ball Room in a program of monologues. The featured piece, "for the first time in this city," was "Sterne's Celebrated LECTURE ON HEADS." The first part included the following:

> "No. 1 Head of Sir Whiskey Whiffle. 2. Comical Fellow. 3. Hamlet's Soliloquy on Death. 4. Head of Jonas, or the Card Playing Conjurer. 5. Head of an Apothecary. 6. Clarence's Dream. 7. The London Blood, going to keep it up. 8. The London Blood, after he has kept it up. . . ."

The second part of this hodgepodge highlighted Antony's oration over Caesar, and Collins' "Ode on the Passions." A reviewer expatiated on his pleasure at the performance, praised Phillips as "an actor not inferior to any of the stars now playing with such boasted honor at New-York and Philadelphia," and chided the population of New Orleans for their unresponsiveness to the opportunity to hear Phillips, regretting that this "amusement of the most chaste refinement and intellectual character, was not honored by the attendance of more of the fashion and beauty of New Orleans." But he said that the people of the town would be given another chance—Phillips was going to repeat the performance, and was even making plans to open his own theater with a company that would specialize in performances of Shakespeare. Aaron joined the company of the St. Philip Street Theater (Phillips of St. Philip) and took the lead in three plays before returning to the East. Aaron did come back to

New Orleans for the winter season of 1819–20 with a repertoire which included *Romeo and Juliet.* But James Caldwell's company had taken the city by storm, and there was no room for a rival. On March 3, 1820, Phillips announced his imminent departure, but he probably stayed in town long enough to watch the Caldwell company's performance of his nephew Mordecai Noah's patriotic play *She Would be a Soldier, or, The Plains of Chippewa,* which was enlivened by the participation of a local detachment of regular Army troops. A reviewer reacted enthusiastically to the Noah drama. "This is the best American Play which we have ever seen," he said. "When our country can boast of such writers as Mr. Noah, we see no necessity of our importing 'British Literature' and British plays 'by the bale and by the hogshead.' " Noah's dramas continued to evoke a lively response from the theater-goers of New Orleans for many years to come, but his uncle Aaron Phillips had not hit it off so well—he paid only one more visit to the city, in 1823.[5]

Reports of passenger arrivals and cargo receipts in the New Orleans newspapers frequently refer to Jews who came to town on business, stayed for a little while, and then moved on. G. Cohen was in and out of New Orleans with trunks and boxes of merchandise, during the business season of 1825–26, on his way from Philadelphia, then up the Mississippi River, and then finally through New Orleans again bound for Havana. At about the same time, S. Levy arrived in New Orleans from Charleston, but his name does not appear again in the records. John B. Levy came to town in 1828 with thirty-seven slaves for sale; he did not even land them, but sold them at the dock from the schooner *Transport.*[6]

These people were, obviously, transients who had no intention of remaining in New Orleans. There were others, however, who intended to become permanent residents, but luck ran out on them, and they died in New Orleans. Among these were Henry Hartman, a commission merchant, and Benjamin Levine, a watchmaker, both of whom died in 1818. Hartman said in his will that he thought his mother, Julia Hirsch, might still be living, in Hamburg, but if not, his executors should make every effort to find his heirs and distribute the proceeds of his estate equitably.[7] Levine had kept in closer contact with his family.

He left $300 to George Levine of Petersburg, Virginia, and $200 to Mary Levy of New York City, probably his brother and sister; the remainder of the estate was to be sent to Moses Levy of Gloucester, England, probably his father.[8] On December 23, 1820, Ezekiel Salomon, Haym Salomon's oldest child, arrived in New Orleans on the steamboat *Car of Commerce* from Louisville, to assume his new position as cashier of the New Orleans branch of the Bank of the United States. He signed notices of checks and drafts available, bank closing dates and similar advertisements in the newspapers until his death on September 27, 1821. One summer in New Orleans was too much for forty-three-year-old Ezekiel.[9] Another casualty was Baruh Jonas, who came to New Orleans from England about 1819–20. He was born in Teignmouth, Devonshire, on January 18, 1798, and may have been related to the Jonas brothers, Abraham and Joseph, who were among the earliest Jewish settlers in Cincinnati. Baruh was married to Teresa Barbarin on November 25, 1820, by the Reverend James Hull. A Protestant ceremony was probably the best compromise this Catholic girl and Jewish man could make. Jonas died on January 4, 1822, a little more than a year after his wedding, and was buried in the Protestant Girod Street Cemetery. Presuming that he was one of the twenty-two children of Benjamin Jonas and Annie Ezekiel of Exeter, it was his brother George and nephew Benjamin Franklin Jonas who brought great distinction to their family's name in New Orleans in later years.[10] Another Jew who died the same year as Baruh Jonas was Louis Levy, thirty-four, of Pennsylvania, one of a large number of "strangers" who died in the yellow fever epidemic that fall.[11]

2. Dealers in Slaves and Indentured Servants, and Many Men Named Jacobs

We have no way of knowing how many young Jewish men came to the New Orleans area as indentured servants or "redemptioners," as they were called. It would be surprising if there were none. They may, as a matter of fact, have been among those advertised by other Jews. A. F. Strauss, listed in the 1822 *City Directory* as a grocer at 36 Gravier street, below Tchoupitoulas, was the agent for the brig *Mississippi*, which arrived at the port from Bremen in November, 1819, with a shipload of indentured craftsmen and farmers, some with their families, who now had to work for several years to repay their fare, as Alexander Phillips apparently had done when he arrived in Pennsylvania. "They are all remarkably healthy," said Strauss' advertisement, "exclusively Germans, and of good character." Levy Jacobs, with headquarters first at 4 Conti street, then at 29 Toulouse street, was another Jew who got a commission for his activity in selling contracts for the repayment of the $70 ship passage money of redemptioners. During 1820 he advertised a number of shipments of these people, as many as a hundred at a time; they included blacksmiths, brewers, bricklayers, butchers, barbers, carpenters, joiners, upholsterers, millers, painters, ropemakers, shoemakers, coopers, gardeners, tailors, tanners, wheelwrights, and masons, and women who had been trained as laundresses, dressmakers and domestic servants.[12]

Levy Jacobs had begun business as an exchange and commission merchant by 1819 at the latest, with a non-Jewish partner named George Asbridge. They offered to "sell or purchase goods at private sale; buy goods at auction; procure freights and vessels for freight; buy and sell Negroes; exchange foreign bills; execute instruments in writing." After they dissolved their partnership, Jacobs seems to have concentrated on liquor sales and slavetrading. He came as close as any New Orleans Jew to specializing in this business. During the late 1820's large shipments of slaves came his way. In September, 1828, he notified the public that he was expecting about 100 "prime, Virginia slaves, selected expressly for this market [slave-dealers always said that, because planters were suspected of shipping their unwanted, sick or rebellious slaves to the expanding areas in the South where more slaves were needed]:—among which are, Ostlers, Carriage Drivers, Mechanics, Field Hands and Cooks, House Servants, seamstresses and washer women." Jacobs was indignant when he was accused of foisting inferior Kentucky slaves on his customers instead of the superior Virginia ones he advertised:

> "NOTICE—A report being circulated that I have for sale no other than Kentucky slaves, I beg leave to state to the public that all the Negroes which I have on hand, and shall hereafter keep for sale are and will be Virginia born Negroes, of good character; that the person who has stated to the contrary, with the view of injuring me, I call upon in this public manner to come forward and support this charge if he can, or hereafter hold his peace. All Negroes sold and bought by me from traders (excepting at my own house) will be free of commission.
>
> L. JACOBS"

The social position of a slave trader in Jacobs' time was not inferior to that of other merchants of a similar success. Levy Jacobs even called himself "Esq." in an advertisement. We may be certain that no one lifted an eyebrow when Levy's daughter Isabella was married, on May 5, 1832, to T. G. Joans, a young printer-journalist. If any eyebrows were raised, it was not because Levy was a slave trader or a Jew, but two years later, when Joans, editor and publisher of the *Mercantile Advertiser*, the *Price-Current's* competition, absconded with the proceeds of some forged notes.[13]

There were many men in New Orleans at this time whose last name was Jacobs. One was Manis Jacobs, the jeweler and trader whom we have already met briefly. Another was Ralph (Raphael) Jacobs, whose nephew, Dr. Joseph Bensadon, became the first medical director of the Touro Infirmary. Ralph was in New Orleans by 1822 at the latest, conducting a ship brokerage business at 3 Custom House street. At that time his partner was one J. W. Melder, who left Ralph and then went bankrupt still owing him some money. Ralph himself was in business difficulties in 1832, and his property had to be sold to satisfy his creditors. Back in business again, he sold some real estate, bought shares in a ferry company, and guaranteed the captains of ships that he would be able to provide seamen, on bond, for ships' crews. He had two offices for those in a hurry to reach him, one at 84 Gallatin street at the foot of the vegetable market, and the other in the rear of a grocery store on the levee. Ralph died on April 23, 1845, at the age of sixty-three.[14]

Ralph was not related to Levy Jacobs, so far as we can discover, but Levy did have a brother named Jacob Jacobs. Perhaps Samuel Jacobs was another brother. We know very little about Sam other than the public ventilation of his domestic troubles. On August 24, 1824, he announced to the readers of the *Louisiana Gazette* that he would no longer be responsible for his wife's debts:

> "Caution. Whereas my wife Rosette has left my house without any just cause whatever, this is to caution the public not to trust her on my account, as I will not pay any debts contracted by her."

A month later, Jacobs printed a retraction. The previous notice had been issued, he said, "merely through a mistake"—"now I have the pleasure to let the public know that we live in perfect harmony." But the "perfect harmony" did not last very long. Before the year was out, the court approved the couple's legal separation. In 1834 Sam went bankrupt and his property was sold at sheriff's auction for $16,200; his possessions included 24 lots of unimproved ground, a building on the levee, and a slave with her six-month-old child. Sam's possessions were still being sold in 1839, the last time his name was mentioned.[15]

3. Scandals and Duels

Samuel Jacobs' legal separation was an unusual occurrence, but not so his marriage to a local non-Jewish woman. Intermarriage continued apace as the newcomers arrived, and their children were invariably reared in conformity with the Christian environment. On October 18, 1822, Lise Augustine, the daughter of J. M. Cohen, a native of Holland, and Marie Victoire Leboulh of Louisiana, was baptized at the St. Louis Church.[16] The following year, Victor Souza, the son of Antonio Souza and Marie Pereira of Bordeaux, was married in the same church by Père Antoine, to Rose Bourdeaux, the daughter of Pierre Bourdeaux and Anne Marcely of Saint-Domingue. Nineteen days before his wedding on December 23, 1823, Victor underwent Roman Catholic baptism; he is the only Jew during this period, other than Simon Cohen, whose name is included as a convert in the baptismal books of the St. Louis Cathedral.[17] But this did not prevent Victor's being identified as an "Israelite" contributor to the newly founded congregation in 1827, under the name "Souza, Jr.," along with "Souza, Sr.," who we presume was his older brother, Mardochée. The older brother went bankrupt soon after the congregation was organized, in 1828. Victor Souza and his partner Decadie Baiz underwent the same unpleasant experience in 1834, but "absconded and defrauded their creditors, whom they have shamefully deceived," according to a notice which offered $1,000 for their apprehension, or $500 for either. Despite his conversion to Catholicism, Victor was described as a Jew:

> "Victor Souza, a Jew, is about 4 feet 11 inches high, has a large face, large nose and a small mouth; his face is red, and his beard strong and black. D. Baix, a jew, [*sic*] about 5 feet 3 or 4 inches high, full face and pock marked, strong black beard . . ."

Newspapers in Mobile, Louisville, Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York City were instructed to copy the notice and to bill the syndic for the creditors, for whose benefit four slaves and three lots of ground were sold at auction. Baiz was probably identical with the Abraham Baiz whose name appears in the Bordeaux records as traveling to New Orleans in 1827 and returning home in 1829, but nothing further is known of his New Orleans career. Victor Souza was apprehended, tried for fraud, convicted, and sentenced to prison. After his release he kept store in Texas and New Orleans, but success continued to elude him. Despite his formal conversion to Christianity and the fact that his children were reared as Catholics, everyone, including the R. G. Dun reporter, thought of Victor as a Jew.[18]

Not all scandals involved a convert. Two Jews got into one of the worst name-calling feuds imaginable, over an absolute trifle, in 1836. These men were Solomon Audler and L. A. Levy, Jr. Audler, who was in Charleston in 1824, and in New Orleans by 1827, was probably a brother of the Dr. E. M. Audler whose "Asiatic Lenitive" for the cure of toothaches, headaches and other "diseases" was a widely advertised patent medicine. Sol married Maurice Barnett's daughter Hélène; they are listed as owning four slaves in the 1830 census. In June of that year he went bankrupt, and two years later, Myer Audler, probably another brother, took the same punishment. L. A. Levy, Jr., has eluded precise identification; there were more than a dozen Levys in town in the early 1830's. It is possible that he was a son of the Levy Andrew Levy who married into the Simon family of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, or that he is identical with the Lewis A. Levy who was buying property in Houston in 1842, but neither suggestion is more than a guess.

The occasion for the trouble between Audler and Levy was a linen coat. One of the Phillipses in town, probably Asser, was auctioning off a lot of linen coats. Phillips promised Levy he could have one at the same price as those which were sold at auction. The coat Levy tried on did not fit, so he exchanged it for one in the batch that Audler bought. Audler billed him for it, but since he had already paid Phillips for it, Levy saw no reason to pay Audler. Sol sued for the cost, but lost the case; pursuing the matter still further, he went to the auction store where the coats were sold, and called Levy a thief. In a rage, Levy sent friends to challenge Audler to a duel, but Audler refused on the ground that Levy was not a gentleman and, therefore, was not entitled to satisfaction. Levy promptly issued a handbill denouncing Audler as a coward:

> "*Notice to the public* . . . S. Audler having gravely insulted me this morning at the auction store of Mr. J. B. Blache, I deem it my duty in justice to my reputation, to state to the public, that my friends called upon the said individual for satisfaction, which he did not grant, I hereby proclaim him to the public, as a coward, and no gentleman, and beneath the notice of the community.
>
> May 28th 1836
>
> (Signed) L. A. Levy, Jr."

Audler immediately took an advertisement in the newspaper, told his version of the entire matter, and asked the "impartial public" to decide

> "whether an individual guilty of an act of this description, should be entitled to the satisfaction due a gentleman. I have been required to give gentlemanly satisfaction, to whom? I would ask—to a man? a gentleman? No! it is to one who cannot prove himself a gentleman, for the act of which he stands charged by me cannot be termed the act of a gentleman. A man he is not; it needs but a glance to perceive it; he was well aware at the time he wrote the challenge that he could not obtain a gentlemanly satisfaction from me, otherwise he would not have demanded it. . . ."

Audler asked the editors of newspapers in New York City and Philadelphia to reprint his long description of the dispute, probably so that relatives and suppliers in both cities might thereby be informed about it. Levy went Audler one better and added the Charleston papers to the list when he published his reply to Audler's attack. Levy's denunciation was a masterpiece of invective:

> "This self same Audler—this vendor of worn out harness—this wash-tub dealer has with the impudence and characteristic daring, inherent in triflers called me that which in the hearing of our most respectable citizens and in a most public place (New Exchange) he himself was called—"a Thief" Audler! ! Ay Audler! Sol Audler! ! ! and who does not shrink at the very letters of his name. He *has* been *is* and *ever will be* the detestation of the honest man, the land mark for the Coward, the beacon for the Insolvent debtor, the light house for the smuggler—he dares to speak of intrusion on the public! well may he do so. Oznaburgs, Italian silk cottonades, old swords and belts, &c. &c. groan loudly a requiem for the ledger of his poor creditors—As to an enlightened public to which he thrice appeals I will but say that it is too 'enlightened' ever again to trust this blackened lump of infamy . . . the public must condemn him for calling *me* a Thief when he himself is so notoriously known as an adept in the business. . . ."

Audler simply reiterated his innocence and asserted his assurance that "after a long residence in this city (I flatter myself without reproach) that my reputation cannot suffer in the opinion of an impartial public, by the slanderous and unfounded accusations of such a worthless fellow as Levy." Here the newspaper notices cease. Whether Audler and Levy were ever reconciled is not known. But it must have been a source of merriment to many readers, and of embarrassment to many Jews, that these two men vented their spleen at each other in public over so trivial a matter.[19]

The challenge to a duel which Levy hurled at Audler is an example of how thoroughly the Jews of New Orleans had adjusted to the temperament of their neighbors. We have uncovered two examples of such affairs of honor in which Jews took part in the 1830's. In both episodes, the Jews involved were not permanent residents of New Orleans. Matthias Gomez, the son of the New York City bookseller, and a third-generation American, was killed in a duel on June 19, 1833. Carl Kohn tells his Uncle Samuel about it in his letter of July 7:

> "We had a duel here again between Mr. Bosqui, the same that killed his cousin Marchand, and an American Gomez by name. The cause was quite a trifling one, nevertheless they were determined upon the destruction of one or the other—they fought with muskets at forty paces, and fired four times without effect, the fifth time however Gomez fell dead, and Bosqui was wounded severely in both his legs. The Physicians thought it incumbent upon them to have one of his legs amputated, but he, fluttering as he was between life & death, preferred rather to die than to be maimed, & would not permit his limb to be amputated—now he is almost able to walk again to the great disappointment of every orderly & quiet townsman—."

How long Gomez had been in town is unknown, but it was long enough for him to have purchased some property from Samuel Hermann; that November, the nineteen lots were sold at auction for the benefit of his heirs in New York City.[20] The other Jew involved in a duel, Major Leon Dyer, was more fortunate than Gomez. In 1836, on his way from Baltimore through New Orleans to serve in the army of Texas, Dyer took the side of a friend in a quarrel with a New Yorker, resigned his commission, and met his antagonist at the usual early morning hour of seven a.m. Both missed on the first shot. Their seconds regarded this as satisfaction enough for wounded honor. Dyer proceeded on to Texas.[21]

4. Boys and Family Men

Most of the Jews who came to New Orleans had no mind for pretensions to such an aristocratic privilege as dueling. They came to New Orleans with little more than the clothing on their backs and a willingness to work hard. Some of them were young enough to be thought of as boys rather than men. One of these was Jacob Bodenheimer, who ran away from his home in Speyer, Germany, at the age of fourteen, because he could not get along with his stepmother. He arrived in New Orleans aboard a sailing vessel in 1822, worked for storekeepers only a little better off than he, and in 1827 left for Moscow Landing in northern Louisiana, where he cleared a farm, opened a country store and operated a ferry. His years in New Orleans went totally unnoticed in press and public records; we know of them only because his son, who became the mayor of the Louisiana town of South Highlands, wrote down some stories his father had told him, at the urging of a local student of history.[22] Another such boy was David L. Kokernot, who arrived in New Orleans in 1817 with his father, Levi Moses Kokernot, at the age of twelve. David's mother and brother remained in Amsterdam, probably just long enough for the father to establish himself in business. David was meanwhile apprenticed to a Mississippi River pilot for a few years, then shipped out for Amsterdam, Bremen and New York on various vessels. His mother, Betsy Levy Kokernot, and his brother Louis were in New Orleans by 1820 at the latest, so David could then have stayed at home. But adventure and the sea were in his blood. David went back to the sailing life, was shipwrecked in Haiti where he worked on a mulatto's plantation, took ship for Hamburg where he did some buying for the family's store, worked for the United States government on a revenue cutter, was shipwrecked again, this time on the Texas coast, and, after taking part in the battle of Anahuac and other campaigns of the Texas War for Independence, settled in Texas as a storekeeper and rancher.[23]

David's mother and brother led more prosaic lives. After

Levi's death, his widow and son operated a retail store at the corner of St. Louis and Levee streets, bought and sold property, and built some structures along the railroad in the Faubourg Marigny. In 1832 the sheriff seized part of their stock to pay some bills. Betsy and Louis seem to have caught an inordinate number of runaway Negroes, or stopped Negroes carrying money without the proper identification; probably much of their trade was with slave-owners. Betsy brought some relatives over to New Orleans from Holland in 1831; her family was increased even more after her marriage to Alexander Hart, whose story we have previously described. When Alexander and his son Isaac joined her business in 1836, her son Louis became a partner of his brother-in-law, Benjamin Van Ostern, another Hollander whose family had been in town since before 1820. Ben's father, Levi, another dealer in dry goods, had gone bankrupt in 1828. One hopes that the partnership between Louis and Ben worked more smoothly than Louis' marriage to Nancy Van Ostern; they were divorced in 1839, probably the first divorce in New Orleans in which both husband and wife were Jews. There was financial trouble in the family in 1839, too, over the division of property among all these in-laws: Isaac Hart, Louis Kokernot, Betsy Kokernot Hart, and Benjamin Van Ostern. Whether it was just a family disagreement enlarged to include three diverse interests, or one more result of the crisis which began in 1837, we cannot make out from the records. Louis and Nancy's children died very young, so the Kokernot name did not survive in New Orleans as it did in Texas, but the Van Ostern name was carried into the Christian community through David—Nancy's other brother, who married Mary Chapman Thayer.[24]

If Levi Moses Kokernot brought Betsy and their sons to New Orleans as early as 1817, or even 1820, they may have been the first Jewish family to settle in New Orleans as a household. All of his predecessors whom we have been able to trace, with the possible exception of Manis Jacobs, seem to have been bachelors who established families, if at all, after their arrival in the area. But the number of Jewish families increased swiftly after 1820. Aaron Daniels, who arrived about 1822, at the age of forty-six, brought his wife along with him; whether they came directly from Prussia or stopped somewhere else on the way, is not known. Daniels was another dry goods shopkeeper of whom there were, eventually, dozens. He kept his store at 17 Chartres street. In 1834, he went into partnership with Daniel Goodman, Hyam Harris' son-in-law. Goodman, another Hollander, was in New Orleans no later than 1824, when he was twenty-three years old. He was an active Mason and was highly regarded by his lodge brothers. In 1837 he was appointed a commissioner in New Orleans for the sale of stock of the Vidalia, Harrisonburg and Alexandria Rail Road Company. The same year he was elected secretary of the Young Men's Howard Association, the society of rescue-workers who rendered public service during the annual yellow fever and cholera epidemics. In 1840 Goodman and Daniels went bankrupt. If they had been content with the vast quantities of dry goods which they bought and sold at wholesale and retail, concentrating especially on the plantation market, they would have survived the depression. But Goodman's penchant for joining every organization in sight led him to purchase stock in a number of flimsy enterprises; he and Daniels also speculated in paper money and invested in Tennessee and Kentucky land. All of their property was sold at a sheriff's auction in 1840. Goodman's will cannot be located, so we have no knowledge of how well he recovered from these losses, but Aaron Daniels' estate was worth only $674 at his death on February 6, 1862.[25]

5. New Yorkers Come and Go

Goodman had another partner before Aaron Daniels: Solomon Soher of New York City, who came down to New Orleans about 1822 to try his luck. He was in business with S. S. De Jonge for a while, but was Goodman's partner by 1824. They had a dry goods store on Chartres street, but were also actively buying cotton and peltries. Together with Goodman's brother-in-law, Abraham Hyam Harris, they owned shares in a number of steamboats during 1828–1830. Harris left the firm in 1830, but Soher and Goodman maintained their partnership for another four years. How much of this time Soher spent in New Orleans is uncertain. Some time in 1828 he married Haym Salomon's granddaughter, Miriam Andrews, whose brothers had set up a store in Huntsville, Alabama, in 1827, and eventually became wealthy factors and merchants with branches in Mobile, New York City and New Orleans (1835). Miriam seems never to have accompanied her husband to New Orleans; her children Rosalie, Zipporah and Moses were born in New York City in March, 1829, May, 1831, and June, 1834, respectively. Soher probably wanted to protect his wife from the discomforts and dangers of the New Orleans climate, or he may have spent much of his time in New York City as the buying agent for his firm's retail merchandise and as the salesman for the cotton and furs they bought in New Orleans. By 1834 Soher had left New Orleans; his son W. Andrews Soher was born in May, 1836, in England. Perhaps he had already made whatever money he thought he could amass in New Orleans; or he may have been so unsuccessful that he lost hope and went to England to work there for Miriam's brothers' interests which soon assumed international proportions.[26]

Other New Yorkers came to New Orleans to cash in on the prosperity, too, but they did not stay as long as Sol Soher. Rowland and John Myer Davies, and Rowland and Monroe Cromelien were in business in two different locations during the period 1822–1826. One store, at 24 Canal street, was called R. and J. M. Davies, while the other at 59 Canal was known as Cromelien, Davies & Company. Their interests were the same: both firms handled wholesale and retail dry goods, acted as agents for ships, bought cotton and sugar, imported specie, advertised for the plantation trade, and sold merchandise sent to them on consignment from the North. Both Davies brothers were married to Cromelien girls, but since they traveled back and forth between New York and New Orleans, it would appear that their wives did not want to settle in Louisiana. Or perhaps the brothers and cousins-in-law did not do as well as they thought they should. Both firms closed down in 1826. But if the four men sold everything they advertised, and made a profit out of it, they must have made enough to retire on.[27]

6. The Gottschalk Clan

Edward Gottschalk came to New Orleans from London at about the same time as these New Yorkers. Born about 1795, the son of Lezer (Lazarus) ben Gottschalk Levi and Shinah (Jane) Harris, Gottschalk first appears in the New Orleans records in an 1823 advertisement of a reward for the return of some cheap jewelry stolen from his rooms at 36 Conti street. In 1825 Gottschalk was working for Hart Shiff, but by 1827 he had entered into a partnership arrangement with a man named Reimers. They set up the sort of commission brokerage business which was so common in New Orleans: they dealt in shares of stock, sold exchange on other cities, bought and sold slaves, liquor, dry goods, notions, cotton, rope, and so forth, and acted as ships' agents. Their trade was primarily wholesale. During the period 1827–1830, they seem to have been one of the largest commission houses in the city.[28]

On May 26, 1828, Père Antoine married Edward to Marie-Aimée Bruslé, the twenty-year-old daughter of a wealthy refugee from Saint-Domingue. Their first child, Louis Moreau Gottschalk (named for his granduncle, the scholarly attorney Louis Moreau Lislet), who was to become the first great American-born composer-pianist, was born on May 8, 1829.[29] Just a few weeks before the baby was born, Edward took his brother James into his business. James had been in New Orleans since 1825 at the very latest; another brother died in the yellow fever epidemic of 1824, at the age of twenty-three.[30]

Perhaps Edward Gottschalk expanded his business too swiftly, or speculated too freely. In 1830 he became a bankrupt. His office equipment and the goods stored in his warehouse were sold at sheriff's auction; countinghouse desks, book presses, chairs, railings, a stove and pipes, barrels of snuff, boxes of cigars, bitters, cordials, sauces, crayons, cases of liquor, a medicine chest, and a shipment of napkins, were among the property which was sold. Three years later he sold some land, nine slaves and the contents of his home. Among the parcels of real estate were two hundred and eleven lots of ground in the town of Magnolia and along the railroad, one hundred and sixty acres in Illinois, a similar number in Missouri, and some lots in New Orleans. The furnishings of his home at 88 Rampart street, between Bienville and Conti, are an interesting index of the luxury with which he had surrounded his wife and children:

> "beds and bedding, cradles, sofas, sideboards, clocks and vases, card tables, a dining table with six additional pieces, round table with marble slabs, looking glasses, toilettes, wash stands, chairs, an elegant glass English chandelier, plated ware, cut glass, carpets and rugs, fenders and irons &c, crockery and kitchen utensils . . . Also, one second handed elegant upright piano forte of German manufacture, three new d[itt]o English manufacture, also a collection of books, in English, French, German and Spanish, and a handsome saddle horse, with saddle and bridle . . . Also a superior and excellent Harp. . . ."

Whether this sale of his household possessions and personal property was related to his prior bankruptcy is not clear; nor can we tell why Edward's wife had to sell a great deal of her own property during 1834–1837. Aimée and James had a small fortune invested in real estate in the suburbs of New Orleans and in Mississippi, Illinois and Florida. The members of the family were clearly involved in speculative ventures and in financial problems; with many mouths to feed—a child was born to Edward and Aimée almost every year—Edward must have felt hard pressed.[31]

It may be that Edward was not himself involved in the sale of his wife's holdings; beginning in 1835 he once again seems to have become an important commission broker, if we can judge his success from his newspaper advertisements of shares of stock, Texas lands (sixty-five thousand acres at one time), slaves, houses, and coffee. He seems not to have been ruined by the panic of 1837. Louis Moreau, who showed every sign of being a musical prodigy very early in his life—the harp and all of the pianos had undoubtedly been purchased for him—was sent off to Paris in 1842 to continue his musical education, and Aimée, with her four younger sons and two daughters, joined Louis there in 1847. Edward stayed in New Orleans, trying to make enough money to support two households, but he was close to bankruptcy at the time of his death on October 23, 1853.

Aimée seems to have been excessively ambitious for herself and her children; Edward was a victim not only of his own speculative nature but also of his wife's inordinate expectations of wealth, luxury and social recognition.[32]

7. Physicians, Dentists, Quacks and Military Men

How many members of his family Edward brought to New Orleans is uncertain. At least one more brother came to Louisiana; he was Dr. Joseph Victor Gottschalk, who arrived in 1836 from Prussia, and tendered "his services to the public, as Physician, Surgeon, Oculist, & Accoucheur." Dr. Gottschalk had his office at his residence on Conti street, between Chartres and Levee. But he was dead within a year; he fell victim on July 10, 1837, at the age of forty, to the perennial New Orleans menace, yellow fever. Joseph left his wife, Marianne Charlotte Wagner, a native of Stargart, Pomerania, her son by a previous marriage, and his own four children. The inventory of his modest estate, which was worth about $3,000, included the typical medical equipment of the time: a large case of amputation instruments worth $120; a pocket case of instruments valued at $50; some instruments used in midwifery, dentistry and the like, together with a medical saw, all worth $60; and another portable case inventoried at $50.[33]

Other Jewish medical people were in New Orleans at one time or another throughout the years. One Michael Solomon notified the population of the city, in 1823, that he had just arrived from Surinam "where he has long and successfully administered relief to those affected with corns; and offers his services to the public for the effectual cure of that distressing complaint. He also flatters himself to have in his possession the very best medicines useful for that purpose."[34] A better trained man was Dr. Gerson Adersbach, a graduate of the Prussian State University in Halle an der Saale, who served as a contract physician with the United States Army at Forts Jackson and St. Philip, at the mouth of the Mississippi, below New Orleans, from 1826 to 1829. Adersbach also spent some time in private practice in New Orleans. He died from the effects of a bout with yellow fever, while on his way North in 1829.[35] Dr. G. Eichhorn arrived in New Orleans in 1828, convinced that his experience in the West Indies and Mexico had qualified him to treat tropical diseases, especially yellow fever. He had also, he reported, "made some successful operations on eyes, & tenders services in this branch of medicine." In 1833 Eichhorn decided to leave New Orleans, and notified the public that bills for his services might be paid at Samuel Hermann's counting house. Carl Kohn wrote the news of Eichhorn's departure to his Uncle Samuel and commented sarcastically that he supposed that "Dr. Eichhorn has gone to Tampico to astonish the world there."[36]

Dr. Zachariah Levy Florance, who advertised his prowess at every sort of dental work and sold toothpaste and a tincture for sore gums, moved to New Orleans from Charleston in 1827 or 1828. His sons Jacob and William had already come to town and established themselves in business in 1825. By the early 1830's, two more sons, Benjamin and Henry, were also in New Orleans. They were a big, busy, bustling family. William and Henry were both active in the Louisiana Militia; Jacob ran for the office of alderman twice, but lost both elections. The family's fortunes rose and fell. William went bankrupt in 1838, and Jacob's "elegant mansion," the Florance House hotel, at the corner of Camp street and Lafayette Square, was sold at auction in 1839 and converted into a boardinghouse. But several of the brothers became wealthy men before they moved North in the late 1840's or early 1850's.[37]

Another Jew who was active in the Louisiana Militia was Joseph Lasalle, who served as Acting Adjutant of the Second Regiment in 1829, and was elected Sergeant Major, then Lieutenant, of the Tirailleurs, in 1830–31. Lasalle was also interested in politics. In 1828–30, he served as clerk of the fourth ward elections; in 1833 he was a judge at the polls. His name was placed in nomination for the office of enrolling clerk of the state legislature in 1833, but he received only three votes. Lasalle ran what he called a "Cheap Store," where he sold dry goods, liquor, glassware and china, jewelry, firecrackers and other odds and ends first on St. Philip street, then at the corner of Condé and Dumaine, finally at 237 Royal. He went bankrupt in 1834, at which time he was in debt to Manis Jacobs for $1,628. His creditors finally accepted settlement in 1837, but it is uncertain whether he was still in New Orleans at that time. Lasalle faded from view as silently as he had appeared in 1827.[38]

8. A Different Kind of Cohen

Lasalle was probably not a Frenchman, despite his name, but rather a German who, like others, adopted the name under French influence during the Napoleonic period. There were, however, a number of French Jews in New Orleans at this time. Two were the brothers Sacerdote, Salomon and Simon, natives of Bordeaux, who were in New Orleans by 1818 at the latest. Sacerdote is, of course, a Latin/Romance translation of Cohen, the Hebrew word for priest. Simon was an ordinary sort of person, with a dry goods store, who made fairly frequent buying trips to France. His wife was Sipora, daughter of Jacob Delvaille and Rachel Cardose of St. Esprit, near Bayonne, a famous old Sephardic community; one of Sipora's brothers, Abraham, lived in Jamaica.[39] Simon's brother, Salomon Sacerdote, was a different kind of fellow from his brother. During the early 1820's he was sole- or part-owner of the Frascati Hotel, located in the Clouet suburb of New Orleans. This establishment was a warm-weather resort, which featured family dinners, rooms for private social functions, lawn bowling, and bar rooms. On holidays there were fireworks, balloon ascensions and other forms of entertainment. Salomon went broke in this venture, ending up with debts of more than $19,000—$3,000 to Simon—and, in desperation or out of personal inclination, turned to the demimonde. He opened a gambling house, the license for which cost him $5,000—the state used its income from licenses for such establishments to support schools and hospitals. This gambling house may have been located in the St. Philip Street Theatre which Sacerdote and a partner bought and converted into the Washington Ballroom—the scene of the notorious quadroon balls for which New Orleans was so well-known during this period, and which have been romanticized from occasions for assignation into formal coming-out parties for sheltered quadroon maidens. Sacerdote's partner in this undertaking seems to have been the wealthy "free man of colour," Antoine Jonau, a man of some mystery, who took over the property after Sacerdote's death in August, 1834. Salomon's estate was estimated to be worth $39,177. His wife, Aimée Dauqueminil de Morand, and his brother Simon were his heirs.[40]

9. The First Warburg and his Sons

One of the most unusual of all the early Jews who came to New Orleans was Daniel Warburg, the first member of that distinguished German-Jewish clan of bankers, scientists and philanthropists to establish residence in the United States. The Warburg genealogy can be traced back almost as far as that of the Schiff family. Daniel's earliest known forebear was one Simon of Cassel, an exchange broker, moneylender and grain merchant in Warburg in the middle of the sixteenth century, who died about 1566. The family was in Hamburg and nearby Altona from the early years of the seventeenth century. Daniel's father, Samuel Abraham Warburg, was first a merchant of Dutch-made wares in Altona, and then a commission merchant in Hamburg; he died in the latter city in 1834 at the age of seventy-five.[41] Daniel, who was born in Hamburg on October 10, 1789, was in New Orleans by 1821, when he was in the commission business with Henry G. Schmidt, a friend of Samuel Hermann. During the 1830's Daniel was especially active in the real estate line, buying and selling property; he was a founder of the Company of Architects, a development firm. He also served as secretary and director of the Levee Steam Cotton Press, and was on the board of the Citizens' Bank. His property holdings during this period appear to have been tremendous, but he apparently went broke in 1839–41; in 1853, he was still being dunned for more than $12,000 in unpaid notes.[42]

Warburg had political aspirations. In 1835 he was a candidate for alderman of the fifth district of New Orleans. After he lost this election, the *St. Francisville Journal* jocularly listed him as a potential gubernatorial candidate. He had other ambitions as well. On July 9, 1836, he made the startling announcement in the *Bee* to the "Captains and Seamen of the Shipping in the Port of New Orleans" that he knew and possessed "the true knowledge of what is termed the quadrature of the circle, and can prove it by a figure, true in its demonstration and true in its calculation." After twelve inches of tightly-printed, closely-reasoned geometrical and philosophical ratiocination (which included the statement, "I deny all belief in religion whatever be its name or ceremonies") he named his price for the revelation of his discovery:

> "I demand of the American nation and government the payment to me of Ten Millions of Dollars, or of the British nation and government Five Millions pounds sterling, if either of them desire to be in possession of the knowledge the truth of which I declare to possess.
>
> "I consider it but a trifling sum, *for if the genius that governs me*, should teach me the secret art of ship building, according to the laws of nature, the nation I shall instruct in that secret will govern on the seas of the world.
>
> "I know the true meaning of the philosophers stone, and can form the cross. . . ."

Warburg signed his statement with his motto, "The Lion and the Serpent." Neither the American nor the British government made any effort to purchase Warburg's secret. Three years later, in the midst of the economic disaster which affected him as well as others, Warburg was still laying claim to mathematical and scientific knowledge denied to other men. In 1839 he published two pamphlets of a mathematical nature. The first was entitled, "*The Goddess Eve.*" *Two Tables, Constructed to Demonstrate by Numbers The True Mode for Extracting the Square Root out of all entire numbers above 1000, and the Cubic Root out of all entire numbers above 1000. Besides: Multiplication and the Rule of Three with Entire Numbers.* (*These Tables may be carried to endless extent.*) This twelve-page item, printed by E. Johns and registered with the Clerk of the District Court on January 2, 1839, was dedicated to the former President, John Quincy Adams. This gem was followed, on September 16, 1839, by another tabled work, *Buy a Lottery Ticket; or A Chance to Get Rid of Money.* "*Table and the necessary explanation, to shew the combination of a Lottery Scheme composed of 75 Numbers, three Numbers in a Row on each Ticket, and 12 Numbers drawn to determine the Prizes.*" A professor of mathematics who has examined these communications thinks that Warburg was an early member of "the International Clan of Assorted Nuts." Perhaps his family was aware of his ambition to become recognized as a mathematical genius and therefore shipped him off to the United States where he would not embarrass them; or he may have slipped beyond reason after losing his way in the speculative quagmires of New Orleans. We have no way of telling whether he was eccentric only in this one way, or in many others.[43]

Warburg has another claim on our interest. He was the father of two mulatto sons, Eugène and Daniel Warburg, who have some significance in the history of artistic endeavor among American Negroes. Their mother, Marie Rose, was apparently a Cuban Negro, still a slave when Warburg first cohabited with her. In March, 1830, Warburg took the requisite legal step of making public announcement of his intention to free his slave Eugène. He must also have freed the mother, although we cannot locate the relevant documents, because their other children, Henri Arthur, Elizabeth Eulalie, Marie Françoise, and Joseph Daniel, appear to have been born free. Marie Rose Warburg, f. w. c., was free by 1837 at the latest, for she herself purchased a slave named Mary early that year. The younger Daniel was active as a stonecutter, tomb designer and engraver, and spent his entire life in New Orleans. Eugène, apparently more ambitious, temperamental and talented, left the city about 1853, after having studied with a French artist named Garbeille, and studied and worked in England, France and Italy. In England he is said to have been commissioned by the Duchess of Sutherland to design bas-reliefs illustrating the story of *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* In 1855 he did a bust of John Y. Mason, the United States Minister to France; this sole surviving example of Eugène's work is now in the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond. Two further pieces, *Le Pêcheur* and *Le Premier Baiser*, are mentioned by a biographer, but are not known other than by title. Another piece is known only from an extensive description in the *Bee*, December 13, 1850:

> "A CREOLE SCULPTOR—We paid a visit to Hall's gilding establishment in Canal street yesterday, and examined with some attention a marble statue chiseled by a young Creole of our city, EUGENE WARBURG, a pupil of GARBEILLE. It represents, we presume, GANYMEDE, Jove's cup-bearer, kneeling and presenting a flowing beaker of Nectar to the King of Gods and Men. The design is beautiful, and the execution reflects infinite credit upon the taste and talent of our townsman. The statue is offered for raffle, and is estimated to be worth $500. Every patron of art, and admirer of native talent should gladly take a chance on this exquisite specimen of sculpture. If Mr. WARBURG will bestow proper study on his models and labor assiduously at his profession, he will doubtless attain deserved excellence."

Eugène Warburg died in Rome on January 12, 1859, when he was about thirty-three years old. His father may still have been alive, but the mother had apparently died some years before.[44]

10. A JOURNALIST AND A DRAMATIST-EDUCATOR

Eugène Warburg's sculpture of Ganymede and Jupiter was probably reviewed for the *Bee* by its English-language editor, Dr. Samuel Harby. A physician and journalist, son of Isaac Harby, the distinguished dramatist, educator and pioneer of religious reform in Charleston, Samuel was in New Orleans by 1834, when he was twenty-one years old. Whether he practiced medicine in New Orleans is uncertain. He was working for the *Bee* by 1838, and in 1844 became one of the four owners of the newspaper. He continued to be a major factor in the paper's management and editorial staff until his death on June 11, 1862. Sam's first wife was Frances Levy, L. A. Levy's sister, whom he married in March, 1842. She died in November, 1850; a year later he married her sister Sarah, a widow. Dr. Harby was an acknowledged intellectual leader in New Orleans; his opinions and taste were highly respected.[45]

Young Sam Harby had been brought to New Orleans by his uncle George Washington Harby, who was only sixteen years older than he was. George became a well-known educator, dramatist and cultural leader in New Orleans. He was in the city before November 28, 1828, when he was married by Parson Clapp to Mary Olivia Lucas, formerly of Louisville. He probably opened his private school immediately after his arrival, serving as headmaster and senior teacher. (In an advertisement in 1834 he wrote of having served as an "English and Classical Teacher" for the past eight years.) Harby employed a number of assistant teachers as well as instructors in various specialized fields. The courses of study which Harby's Academy offered to its pupils included the following:

> "Orthography, Reading in Prose and Poetry;
> Grammar;
> Penmanship, on the Caretarian principle;
> Ancient and Modern Geography;
> The use of the Globes;
> The construction of Maps;
> Arithmetic, Geometry;
> Plain Astronomy, Mythology;
> Logic, Constitution United States;
> Universal History;
> Botany, and all useful and polite learning.
> LANGUAGES.
> English, French, Spanish, Latin."

School hours were from eight in the morning until three in the afternoon. Tuition charges amounted to four or five dollars a month, with additional fees for foreign language instruction. By 1839, the fees were between $4 and $8 a month for day pupils, and $25 a month for boarding students, the latter charges including tuition, room, meals and laundry. Harby's philosophy of education was simple and clear:

> ". . . Oral Instruction and Conversational Lectures are the only sure methods of teaching rational beings. Pupils must have explained to them the meaning of all their studies—they must be made to comprehend what they are doing. Long tasks may improve memory, but cannot instruct the understanding. The think-

> ing powers must be brought into operation. The curiosity must be excited—then search commences; the preceptor aids the student—the truth is discovered—the boy is delighted—the task has been a pleasant one; and the utile cum dulce is combined. This causes powerful excitement in the breast of youth, and ends [leads?] to a noble emulation, and a virtuous ambition.
>
> "In fact, in order to instruct youth three things are essentially requisite:—Easy tasks—certain advancement—and pleasant occupation . . ."

In order to demonstrate how effective his methods of pedagogy were, Harby invited interested persons to visit the school and quiz the pupils who, he felt sure, were prepared to answer questions at any time, not just in scheduled examinations. As a matter of fact, George's educational system was an old fashioned one, stressing classical learning and formal knowledge; he was probably following the same approach which his brother Isaac had used in his Charleston institution. When the school building at Tivoli Circle burned down on January 11, 1840 ("supposed to be the work of an incendiary," said the *Bee*—not, let us hope, the "work" of a disgruntled student), Harby's private venture came to an end. His institution was transformed into a public school of the third municipality, and began to admit girls. Of a total of 110 students in 1842, divided into four grades, seventy-six were boys and thirty-four were girls; only twenty-three of them were enrolled in the French class. Meanwhile, Yankee teachers were being imported from the North; Horace Mann's influence was being felt throughout the country. New educational techniques were being developed, predicated on the needs of the middle class—education was no longer to be the privilege of an elite caste trained in the classical manner. George Harby, apparently, could not adjust to the new day. By 1855 he had been demoted from principal to teacher, and was working in a school in the first district of the city.[46]

Mary Harby died in Louisville while visiting with her family in the fall of 1834. A year later Abbé Moni married George to fifteen-year-old Marie Ulalie Pouillot, an orphan who had been born in France.[47] This young lady had probably been attracted to George, who was twenty-two years older than she was, far more by virtue of the glamor of his theatrical interests than the intellectuality of his profession as an educator. George was the heir to a family tradition of literary and dramatic interests. His brother Isaac had written and produced plays of a classical character in Charleston during the 1820's. George's earliest theatrical effort, a melodrama on an American theme, *Tutoona, or The Battle of Saratoga*, was presented at the New Orleans American Theatre on February 22, 1835—in honor of the celebration of Washington's birthday anniversary. James Rees, George's friend and colleague, who published a number of books on the contemporary drama in America, thought that *Tutoona* "is the best national drama we have—greatly superior to 'She would be a Soldier' of Major Noah." The *Louisiana Advertiser's* reviewer praised *Tutoona* for "a score of hair breadth escapes, a great deal of action, and interesting incident," but thought that its "many trivial passages . . . its many extravagant tirades . . ." and an excessive number of "scalping, whooping, trotting Indians," detracted from its success. Another reviewer dwelt more on the author's character, and the issue of native American drama, than on the play itself:

> "Tutoona or the Battle of Saratoga.—This play was performed on Saturday night to an overflowing and delighted audience. At the end of the piece the author was universally called for when he appeared and addressed the auditory in a most feeling and beautiful manner . . . This Drama . . . possesses spirit, vivacity and sentiment, which proves what we have always heard of our fellow-townsman—that with a generous and noble philanthropy, he has a heart and a spirit, one would think too great for so small a compass. He has for a very long time been among us, one of the most arduous laborers in the cause of literature.—His oration—his essays in the cause of education, his beautiful address when he received a standard for the Louisiana Guards are now ripe in our memory:—and his general probity, and moral qualifications have proved him a man of more than ordinary talents and literary acquirements. He is a native of our soil . . . let us not cast a mist before our eyes because this play is not transatlantic . . . We sincerely hope this production may prove a source of satisfaction and *profit* to the author. . . ."

Tutoona was repeated three times, the final performance being a benefit for the author; it was revived in 1841. In 1835, George also delivered the address at the cornerstone ceremonies of Caldwell's new theater.[48]

James Rees, for whose periodical *Dramatic Mirror and Literary Companion* Harby wrote New Orleans news in 1841–42, gives us the names of other dramatic pieces which Harby wrote: *Minka, or the Russian Daughter; Mahommed; Stephania; The Robber Girl; Azzo; Abou Hassan; The Gentleman in Black;* and *Twenty Years' Life of a Courtesan.* None of these dramas is recorded as having been produced in New Orleans. But a local color farce by Harby, *Hard Times in New Orleans,* was given twice in 1837—one hopes that some of the bankrupted merchants and bankers had enough money to buy tickets to find out what was so funny about their troubles. Harby's "domestic drama," *The Deceived,* was presented in 1838. His most successful work was a dramatization of Robert Montgomery Bird's novel, *Nick of the Woods.* After a trial performance or two in Natchez, it was given its premiere in New Orleans on March 20, 1838. The *Picayune* reported that *Nick of the Woods* was received with "deafening applause;" the critic marveled that Harby had so successfully "dove-tailed the language of the author with his own, that his drama comes before us as a perfect whole." He pleaded with the public to support the play, because Harby was in financial trouble, "arising from his too free disposition to aid and assist his fellow creatures. We could enumerate an hundred instances of his generous open hearted kindness, manifesting itself diametrically to his disadvantage. To recover some portion of these losses, he has had recourse to his pen." The author's benefit, on March 23, 1838, included a potpourri of other pieces (the trial scene from *The Merchant of Venice;* a German song in seven parts; and the operetta *No!*) added to *Nick,* in order to attract as large an audience as possible. *Nick of the Woods* was performed in St. Louis, Philadelphia, and other cities, and Rees seems to have done everything possible to popularize Harby's work throughout the country—he was convinced that Harby's version of *Nick* was the "most popular" of the many stage adaptations of the novel—but the time was not propitious for anyone to aspire to become a professional dramatist in America. Although there is no question but that Harby was the only successful New Orleans dramatist in this period, it was discouraging that some of his works were never even performed, and those that were, lasted only a few days. At the time of his death in 1862, hardly anyone remembered his early prominence as a stagecrafter.[49]

11. Three Charlestonians

George and Sam Harby were not the only Jews who came to New Orleans from the cultured environment of Charleston. Others came, too, similarly motivated by the zest for adventure and the longing for fortune, but also bringing with them the proclivities for intellectual pursuit, professional excellence and service in public life which were so characteristic of that famed Jewish community. One Charlestonian newcomer was the seventeen-year-old college dropout, Judah P. Benjamin, who arrived in New Orleans in 1828, with no visible assets other than the wit, charm, omnivorous mind and boundless energy with which he would find his place in the sun. When Benjamin arrived in New Orleans, he stayed with and probably worked for Jacob Levy Florance, the dentist's son, who must have known him in Charleston. On the eve of the Civil War, when Benjamin was publicly accused, in the North, of having been expelled from Yale because he had been caught in a theft, Florance wrote the following to his daughter Lavinia:

> "It [the charge of theft] has shocked me and all his admirers Christians and Jews. Whether the charge is true God only knows. As the present political troubles has brought it out, after slumbering so long it may be untrue. But the signer and the collegeates are named and most of them are living. All that I know is that about 1827 when he arrived at New Orleans and entered my family (then about 18 years old) he said that he had been to Yale college. Had not finished his studies and left because his father could not support him."[50]

If Benjamin did not work for Florance, then his employer prior to the time that he learned the rudiments of law while working for the notary G. R. Springer, must have been Samuel Hermann, for that wealthy Jewish merchant-banker was a witness at Benjamin's marriage to Natalie St. Martin on February 16, 1833.[51]

It would serve little purpose for us here to attempt to summarize Judah Benjamin's meteoric rise to wealth, political power, professional prestige and national prominence. The reader is referred without apology to Robert Douthat Meade's splendid biography of the man which offers penetrating insight into Benjamin's life, particularly his career as Attorney General, Secretary of War and Secretary of State of the Confederacy. Benjamin will always be worthy of study in depth.[52] We shall later refer to him as an example of the process of assimilation, but it is interesting here to note that he was married not as "J. P. Benjamin," the name he always used in public, or as "Judah Philip Benjamin," his full name, but as "Philip Benjamin." Was it the priest who bridled at entering the name "Judah" ("Judas?") in the church's marriage register, or did Natalie refuse to call him by his first name? We shall never be able to discover why neither his first name nor even his first initial was used in the wedding document, but perhaps this occurrence was symptomatic of a problem with which he had to deal all through his life as a public figure.

Judah Benjamin, according to report, came to New Orleans with his older cousin, twenty-two-year-old Henry Michael Hyams. Hyams was not only searching for opportunity for himself, but was exploring the area with a view of moving his entire family—his father, three brothers and three sisters—to Louisiana. Benjamin's grandmother and Hyams' mother were sisters, and the families appear to have been very close. Henry is said to have been admitted to the New Orleans bar in 1830, but there is no record of this in the city. He did not, at any rate, remain in New Orleans very long, but secured a position as cashier of the Donaldsonville branch of the Canal Bank. Members of his family joined him in that town. On January 16, 1833, his sister Eliza was married there to Joseph Benzaken

Marks. The wedding was probably conducted by their father, Samuel Hyams, who had performed a number of such ceremonies in Charleston. Marks was another Charlestonian who moved to New Orleans. He served as a notary in New Orleans until his death by drowning in 1851.[53]

One William Hull denounced Henry Hyams in the press in 1834 as a "*mean, despicable* coward," and challenged him to a duel. Hyams answered very calmly that after Hull "shall have cleared his character from the suspicion of having stolen One Thousand Dollars from the brother of the undersigned, no satisfaction due to a gentleman, shall be withheld from him." He referred any answers to his two seconds, one of whom was his cousin Judah Benjamin. In 1835, Henry was a leader at an anti-abolitionist mass meeting in Donaldsonville and was appointed a member of a vigilante committee to thwart anti-slavery propaganda and quell any servile rebellions which might take place. This activity foreshadowed his active participation in the Democratic Party after he moved to New Orleans in the 1840's. In 1855 he was elected to the state senate, and in 1859, became Lieutenant-Governor of Louisiana—the first Jew known to serve in that office in any state in the Union.[54]

It will do no harm to go beyond our self-imposed time limit of 1828 in order to include a third Charlestonian who practiced law in New Orleans, Myer M. Cohen, who arrived in Louisiana somewhat later than Benjamin and Hyams. Cohen conducted a Charleston "English and Classical Academy," very similar to George Harby's, from 1824 to 1828, until he passed his bar examinations. He practiced law and entered politics; in 1835 he was a justice of the peace, and a member of the South Carolina legislature. As an officer of the Washington Guards of Charleston he spent three and a half months in the Seminole War, and wrote one of the most popular books about it, entitled *Notices of Florida and The Campaigns. By M. M. Cohen (An Officer of the Left Wing)*, published in Charleston in 1836 by Burges and Honour. Late in 1836, when he was thirty-two, and had not yet made his fortune, he decided to move on to the broader, more exciting opportunities of New Orleans, and on March 16, 1837, opened a law office in the Banks Arcade; he also secured an appointment as Commissioner (legal representative) in New Orleans for the state of South Carolina. He immediately threw himself into the political and cultural life of his new home. In December, 1837, he delivered an ornate address on the relationship of literature and commerce at the annual meeting of the New-Orleans Commercial Library Society. In 1838 he was a leading spokesman at the meeting which was organized to raise funds for the victims of the great Charleston fire, and George W. Harby joined him in collecting contributions in the second municipality. Cohen was a typical American "joiner." He was constantly active on committees: for the relief of the people of Natchez; for the establishment of a German theater in New Orleans; for the reception of the Governor of South Carolina when he visited the city. Despite his literary pretensions, and his variegated activities, he was also a brilliant, industrious attorney who specialized, as Judah Benjamin did, in commercial law. He was active in the New Orleans Law Association, and served as a member of the Administrative Board of the University of Louisiana, of which he ultimately became secretary. His practice brought him into constant contact with business interests; he was attorney for the Mutual Benefit Life and Fire Insurance Company, chairman of the permanent committee of the New Orleans, Algiers, Attakapas and Opelousas Rail Road, and president of the South-Western Industrial Fair of 1854. Cohen was frequently embroiled in political activities. In July, 1851, he presided at a riotous mass meeting after the news reached New Orleans of the execution of some of the Southern filibusterers who had invaded Cuba under the leadership of Narciso Lopez. At the age of sixty-nine, in June, 1873, Cohen himself was tried for taking part in an assassination attempt on the life of the Reconstruction governor of Louisiana, William P. Kellogg, but was acquitted of the crime! He was still active in the practice of law, and was teaching admiralty and commercial law; as late as 1883, he wrote a scholarly treatise on admiralty law. A man of many interests, both scholarly and activist, was Myer Cohen, who, because he had once declined a federal judgeship, was still called "Judge" Cohen when he died on February 23, 1887, at the age of eighty-three. His enterprise, hot temper, militant spirit, local "booster" qualities make him seem as much a man of our times as of his own.[55]

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

So we come to the end of our description of this mixed multitude of Jews who came to New Orleans in this early period in search of fortune, adventure and happiness. They came from New York City, from Charleston, and from England, France, Holland and the German-speaking lands, drawn by the promise of wealth, success and personal fulfillment, driven, too, by personal failure or lack of opportunity in their old homes. They were individuals all; no generalizations can accurately characterize them as a group. Some found permanent security, prosperity and fame; others ended in bankruptcy, defeat or death. Some made a high mark, wrote their names large in the economic and political life of the city; others left a bare record of their passage. Most of them were engaged in the hectic commercial pursuits of the city—the business emporium of the Southland—but there was a sprinkling of attorneys, medical men, cultural leaders. Drama there was in the lives of many, duels, divorces, public conflicts; others lived quietly. They were people, and people are always interesting. But they were Jews, too. . . .

V

Judaism Finally Comes to New Orleans: The Organization of a Congregation

We have found no evidence to justify a very late report that Jewish services were conducted in New Orleans in 1750; indeed, we have not located any Jews in the town until 1757–58, and there is not the slightest hint in documentary form, either friendly or hostile, that they attempted to meet for worship. Surely Rochemore would have added that fact to his denunciation of the presence of Jews during the *Texel* affair.[1] Rabbi James K. Gutheim is reported as having said in 1850 that formal Jewish life in New Orleans began with the "assembling in a small room of twelve persons, in 1824."[2] But this was probably a misprint or a slip of the pen. There is nothing to suggest that "The Israelite Congregation, of Shanarai-Chasset, (Gates of Mercy,) Of the city of New-Orleans, State of Louisiana," traced its origins back to 1824. Indeed, when the Jews of Cincinnati were soliciting contributions for their building fund in 1825, they made a point of asserting that "there is not a congregation within 500 miles of this city and we presume it is well known how easy of access we are to New Orleans, and we are well informed that had we a Synagogue here, hundreds from that City, who now know and see nothing of their religion would frequently attend here during the holidays."[3] Whether there were so many "hundreds" of Jews in New Orleans at this time is open to question, but so far as the leaders in Cincinnati knew, no form of organized Jewish communal life existed in New Orleans in 1825. That development was delayed until the arrival in the city of one of those determined, creative leaders upon whose shoulders the fate of the faith of Israel has always rested.

1. Jacob S. Solis

This man was Jacob S. Solis, who was born in the Sephardic community of London on August 4, 1780, and was in the United States by the fall of 1803. Solis almost immediately associated himself with the Spanish-Portuguese Shearith Israel Congregation of New York City, the congregation of Hart, Seixas and Benjamin Levy. Following his marriage on April 24, 1811, to Charity Hays, daughter of a Westchester County farmer and brother of a future High Constable of New York City, Solis became adept at *shechitah* (the ritual killing of animals) so that he might provide kosher meat for his family while they were living in Mt. Pleasant, N. Y. In 1814 or 1815 Jacob and his brother Daniel opened a store in Wilmington, Delaware, and solicited the trade of local customers with the promise that they would save not only time but also money by making their purchases in Wilmington, rather than in Philadelphia where they were wont to do their buying. The Wilmington venture lasted for five or six years, and then Jacob returned to Mt. Pleasant. In 1822 he applied to Mikveh Israel Congregation of Philadelphia for the position of official *shochet* (ritual slaughterer), but was told by Simon Gratz that the position had been taken—Jacob's brother Daniel served in that capacity in later years. Although little is known about Jacob's financial situation, it is apparent that he had not done very well in Wilmington, or he would have remained there; and if he was willing to accept the poorly paid position of a congregational *shochet*, he had little expectation of doing very much better. In 1826 he was attempting to promote the establishment of an academy for Jewish boys and girls where farming, crafts and domestic skills would be taught in addition to the Jewish traditions; the school and its attendant workshops would be supported by prosperous Jews because the institution was designed particularly for the benefit of Jewish orphans. Solis was obviously concerned with Jewish welfare and public service, but he was just as obviously in search of a way of supporting his growing family.[4]

Solis must have been desperate for a livelihood to go as far as New Orleans without his family; perhaps he had heard of the booming conditions there from a fellow-member of Shearith Israel like Sol Soher. Tradition has it that he first came to New Orleans to open a store in 1826, but the year was more likely to have been 1827. His family has preserved the story that, once in New Orleans, he found himself unable to purchase *matzos* (unleavened bread) during the Passover festival, and, appalled that no one else was interested in baking any, he himself ground the meal and made his own; this experience led him to the determination, runs the tale, to lead a campaign to found a congregation. But Jacob's youngest child, Phoebe, was born on March 30, 1827, when Jacob was still probably in the North, and the congregation's *Constitution and Bye-Laws*, published in 1828, reports that it was "Founded February 2d, A. M. 5588, By Jacob S. Solis, of the State of New-York, December 20th, 1827." Despite the confusion of dates—he could not have founded the congregation twice—it is apparent that the congregation had not been organized for the High Holy Days of 1827. If Solis had already been in New Orleans in early 1827, and if he had felt challenged by the absence of any celebrations of the Passover holiday, he would undoubtedly have conducted services for the New Year and the Day of Atonement, and the congregation's inception would have been identified with those services.

Whether or not Solis intended to remain in New Orleans is unclear; only a few indications of his business activity have been located: the purchase of some property and receipt of some merchandise, both in March, 1828. He left New Orleans in early June and returned to his family via Louisville and Cincinnati; he appears to have gone back to New Orleans some time in the fall of 1828 or the winter of 1828–29, but was in Mt. Pleasant by December 29, 1829, when death struck him there. After the news of his death reached New Orleans, the secretary of the congregation wrote to Jacob's widow; he told her that "as soon as the sad tidings came to this place the Board of Trustees held a meeting on account of the Death of their Beloved Member and first founder. . . ." It is obvious from the congregation's acknowledgement on the title-page of its *Constitution* and from the resolutions which were adopted by the officers and trustees that Jacob Solis alone was responsible for the successful campaign to create the congregation:

> "Obituary
>
> "Died at Mount Pleasant, (N. Y.) on the 29th December last, Mr. Jacob S. Solis, aged 49 years, a native of London, (England,) and for the last twenty-five years, a respectable citizen of the United States. It is so common to praise after death, that

I am almost detained from mentioning the virtues of a truly good man. Mr. Jacob S. Solis will be long lamented by his family and friends, particularly remembered by the members of the Israelite Institution of New Orleans, for his indefatigable exertions in establishing it on the principles to protect the widow and the orphan from the cold charity of a hard world; and insure the latter an education and support. Such men merit the highest eulogy.

"He who wipes one tear from the widowed cheeks or protects one orphan from the allurements of a wicked world, cancels a thousand sins at Heaven's chancery.

"At a stated meeting of the Trustees of the Israelite Institution of this city, duly assembled according to notice, the following Resolutions were unanimously adopted.

"1. Resolved, That in consequence of the death of our much lamented member *Jacob S. Solis*, and in consideration of his many virtues, and the effectual services rendered to this Institution on its formation, the officers wear crape on their left arms for the space of thirty days from the date of this meeting.

"2. That the Secretary of this Institution do write a consolatory letter to the widow and orphans of the late Jacob S. Solis.

"3. Resolved, That the above Resolutions be published in two papers of the city.

By order of the Board.

SOLOMONS, Secretary pro tem.

"New Orleans, Feb. 7th, 1830."[5]

2. THE CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

The printed pamphlet which the congregation published in late May or early June of 1828 is a fascinating source of information and insight. It includes the following:

a) English and French versions of the act of incorporation, approved March 25, 1828, which authorized Manis Jacobs, Aaron Daniels, Isaac Phillips, Souza "senr," Abraham Plotz, J. S. Solis, Bernard Lejeune "and all other white Israelites living in this city," to form the congregation and to engage in appropriate activity for a period of twenty-five years. The officers were to be two *Parnassim* ("senior wardens") and three *Gabaim* ("junior wardens"); all of them were required to be residents of New Orleans and over twenty-five years of age; at least one *Parnas* and one *Gabai* had to be married, and a property-owner. The funds of the congregation were to be used only for "erecting or repairing Temples, relieving the unfortunate, and . . . establishing schools for the education of Israelites." The final provision of this charter, an indication of the excessive amount of intermarriage in the community, stipulated that "no Israelite child shall be excluded, either from the schools, from the Temple, or the burial ground, on account of the religion of the mother." This was in direct opposition to the judgment of Jewish law that the child always follows the religion of the mother; in the absence of a formal act of conversion to Judaism, the children of non-Jewish mothers would automatically be considered to be gentiles.

b) The by-laws, in English and French, which related mainly to business matters, elections, charges for funerals, and similar subjects. These rules returned, again and again, to the question of the status of intermarried members. Article 21 provided that a "strange woman," i.e., a non-Jewess, married to a Jew, might be buried in a special section of the cemetery, but "it is well understood, and forcibly regarded, that they shall be buried after the Israelite custom." Article 23 guaranteed, once more, that "all children born of an Israelite, and not having abjured the religion of the father, shall be entitled to burial." Article 25 offered "members married to strange women" the privilege of burial next to their wives (in the special section) or children. Article 31 gave Jewish women "married to strange men" the right to be buried in the cemetery, if they had not been converted to another religion, and if a designated sum of money were contributed to the congregation . . . but the authors of the by-laws showed what they thought of such women by including this permission in the same article which specified that "All adulteresses shall be buried apart." Suicides and prostitutes were also to be interred in a special section of the cemetery. These provisions relating to intermarriage offer vivid testimony of the extent of marriage out of the faith, and demonstrate how strongly the congregational leaders tried to keep these men from feeling alienated from their ancestral faith, and how profoundly they hoped that the children of these marriages might be saved for Judaism.

One further by-law required that "all prayers offered shall be after the custom of the Portuguese Israelites." This was certainly inserted on the insistence of Jacob Solis, himself trained in the Sephardic ritual, although most of the members of the congregation were of Ashkenazic background. Perhaps several other factors entered into the decision—the majority of the congregations in the country still maintained the Sephardic rite; many of the wealthiest and most successful Jews of the country were identified with Sephardic congregations; some of the New Orleans Jews who had been established longest in town, men like Touro and Hart, although inactive in the organization of the congregation, had been reared in a Sephardic environment; and, finally, the affinity of the population of New Orleans for French culture might have led the Jews of New Orleans to identify with French Judaism, largely Sephardic in places like Bordeaux. Nonetheless, if the strongest leader of the congregation had been an Ashkenazic Jew, there is little question but that his preference would have been followed.

c) A list of the officers, members, Jewish contributors and non-Jewish contributors. This is a unique source of names of New Orleans Jews. We print it here, with data in the notes about those persons not hitherto identified in our narrative; those noted with the # sign are altogether unknown.

Officers for this year—Officiers de cette année:

Manis Jacobs, Esq. *President.*
Aaron Daniels, Esq. *Vice-President.*
A. Plotz, Esq. *Junior-Warden.*[6]
A. Green, Esq. *Junior-Warden.*[7]
A[sher] Phil[l]ips, Esq. *Junior-Warden.*
Isaac Phil[l]ips, Esq. *Treasurer.*
S. Audler, Esq. *Secretary.*

Members of the Congregation—Memb. de la Congrégation:

Jacob S. Solis
Abs. Goldsmith[8]
Bernard Lejeune[9]
Nathan Hart
A. H. Dejong[e]
L. S. Levy[10]
A. S. Emmony#
David Lewis[11]
Samuel Jacobs
Moses J. Hart[12]
Marx Myers[13]
Ralph Jacobs
Levy Prince[14]
A. P. Levy[15]
Solomon Ferth[16]
Myers S. Ellis[17]
Lewis Kokernot
J. La Salle
Marton P. Levy[18]
Solomon Hunt[19]
Charles Myers#
L. Jones[20]
Aaron Kirkham[21]
Joseph Solomons[22]
Abr. Block[23]
E. Stern[24]
Doct. Z. Florance

Names of the Israelite Donors, who are not Members of the Congregation—Noms des Donateurs Israélites qui ne sont pas membres de la Congregation.

Judah Turo [*sic*]
H. Florance
Daniel Depass[25]
Daniel Goodman
L. Jacobs[26]
John Marks#
Edward Gottschalk
Benedict Solomons#
L. Morange[27]
Jacobs L. Workum[28]
L. Solomons[29]
L. Jacobs, Jr.
Souza, sen.
Joseph De Pass[30]
S. Sacerdote[31]
Souza, jnr.
Samuel De Pass[32]
Edward Engelhart#
Hyam Harris
William Hardcastle#
S. Silverberger#
A. H. Harris
M. Joseph[33]
A. Lange[34]
Moses Harris
D. Kokernot
Isaac Lyons[35]
Jacob L. Florance
Israel Solomons[36]
M. Milone#
Wm. Florance
L. B. Baruck[37]
Myer Barnett, senior

Names of the Honorable donors who are not Israelites.
Noms des honorables donateurs non-Israélites.

George W. Morgan
Wm F. Saul
J. H. Holland
J. J. Mercier
J. Peillon
Jno. R. Grymes
L. Pilié
Joshua Lewis
John Woolfolk
John M. Baity
Carlile Pollock[38]

d) A twenty-four-year calendar of Jewish festivals, transliterated in accordance with the Sephardic pronunciation of Hebrew, undoubtedly prepared by Jacob Solis.

3. Manis Jacobs, the First President

We have deferred until now a detailed consideration of the life and career of Manis Jacobs, the man who accepted the responsibility of directing the affairs of this new congregation. Born in Amsterdam about 1782, Jacobs arrived in New Orleans some time between 1809 and 1812. The first precise reference to his presence in town was a newspaper advertisement in May, 1812, in which he offered a reward of fifty dollars for the apprehension of Solomon King, whom he accused of stealing a large quantity of jewelry. Jacobs described King as "a native of the state of New York, who professes to be a Doctor, and sometimes a clerk . . . has been but a few days in this country [Louisiana], and is known in Natchez as a swindler." At that time Jacobs had a partner named J. Calker, and made his headquarters at 13 Custom House street. The only early references to Jacobs are to a lawsuit against one Cholros in 1814, and the purchase of slaves in 1817 and 1822.[39] The notarized records of Jacobs' slave transactions reveal a fascinating and, for New Orleans, unique habit: he always signed his name in English with his Hebrew name "Menachem" in Hebrew letters as a cachet or seal. Of all the Jews in New Orleans during this early period, he was the only one to express his personal identification with Judaism through his signature on business papers. This was his way of saying, through all those long years when there was no formal Jewish life in New Orleans, that he still considered himself a Jew in a positive sense.

Jacobs may have brought a wife with him from Amsterdam or elsewhere when he first came to New Orleans, but we know nothing about her. She was probably Jewish, and, if so, was the only woman of Jewish birth in town other than Angélica Dow, Clara Scott and, possibly, the Lange sisters. All we know is that Manis had a daughter named Irma who was about twenty-eight years old in 1843, when her husband, Bernard Hart, died. Since Irma had married a Jewish man, it is a reasonable assumption that she herself was Jewish. Jacobs married a second time, probably between January and July of 1826. His bride was the widow Angélique-Charlotte Jacinthe Verneuille, who had been born in Paris in 1781 or 1782, married Denis Verneuille there and bore him a son named Louis-Alexandre. Angélique and Denis may have lived in Saint-Domingue before they came to New Orleans. Angélique was already a widow in 1812 when she lived in New Orleans with her uncle, Jean-Baptiste Le Sueur Fontaine, a refugee from Saint-Domingue and a well-known actor-editor-businessman. It is worth noting that Manis' wedding to Angélique was probably the first marriage of a Jew and a Christian not to be performed in a church. Angélique was a French Catholic. St. Louis Cathedral was the only Catholic church in New Orleans at the time of their wedding, and there is no record of their wedding in its marriage registries. The conclusion is inescapable that Manis would not submit to a Catholic ceremony. He may have asked some Jew in town to conduct the wedding, or may even have performed it himself, since a rabbi is not required to take part in a Jewish marriage service. But it would have been interesting to see the Hebrew letters for "Menachem" in the marriage register of St. Louis Cathedral! By the spring of 1828, Manis and Angélique were the parents of two children, Thérèse and Félix.[40]

Little is known about Manis' business career. In the 1822 *City Directory* he was listed as a trader at 232 Dumaine, corner of St. Claude. He was delinquent in paying taxes in 1823, gave a mortgage on some property in 1826, and was curator of the estate of a watchmaker in 1832. By 1833–34 he appears to have become fairly prosperous. He endorsed notes for Joseph Lasalle for $1,628, and for Samuel Jacobs for $400—these, together with other notes amounting to at least $1,275, were unpaid at the time of his death. In 1834 Manis made substantial investments in real estate, and was one of seven men who established the construction and development corporation named the Company of Architects. But within a few years the speculation bubble of New Orleans had burst, Manis was taken to court by the Architects Company, and some of his property was sold at sheriff's auction. He was a partner with S. S. De Jonge and Lewis Levy in several of the investments listed in his inventory, but these and other holdings had to be sold for the benefit of his creditors, after his death. These sales included thirteen lots of which he was sole owner, twelve lots in which he had a share, his own home at the corner of Royal and Barrack streets, another house, and three of his eleven slaves. The estate was in litigation for some years. Angélique and Irma kept trying to hold on to their interests by purchasing each other's property at sheriff's auction, but how well this succeeded is not shown in the records.[41]

When Manis Jacobs died on September 24, 1839, six days after Yom Kippur, he was eulogized as the "Rabbi" of New Orleans:

> "OBITUARY.
>
> 'Tis now oh! death! thy poignant sting we own,
> 'Tis now oh! grave! thy victory is shown!
>
> "The conflict is o'er; the struggle is ended, the king of terror has declared and sustained his prerogative, and another worthy member of our community is '*gathered unto his fathers*.' On the 28th inst. resigned his spirit to the hands of his creator, in the 60th year of his age, the Reverend MANIS JACOBS, Rabbi of the Hebrew Congregation of this city, a native of Amsterdam, (Netherlands) but for the last thirty years a resident of New Orleans. In the demise of the subject of this obituary, society has to deplore the loss of one of its most valuable members; as a *philanthropist* his name will ever be deeply engraven upon the hearts of the indigent

> and distressed; the couch of disease will have to mourn the bereavement of one whose daily solace was to administer to the comforts and necessities of those who had been overtaken by the iron hand of stern adversity. He had indeed
>
> ....'A tear for pity
> And a hand open as day for melting charity.'
>
> "In the social walks of domestic life an afflicted widow and three orphans have to bemoan the transit from this earth of an affectionate father, a kind and loving husband; yet as an alleviation of the family's affliction under this great loss, it pleased divine providence in some degree to prepare them for the shock by the gradual progress of his disorder to its fatal termination. His remains were conveyed to the sepulchre of his FATHERS, surrounded by a numerous concourse of friends and citizens, where the funeral rites according to the Hebrew religion were performed in a most solemn and impressive manner, the requiem chaunted and the body consigned to its earthly bed, amid the regrets and tears of many. 'May his soul rest in peace. Amen.' "[42]

This tribute was signed "M"—one would wish that it had been written by "G.W.H." or by almost anyone else. George or Solomon Harby would surely have avoided the sick-sweet flavor of death so apparent in this and other obituaries that "M"—probably A. J. Marks—wrote. But now, at least, we know the identify of the early "Rabbi" about whom so much legend has clustered over the years. In a well-known description of American Jewish life written in 1842 by Dr. M. Wiener for a German-Jewish periodical, following an extensive trip throughout the Western hemisphere, some stories were told about "Rabbi" Jacobs:

> "The deceased rabbi was by birth a Hollander with a Catholic wife who only with difficulty could be prevented from putting a crucifix into his coffin. Wondrous stories were told about this spiritual leader, who died six years previously. Thus, a short time before his death, he delivered in the synagogue, on the Day of Atonement, an address in which he demonstrated to his congregation that fasting on that day was damned nonsense. . . ."[43]

Dr. Wiener was an Orthodox Jew who objected to any relaxation of the tradition; perhaps Manis Jacobs had been propagandizing on behalf of the Reform movement, still almost unknown in the United States. But Wiener demonstrated no understanding of the courage which was displayed by a man like Jacobs who, without any training as a rabbi or Jewish scholar, did his best to give some Jewish leadership to his coreligionists. Rabbi Max Heller, writing in 1922, reported that Manis' Catholic descendants believed that he had been buried in a Catholic cemetery; it was probably to discredit any such supposition on the part of Angélique's friends that "M" referred to Manis' Jewish burial in so insistent a manner.[44]

4. A CHARTER, A WEDDING AND A CEMETERY

The early months of the congregation's existence were hectic. After the meeting on December 20, 1827, at which Jacob Solis persuaded his fellow-Jews to organize a congregation, many steps had to be taken. First the application for a charter had to be prepared for approval by the two houses of the legislature and by the Governor; it was probably ratified at the meeting which was held on February 2, 1828.[45] Manis Jacobs must meanwhile have consented to serve as president; he was probably elected at the February meeting, together with the other officers. The next assignment was to locate a property which could be used for a cemetery—the indispensable requirement of an organized Jewish community.

But before the cemetery could be found, another event took place—the first documented Jewish wedding in New Orleans. On February 26, 1828, Daniel Goodman was married to Amelia Harris, or in terms of their traditional Hebrew names, Naphtali the son of Yom Tov took Malkah the daughter of Hayyim as his bride. Samuel Hermann and Samuel Kohn were the official witnesses who signed the Hebrew marriage document, the *Ketubah*, but their names are in English, not in Hebrew; they may have come as guests of Amelia's uncle, Asher Nathan, who, as a relative, was forbidden by Jewish law to act as a witness. Judging from Manis Jacobs' Hebrew script in his signature seal, he probably could not print the Hebrew text of the *Ketubah* as beautifully as it appears in this document; Jacob Solis must have been the *sofer* (scribe) for the occasion. He may, however, have instructed Manis Jacobs in the wedding service, if he did not already know how one was conducted.[46]

Once this festivity was concluded, Manis Jacobs and Jacob Solis could continue their search. They finally found an appropriate site in the Lafayette suburb in Jefferson Parish, at Jackson avenue and Saratoga street. This was fairly distant from the center of things in those days. Because the congregation was not yet a corporation, and therefore could not legally own property, Manis purchased the lot on March 13 for $361.25. Once the charter had been approved by the legislature on March 25, and, presumably, some money was collected, Manis turned the property over to the congregation; this took place on April 26.

The choice of a name for the congregation must have been made very early in this chain of steps. Solis' was probably the decisive voice in the selection of Shanarai-Chasset but he could not have recommended any Hebrew words more difficult to transliterate or pronounce. Through the years Shanarai-Chasset was written in a variety of forms, even by the officers—"Sharri Haset," "Sharei Shisset," "Shangarai Chasset," "Shangarai Chassed," "Shaarai Chesed." It was a good thing that the congregation ultimately came to be known as Touro Synagogue!

Meanwhile the act of incorporation, and an exchange of complimentary letters between Solis and Jacobs, appeared in the newspapers; an official meeting was held to elect the officers authorized by the charter; and the constitution and by-laws were drawn up for printing. All of those men in town who had promised to join the congregation (and pay their dues!) were asked to go to Aaron Daniels' store at 17 Chartres street to sign the constitution, under threat of forfeiting one hundred dollars in addition to accrued dues if they delayed beyond June 14. But the officers must have had a difficult time collecting both signatures and contributions, because the printed notice which summoned the Jews of New Orleans to do their duty was repeated in the newspapers day after day into August, well beyond the deadline.[47]

Jacob Solis left New Orleans for Louisville and home some time in May or June of 1828. Manis kept him informed of the welfare of his new baby, the congregation:

> New Orleans June 4th 1828
>
> Mr. Jacob S. Solis
>
> I have the honor to forward you by the present your umbrellas, [ ][48] pamphlets of our Consti[tu]tion and by laws[49] which you will be So good and dispose of, one to the president of the Hebrew Congregation of Sinçinaty two to New York, two to Philadelphia, one to Baltimore one to Richmond, one to Charleston, one for yourself one to Luries[50][,] Myers[,] Jacobs, Lyons, Workum[,] Joseph, Goldsmith, near Louisville. My dear Sir Since you been gone I had hard work, to do, that is to Say, to Say prayers every Evening in the house of the mourners, and you know that I do not know much about the portuguaise minhag [rite] Still we come on pretty well. I have been yesterday in the afternoon on horse back to the burial ground and the Sons of the demise have made already a tombstone ~~at~~ over the grave; when you will write me from New York inquire how a corpse must lay. For Some think yet that the feet ought to lay in the East,[51] write me also how you came on at Natchez, and write another letter from Louisville and one from Cincinaty.[52] I hope you may succeed in all your good undertakings. I have the honor to be Your most humble
>
> Manis Jacobs
>
> Madame Jacobs and her
> Children send their compliments
> Mr. Marks goes every Evening with me to prayers
> But Complains that I keep him too long there
> I send you one more for Mr Salomon of New York and for
> the president to Savana
> one for Salomon Hunt and one for Baruk[53]

This report reveals how sincerely and conscientiously Manis Jacobs was attempting to lead the congregation—distributing the *Constitution*, conducting services, inspecting the cemetery. It was Hyam Harris who had died on June first, and whose grave site Jacobs had inspected. This funeral was followed swiftly by two others: Emanuel Stern died on July 25, and his wife, Jeanette Hunt Stern, died on July 28. Stern had been in New Orleans since 1824 at the latest; he went bankrupt that year. The Sterns had two sons: a younger boy named Isaac, who went to live with his aunt Mrs. Van Ostern, and an older son, Adolphus Sterne.[54] Adolphus was the well-known Texas pioneer who smuggled weapons and ammunition into Nacogdoches for the Fredonian Rebellion in 1826. From 1831 to 1833 he held various offices under the Mexicans, and was a secret emissary for Sam Houston in New Orleans, equipping an entire company for the Texas Revolution of 1835. Sterne kept a store in Nacogdoches, practiced law, bought and sold land, was an active Mason, and served several terms in the Texas legislature, before his death on March 27, 1852. He is said to have lived and worked in New Orleans from 1817 to 1826, but we have found no record of his activities; he was probably like many other young men, clerks and apprentices, who grew up the hard way before they decided on their future. While he was active in business in Nacogdoches, he kept in contact with some Jewish businessmen in New Orleans, Alexander Phillips among them. Adolphus was represented in the proceedings in New Orleans connected with his father's estate by Edward Gottschalk.[55]

There were other funerals to take care of, holiday and Sabbath services to conduct, meetings to arrange, and a myriad of responsibilities to keep Manis busy. On August 26, 1829, he wrote a long report to Jacob Solis about the congregation's progress: Alexander Phillips had contributed fifty dollars; "old [Jacob?] hart Doct A Costa and L. Levy in making apology for you and the Congregation before the board, put in the minute book was at last received."[56] One of the members had lost a child; Levy Prince and Leopold Jones of New York had died; Solis' cousin Solomon sent his regards (but there were too many Solomons for us to try to figure out who this might have been). Manis asked Solis to order "two holy books" (Bibles?) from London, and to try to raise some money for the congregation among his friends in New York City. He also reported the exciting news that the congregation had paid $205 at an auction for a lot of ground 70 by 80 feet at the corner of St. Louis and Franklin streets. This was to be used as the site of a synagogue, if the necessary five or six thousand dollars for construction could be raised. "Now Sir," wrote Manis Jacobs,

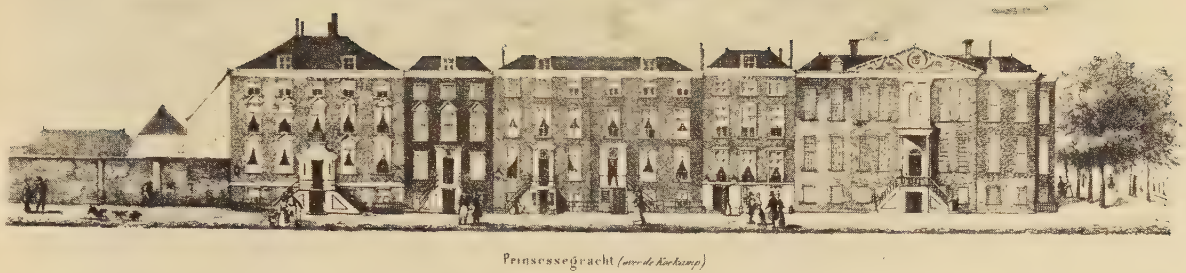
> "we have to beseech you a favor knowing that there exist in New York Several rich Israelites, who walk in the ways of God, and particular one who all ready has Shewn to the congregation of New York his charitable heart to ask a loan of them or him of the amount of five thousand or Six thousand Dollars for wich we will pay them or him a Small interest and give him or them a morgage on the property until final payment. Sir we all know that there is no greater Mitzva [good deed] among Israel than to Save the life of an Israelite, and in helping to build temples that the name of the great god of Israel may be propagated in the whole Globe. . . ."

That Manis meant Harmon Hendricks, even though he did not remember the name, was immediately recognized by Solis, who wrote on the overleaf of the address sheet, "H. Hendricks, Esqr./ New York."[57] Hendricks (1771–1838) had advanced thousands of dollars to Shearith Israel so that the congregation could pay its debts and remain solvent. The letter itself reported the background of the congregation to the prospective donor:

> "Having heard of your Noble action and your magnanimity, towards our brethren, therefore, we the officers of the Israelite Congregation, Sharei Shisset of New Orleans, take the liberty to address ourselves to you, hoping that you will not reject our request. New Orleans had always the reputation by Israelites, Gentiles, &. to be the last place in the union for religious Societies, it is but 17 months ago that there was not here, the least iot of an Ysraelite Congregation. Since that the time they have a place of interment a Metaher House [at the cemetery for the preparation of the dead for burial] and a lot to build a temple on, and all that through your worthy fellow Citizen Mr. Jacob S. Solis, we now pray you to advance the Said Society the Sum of Six Thousand Dollars, with a Small Interest and Morgage on the property till final payment for wich we have authorize Mr. Jacob S. Solis to

> make arrangements with you. In So Doing the blessings of the God of Israel will never cease to come on you and your family for ever and ever, and will never Cease from your descendants, we remain for ever
>
> Your most humble servants:
>
> Manis Jacobs, pres.
>
> Aaron Daniels, vice-presed."[58]

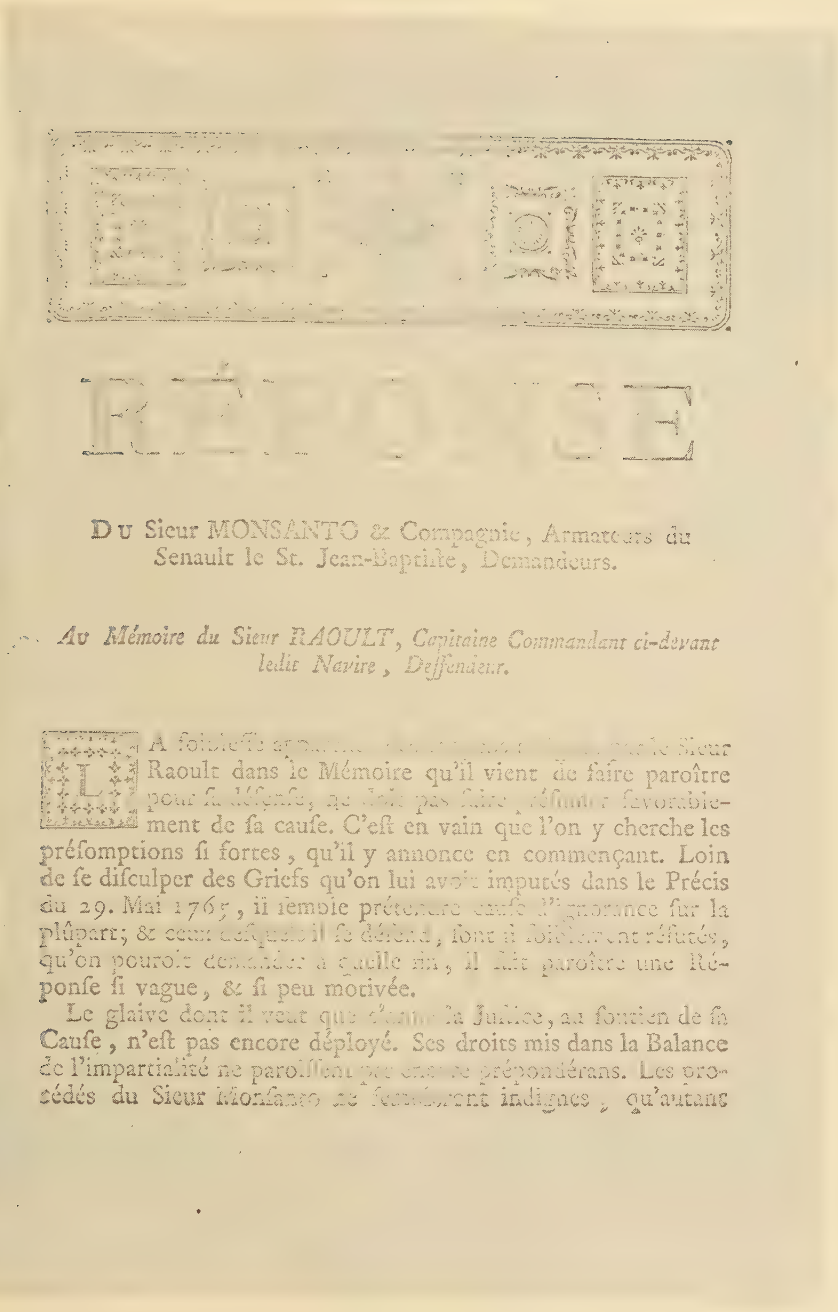
That Manis Jacobs had to ask Solis to try to obtain a loan for the New Orleans congregation from a wealthy New Yorker, when there were so many wealthy Jews in New Orleans, spoke volumes. It is to a review of that problem that we now turn.



Prinsessegracht (over de Koekamp)

1. Home of Sir Salomon de Medina (David Monsanto's Employer), The Hague
(Right half of third building from right)

2. The Hague Synagogue in which the Monsanto Family Worshipped



RÉPONSE

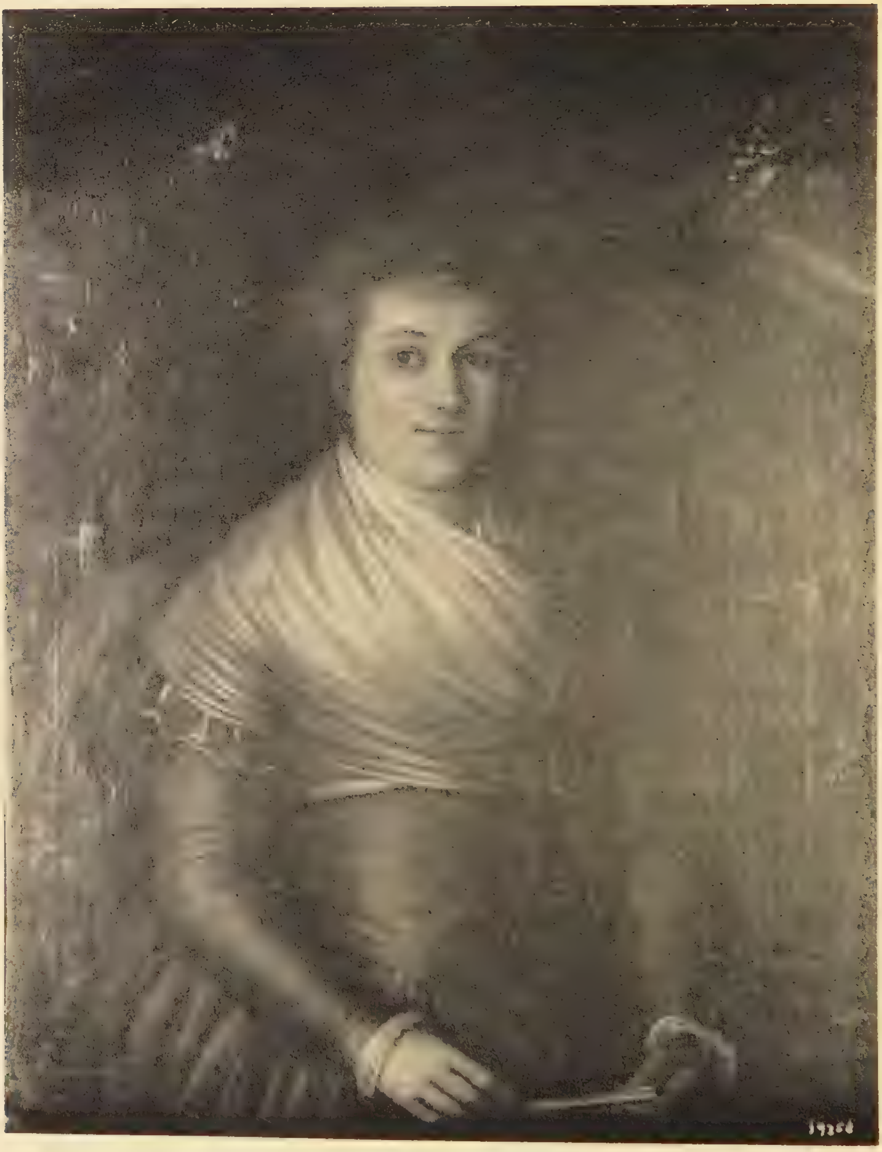
Du Sieur MONSANTO & Compagnie, Armateurs du Senault le St. Jean-Baptiſte, Demandeurs.

Au Mémoire du Sieur RAOULT, Capitaine Commandant ci-devant ledit Navire, Deffendeur.

LA foibleſſe [illegible] par le Sieur Raoult dans le Mémoire qu'il vient de faire paroître pour ſa défenſe, ne doit pas faire préſumer favorablement de ſa cauſe. C'eſt en vain que l'on y cherche les préſomptions ſi fortes, qu'il y annonce en commençant. Loin de ſe diſculper des Griefs qu'on lui avoit imputés dans le Précis du 29. Mai 1765, il ſemble prétendre cauſe d'ignorance ſur la plûpart; & ceux deſquels il ſe défend, ſont ſi ſolidement réfutés, qu'on pourroit demander à quelle fin, il fait paroître une Réponſe ſi vague, & ſi peu motivée.

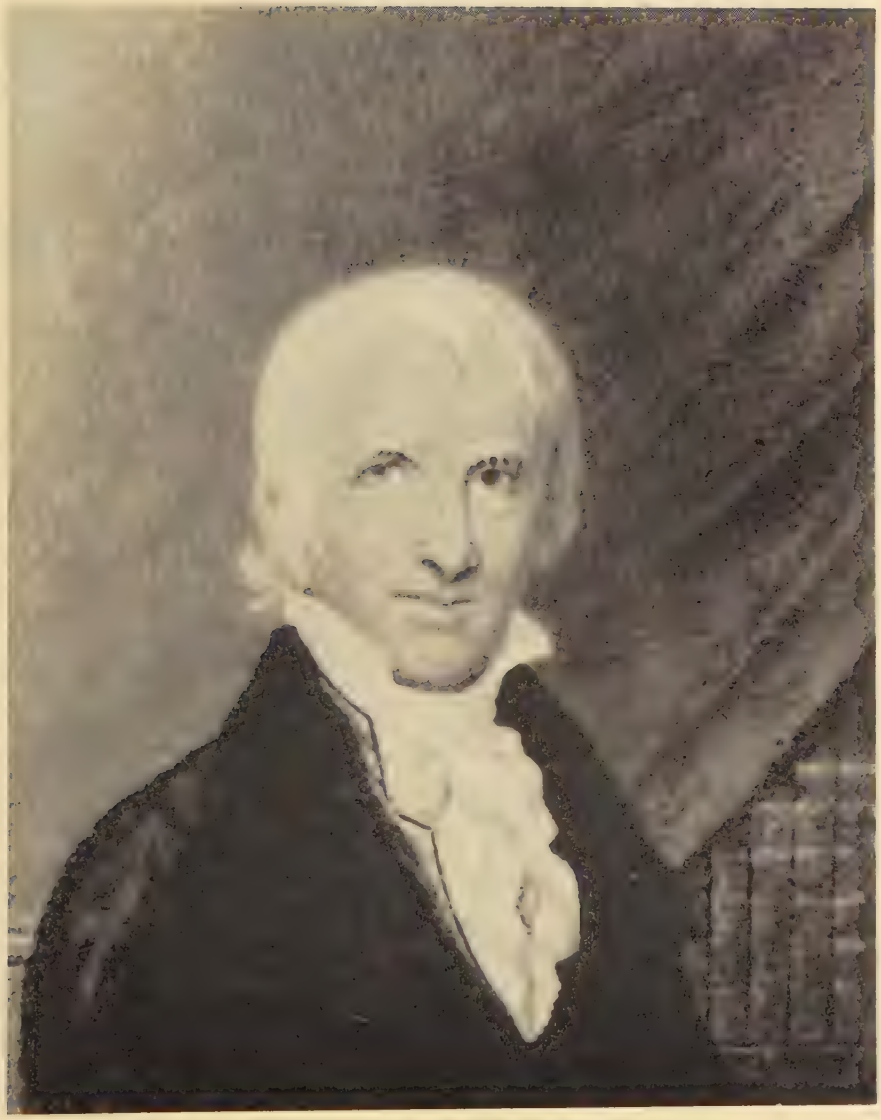
Le glaive dont il veut que s'arme la Juſtice, au ſoutien de ſa Cauſe, n'eſt pas encore déployé. Ses droits mis dans la Balance de l'impartialité ne paroiſſent pas encore prépondérans. Les procédés du Sieur Monſanto ne ſembleroient indignes, qu'autant

3. First Page of 1765 Monsanto Legal *Réponse*, New Orleans



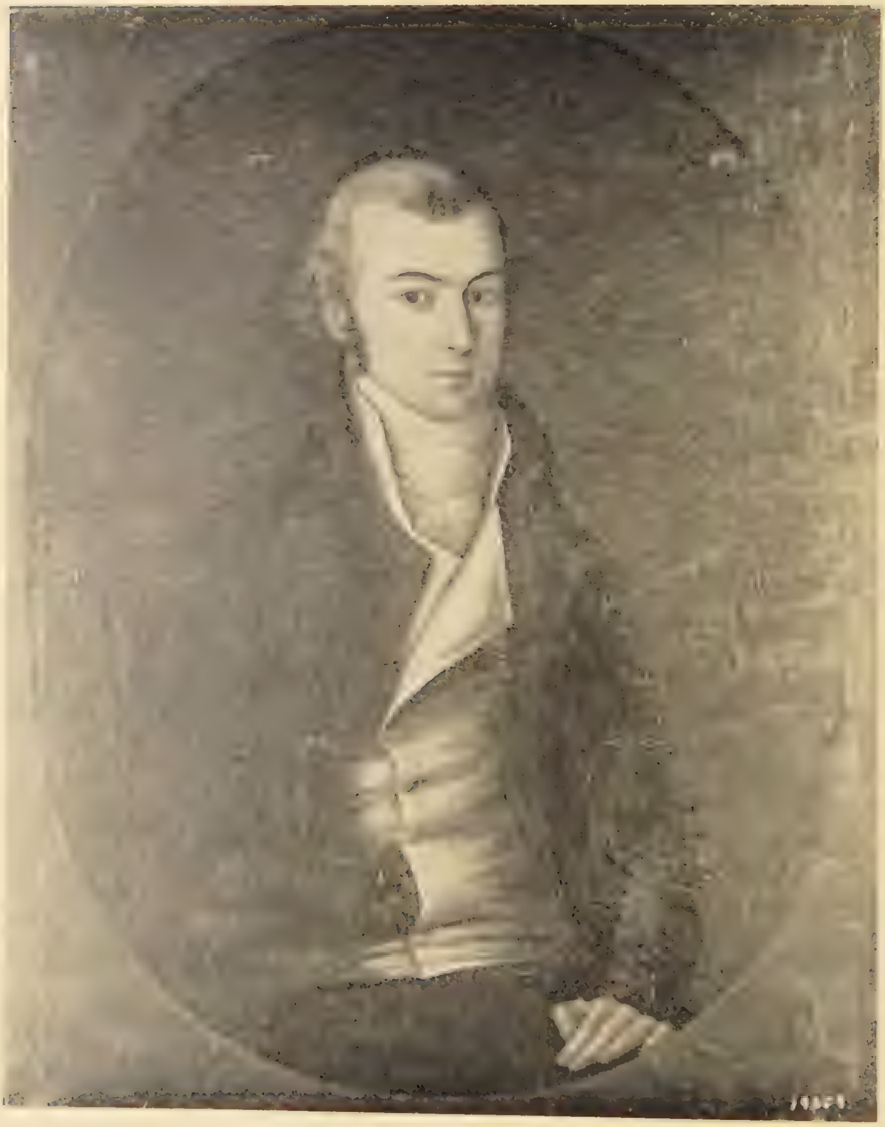
4. Angélica Monsanto Dow

Portrait by José de Salazar

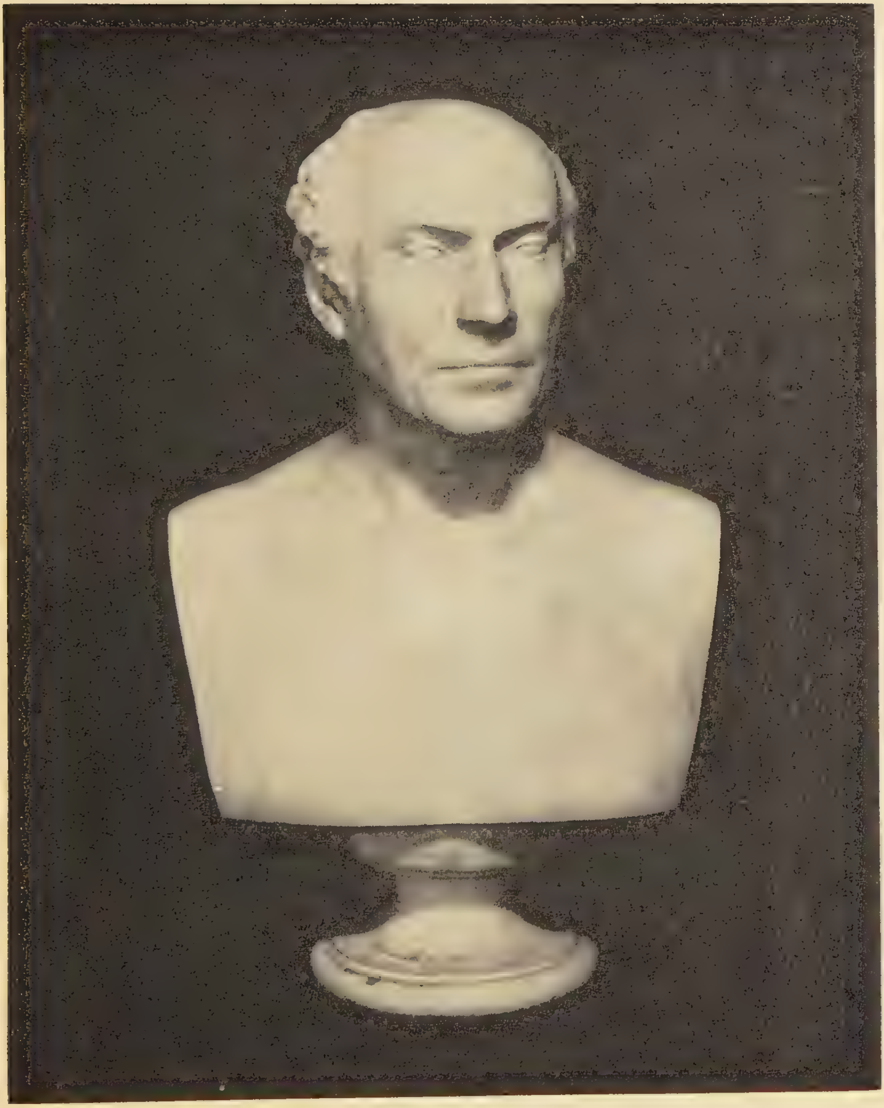


5. Angélica's Husband, Dr. Robert Dow

Watercolor by Unknown Artist

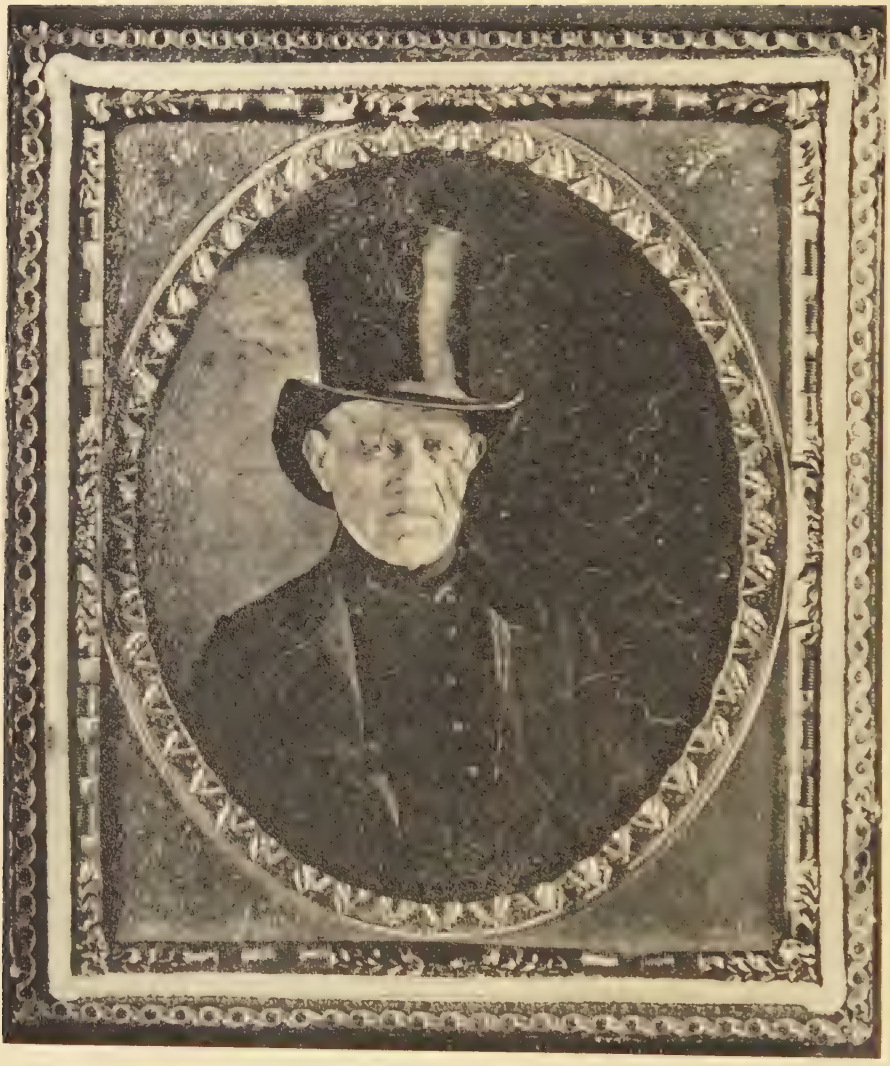


6. Angélica's Elder Son, Thomas Urquhart
Portrait by José de Salazar



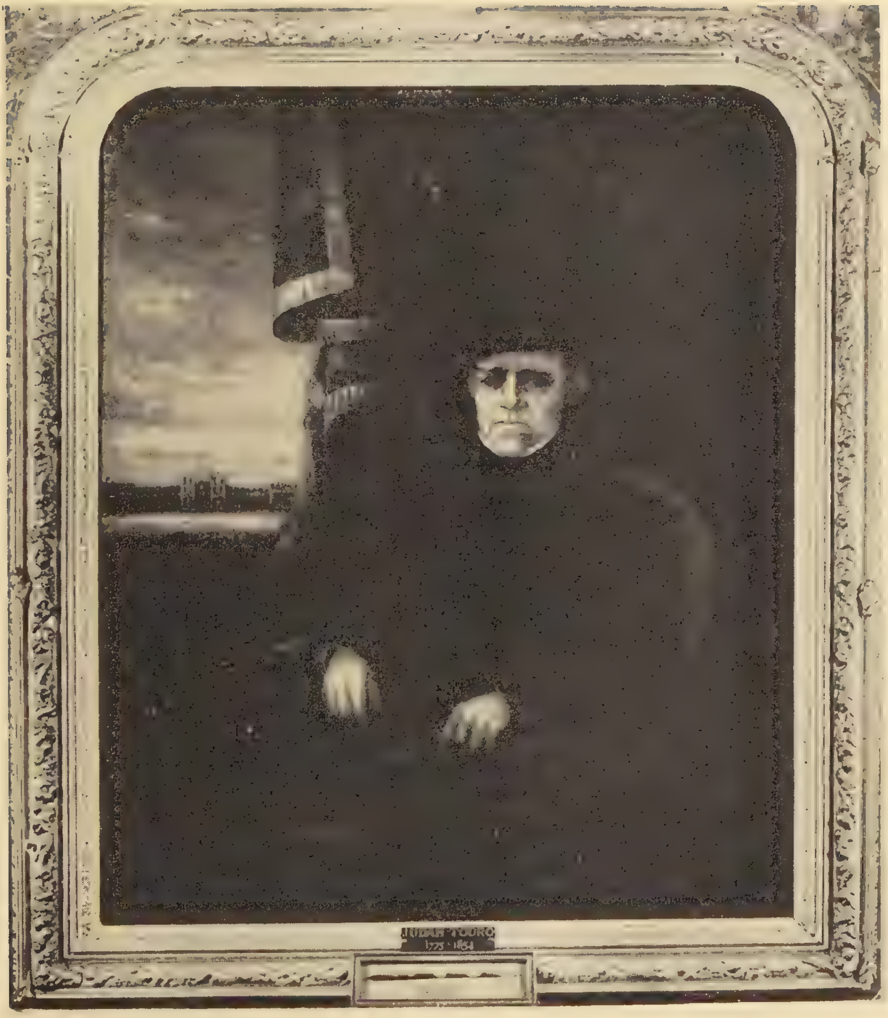
7. Angélica's Younger Son, David Urquhart

Bust by Hiram Powers



8. Judah Touro

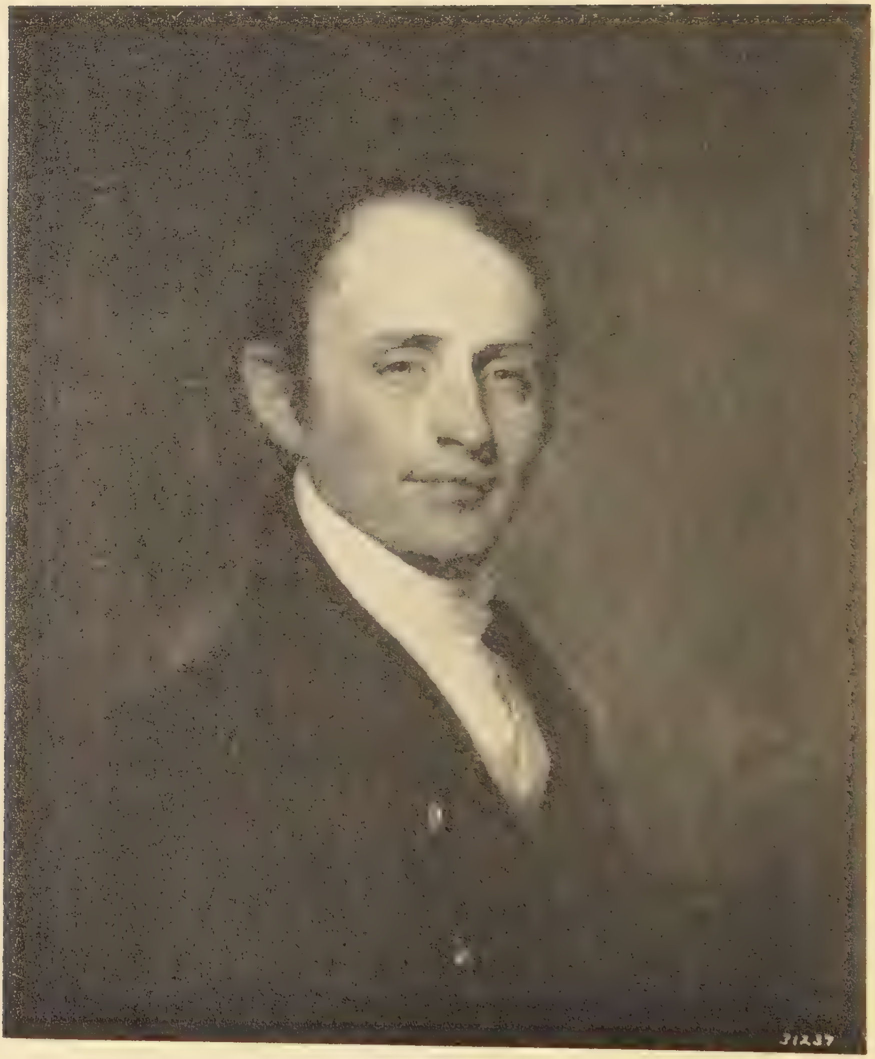
Daguerreotype



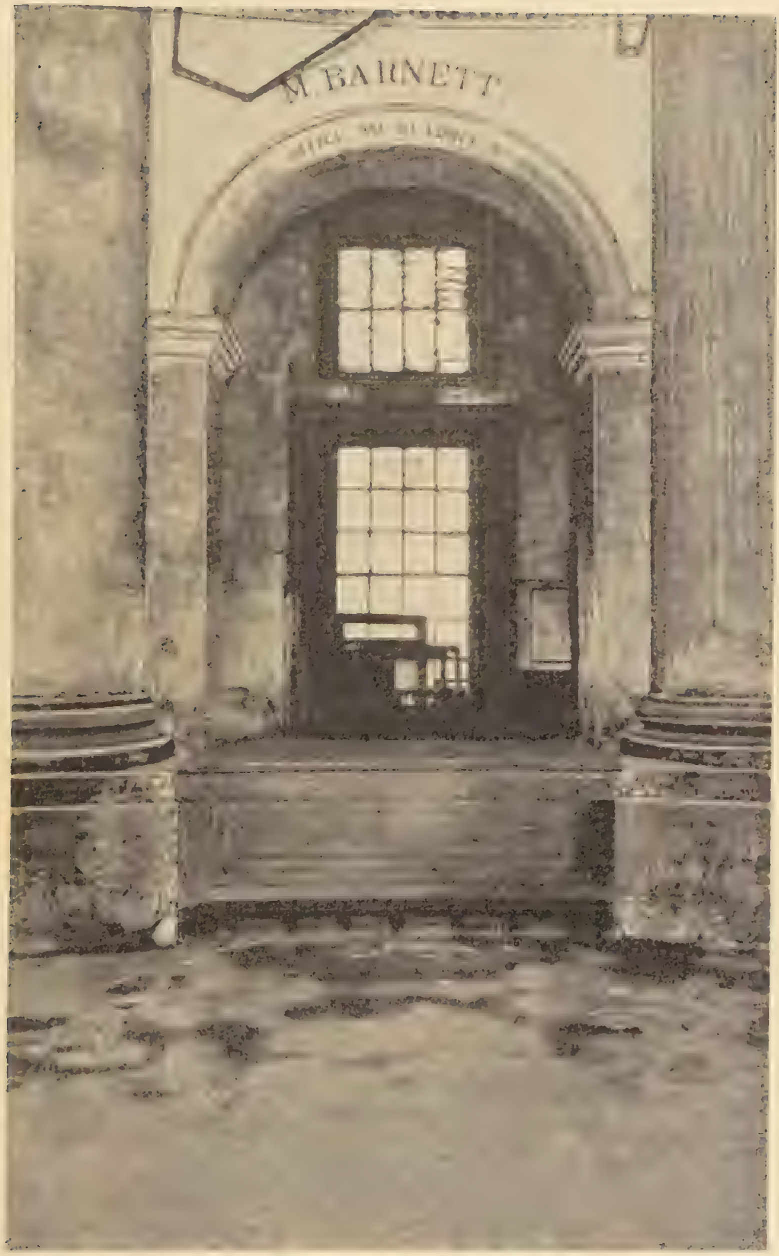
JUDAH TOURO
1775 · 1854

9. Judah Touro

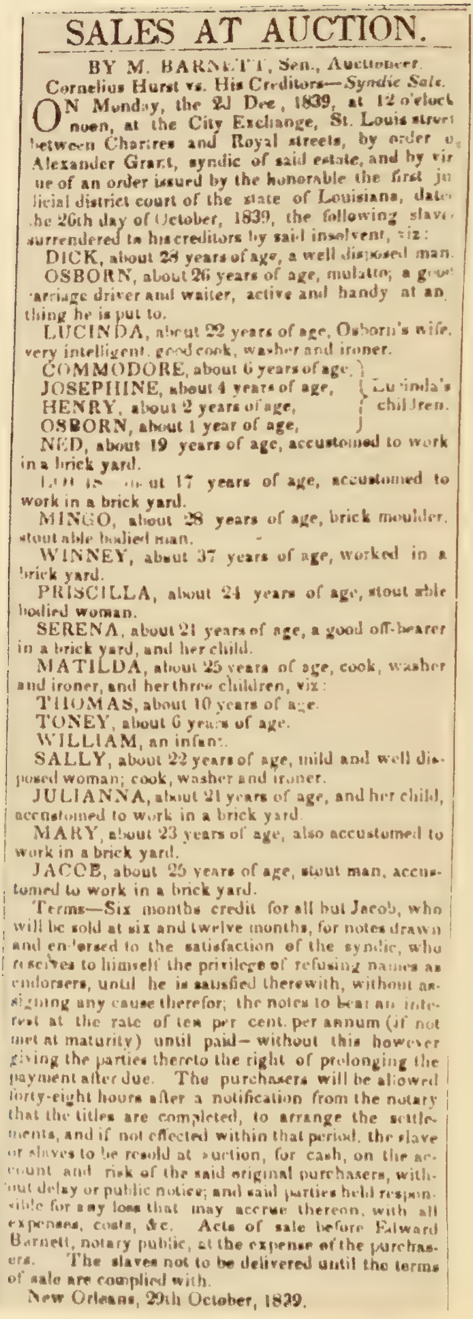
Portrait by Solomon Nunes Carvalho



10. Touro's Friend, Rezin Davis Shepherd
Portrait by Gilbert Stuart



11. Maurice Barnett's Old Slave Block



SALES AT AUCTION.

BY M. BARNETT, Sen., Auctioneer.

Cornelius Hurst vs. His Creditors—*Syndic Sale.*

ON Monday, the 2d Dec., 1839, at 12 o'clock noon, at the City Exchange, St. Louis street between Chartres and Royal streets, by order of Alexander Grant, syndic of said estate, and by virtue of an order issued by the honorable the first judicial district court of the state of Louisiana, dated the 26th day of October, 1839, the following slaves surrendered to his creditors by said insolvent, viz:

DICK, about 28 years of age, a well disposed man.

OSBORN, about 26 years of age, mulatto; a good carriage driver and waiter, active and handy at any thing he is put to.

LUCINDA, about 22 years of age, Osborn's wife, very intelligent, good cook, washer and ironer.

COMMODORE, about 6 years of age,
JOSEPHINE, about 4 years of age,
HENRY, about 2 years of age,
OSBORN, about 1 year of age,
} Lucinda's children.

NED, about 19 years of age, accustomed to work in a brick yard.

[illegible] about 17 years of age, accustomed to work in a brick yard.

MINGO, about 28 years of age, brick moulder, stout able bodied man.

WINNEY, about 37 years of age, worked in a brick yard.

PRISCILLA, about 24 years of age, stout able bodied woman.

SERENA, about 21 years of age, a good off-bearer in a brick yard, and her child.

MATILDA, about 25 years of age, cook, washer and ironer, and her three children, viz:

THOMAS, about 10 years of age.

TONEY, about 6 years of age.

WILLIAM, an infant.

SALLY, about 22 years of age, mild and well disposed woman; cook, washer and ironer.

JULIANNA, about 21 years of age, and her child, accustomed to work in a brick yard.

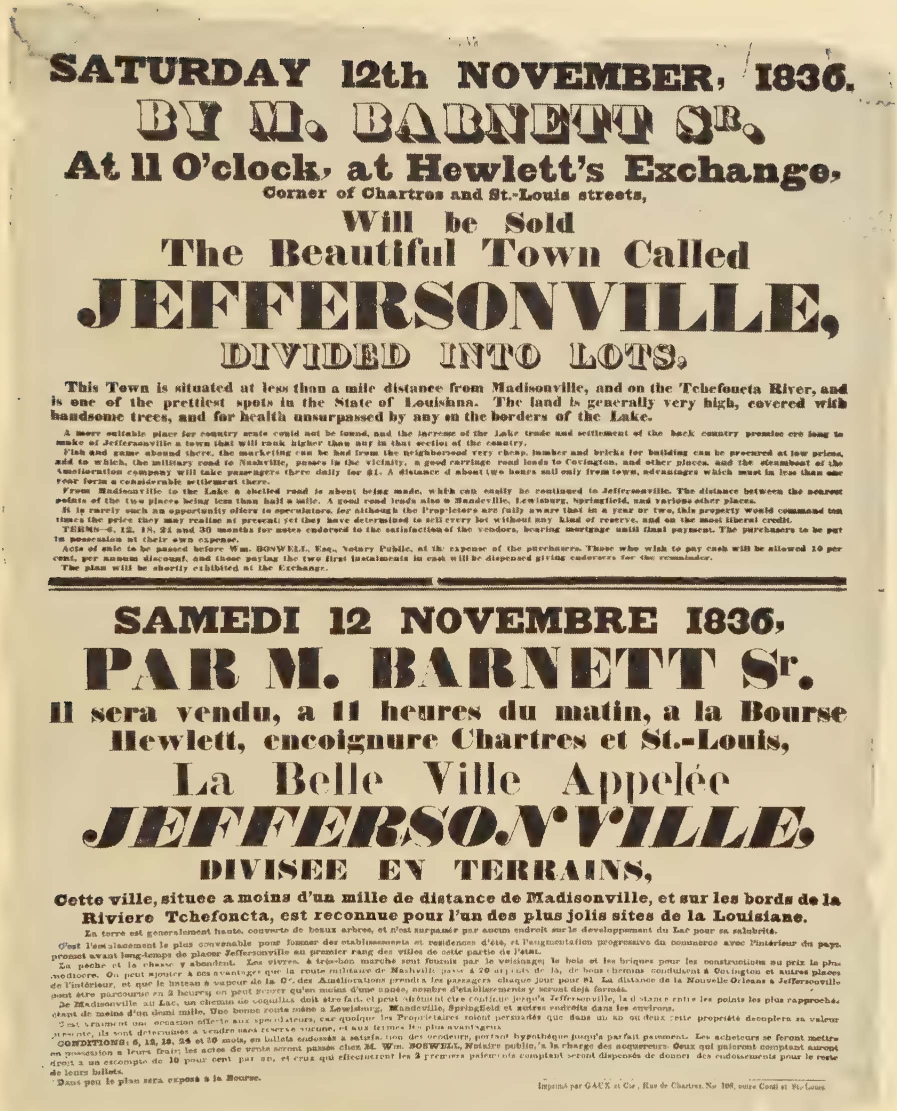
MARY, about 23 years of age, also accustomed to work in a brick yard.

JACOB, about 25 years of age, stout man, accustomed to work in a brick yard.

Terms—Six months credit for all but Jacob, who will be sold at six and twelve months, for notes drawn and endorsed to the satisfaction of the syndic, who reserves to himself the privilege of refusing names as endorsers, until he is satisfied therewith, without assigning any cause therefor; the notes to bear an interest at the rate of ten per cent. per annum (if not met at maturity) until paid—without this however giving the parties thereto the right of prolonging the payment after due. The purchasers will be allowed forty-eight hours after a notification from the notary that the titles are completed, to arrange the settlements, and if not effected within that period, the slave or slaves to be resold at auction, for cash, on the account and risk of the said original purchasers, without delay or public notice; and said parties held responsible for any loss that may accrue thereon, with all expenses, costs, &c. Acts of sale before Edward Barnett, notary public, at the expense of the purchasers. The slaves not to be delivered until the terms of sale are complied with.

New Orleans, 29th October, 1839.

12. Maurice Barnett Sells Some Slaves



SATURDAY 12th NOVEMBER, 1836.

BY M. BARNETT Sr.

At 11 O'clock, at Hewlett's Exchange,

Corner of Chartres and St.-Louis streets,

Will be Sold

The Beautiful Town Called

JEFFERSONVILLE,

DIVIDED INTO LOTS,

This Town is situated at less than a mile distance from Madisonville, and on the Tchefoncta River, and is one of the prettiest spots in the State of Louisiana. The land is generally very high, covered with handsome trees, and for health unsurpassed by any on the borders of the Lake.

A more suitable place for country seats could not be found, and the increase of the Lake trade and settlement of the back country promise ere long to make of Jeffersonville a town that will rank higher than any in that section of the country.

Fish and game abound there, the marketing can be had from the neighborhood very cheap, lumber and bricks for building can be procured at low prices, add to which, the military road to Nashville, passes in the vicinity, a good carriage road leads to Covington, and other places, and the steamboat of the Amelioration company will take passengers there daily for $1. A distance of about two hours sail only from town, advantages which must in less than one year form a considerable settlement there.

From Madisonville to the Lake a shelled road is about being made, which can easily be continued to Jeffersonville. The distance between the nearest points of the two places being less than half a mile. A good road leads also to Mandeville, Lewisburg, Springfield, and various other places.

It is rarely such an opportunity offers to speculators, for although the Proprietors are fully aware that in a year or two, this property would command ten times the price they may realise at present; yet they have determined to sell every lot without any kind of reserve, and on the most liberal credit.

TERMS—6, 12, 18, 24 and 30 months for notes endorsed to the satisfaction of the vendors, bearing mortgage until final payment. The purchasers to be put in possession at their own expense.

Acts of sale to be passed before Wm. BOSWELL, Esq., Notary Public, at the expense of the purchasers. Those who wish to pay cash will be allowed 10 per cent. per annum discount, and those paying the two first instalments in cash will be dispensed giving endorsers for the remainder.

The plan will be shortly exhibited at the Exchange.

SAMEDI 12 NOVEMBRE 1836,

PAR M. BARNETT Sr.

Il sera vendu, a 11 heures du matin, a la Bourse Hewlett, encoignure Chartres et St.-Louis,

La Belle Ville Appelée

JEFFERSONVILLE.

DIVISEE EN TERRAINS,

Cette ville, situee a moins d'un mille de distance de Madisonville, et sur les bords de la Riviere Tchefoncta, est reconnue pour l'un des plus jolis sites de la Louisiane.

La terre est generalement haute, couverte de beaux arbres, et n'est surpassée par aucun endroit sur le developpement du Lac pour sa salubrité.

C'est l'emplacement le plus convenable pour former des etablissements et residences d'été, et l'augmentation progressive du commerce avec l'intérieur du pays, promet avant long-temps de placer Jeffersonville au premier rang des villes de cette partie de l'état.

La peche et la chasse y abondent. Les vivres, à très-bon marché sont fournis par le voisinage; le bois et les briques pour les constructions au prix le plus mediocre. On peut ajouter à ces avantages que la route militaire de Nashville passe à 20 arpents de là, de bons chemins conduisent à Covington et autres places de l'intérieur, et que le bateau à vapeur de la Cie. des Améliorations prendra les passagers chaque jour pour $1. La distance de la Nouvelle Orleans à Jeffersonville peut être parcourue en 2 heures; on peut assurer qu'en moins d'une année, nombre d'etablissements y seront déjà formés.

De Madisonville au Lac, un chemin de coquilles doit être fait, et peut aisément etre continué jusqu'à Jeffersonville, la distance entre les points les plus rapprochés étant de moins d'un demi mille. Une bonne route mène à Lewisburg, Mandeville, Springfield et autres endroits dans les environs.

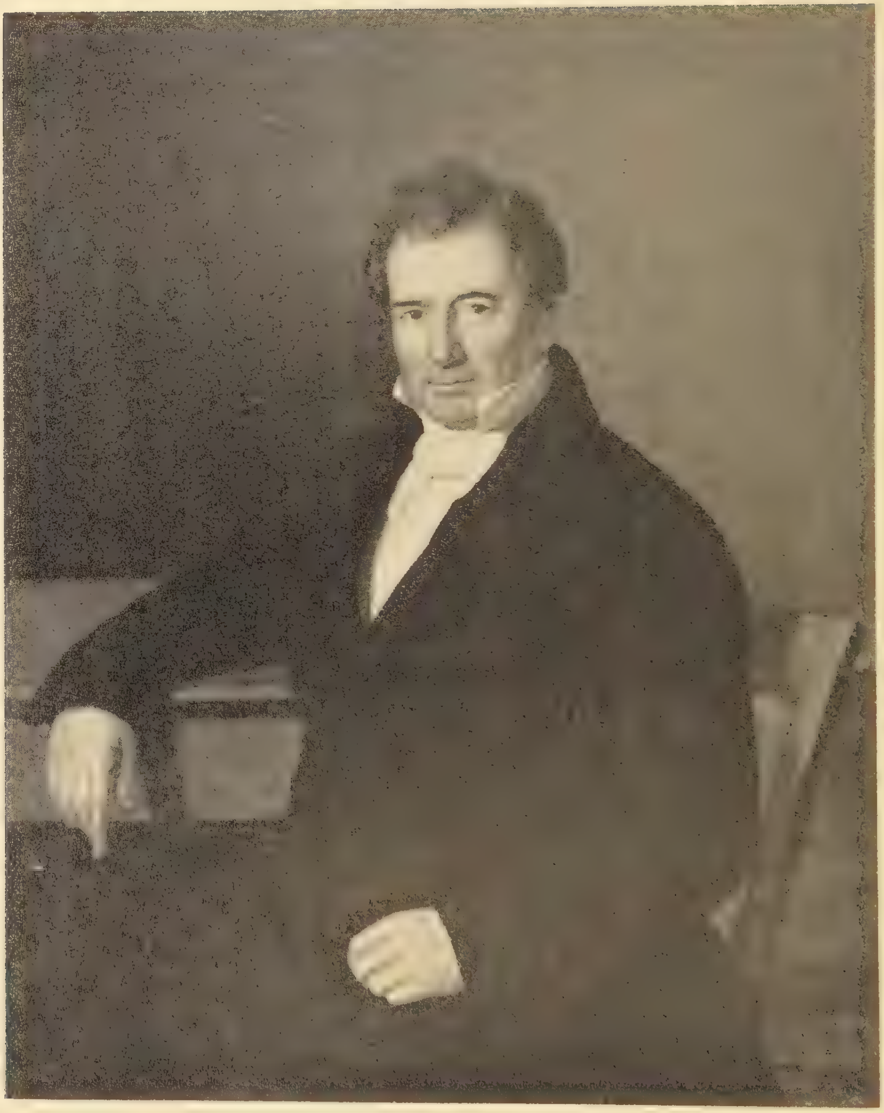
C'est vraiment une occasion offerte aux speculateurs, car quoique les Propriétaires soient persuadés que dans un an ou deux cette propriété decuplera sa valeur presente, ils sont determinés à vendre sans reserve aucune, et aux termes les plus avantageux.

CONDITIONS: 6, 12, 18, 24 et 30 mois, en billets endossés à satisfaction des vendeurs, portant hypothèque jusqu'à parfait paiement. Les acheteurs se feront mettre en possession à leurs frais; les actes de vente seront passés chez M. Wm. BOSWELL, Notaire public, à la charge des acquereurs. Ceux qui paieront comptant auront droit à un escompte de 10 pour cent par an, et ceux qui effectueront les 2 premiers paiements comptant seront dispensés de donner des endossements pour le reste de leurs billets.

Dans peu le plan sera exposé à la Bourse.

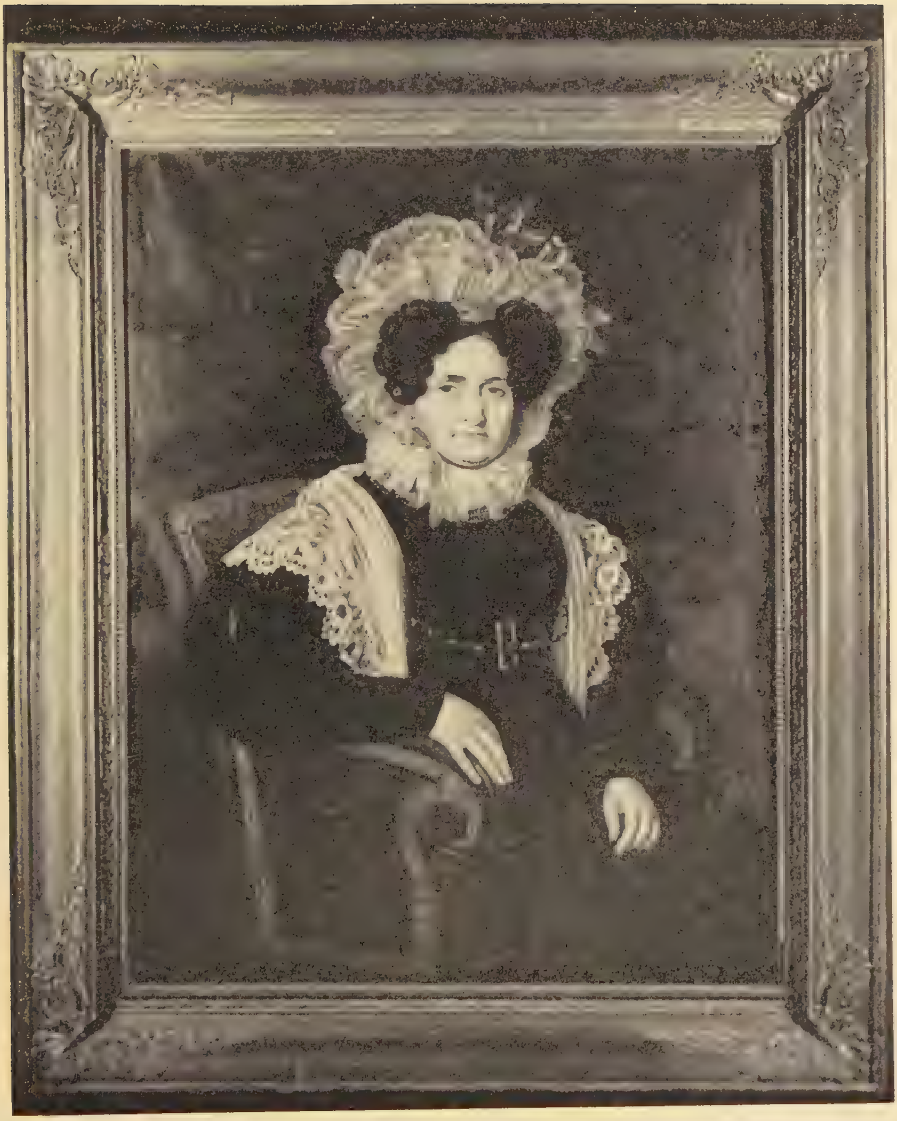
Imprimé par GAUX et Cie, Rue de Chartres, No. 106, entre Conti et St.-Louis

13. Barnett Real Estate Auction Broadside



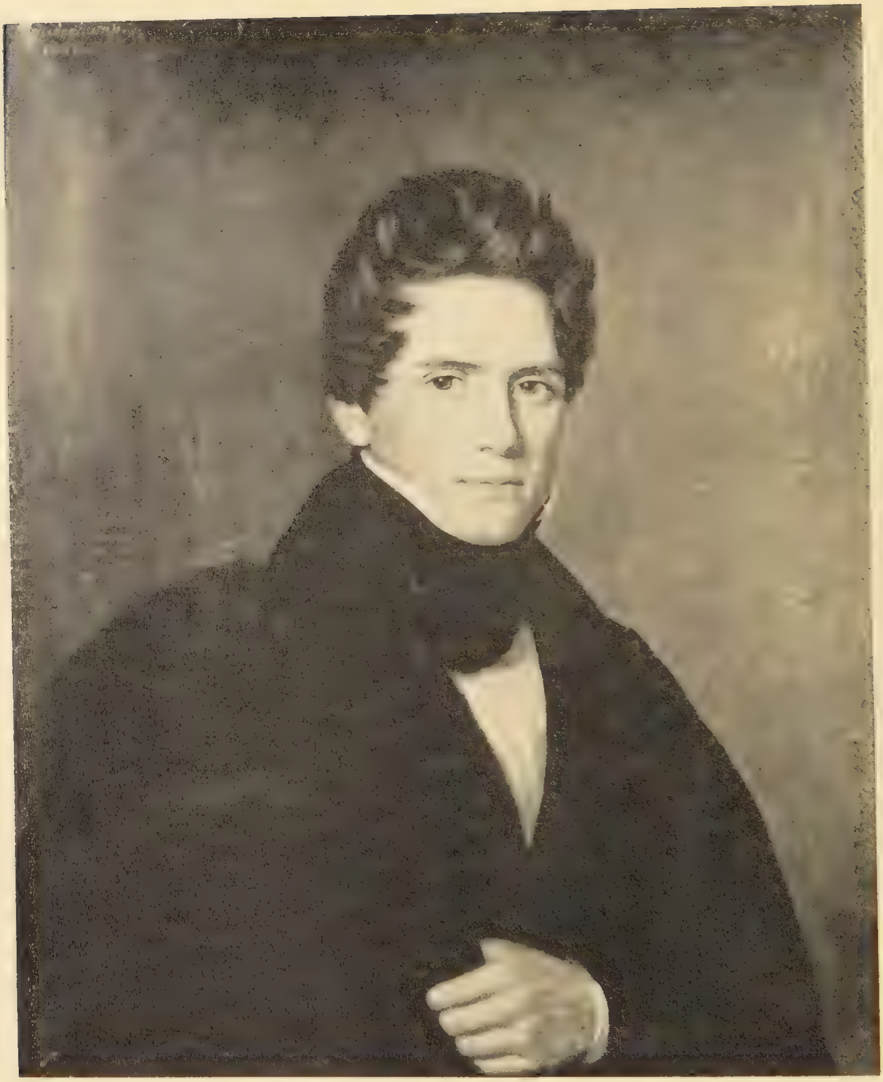
14. Samuel Hermann, Sr.

Portrait by Vaudechamp



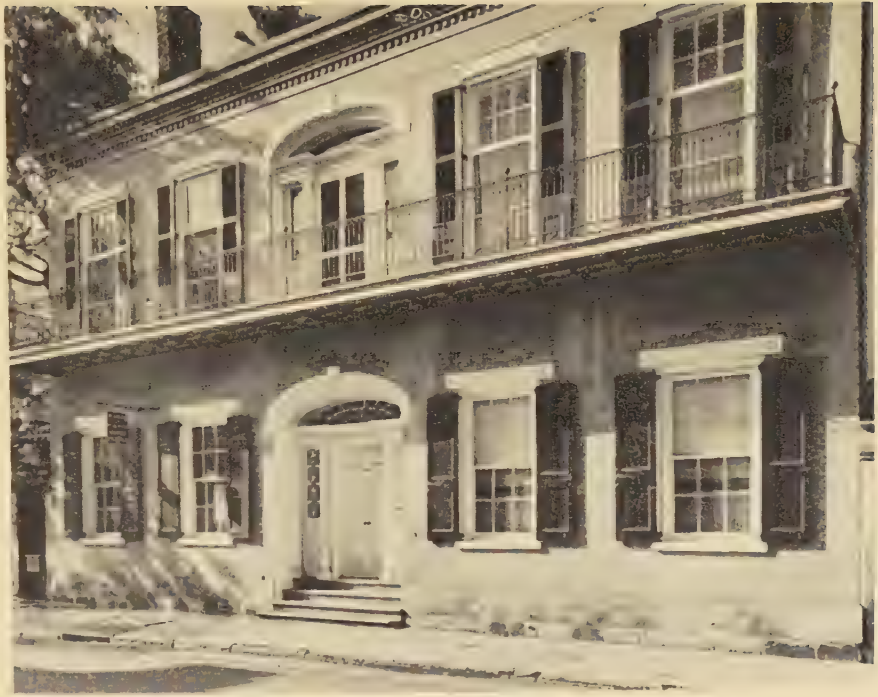
15. Marie Emeronthe Becnel Brou Hermann

Portrait by Vaudechamp (?)

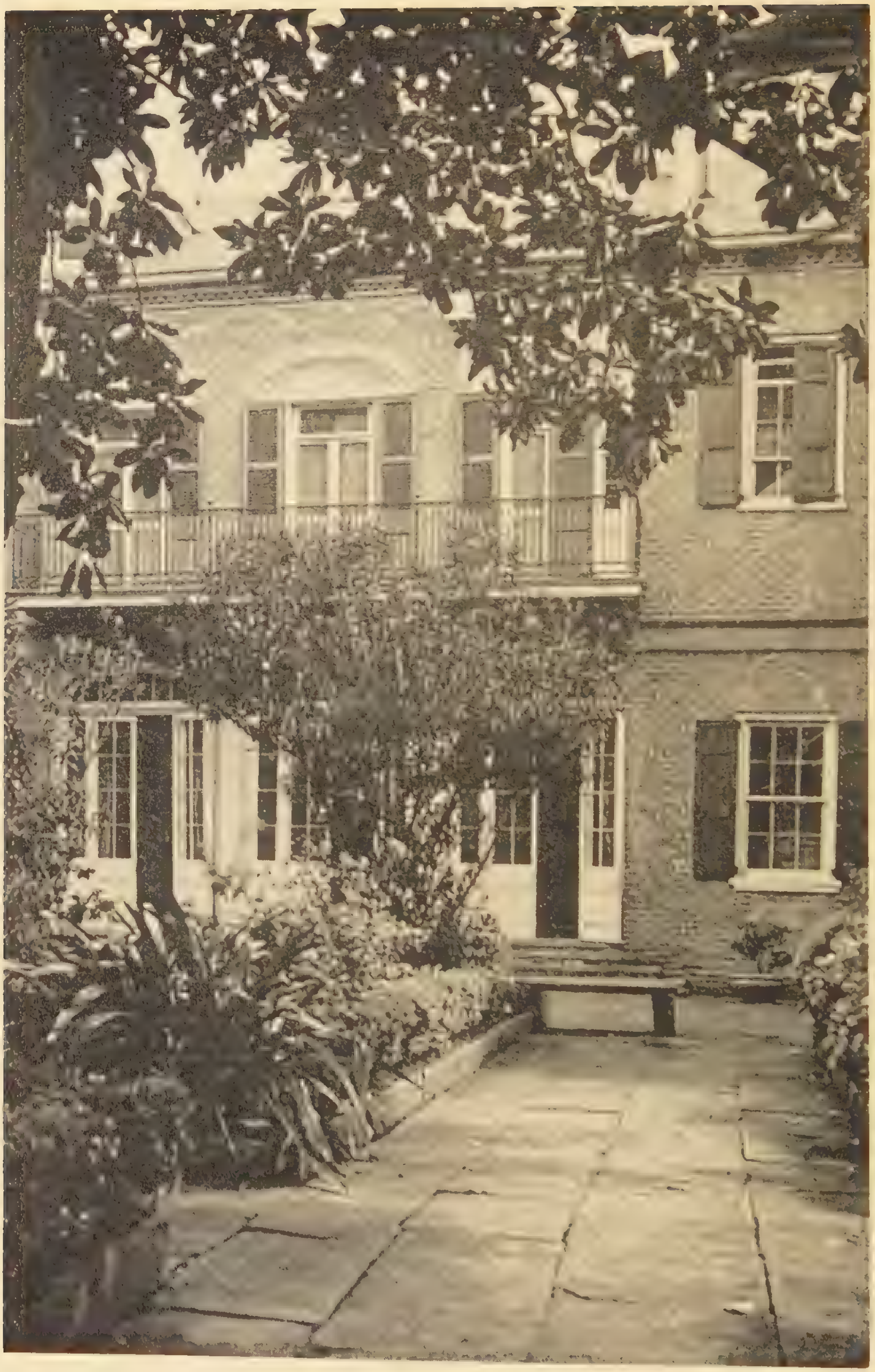


16. Samuel Hermann, Jr.

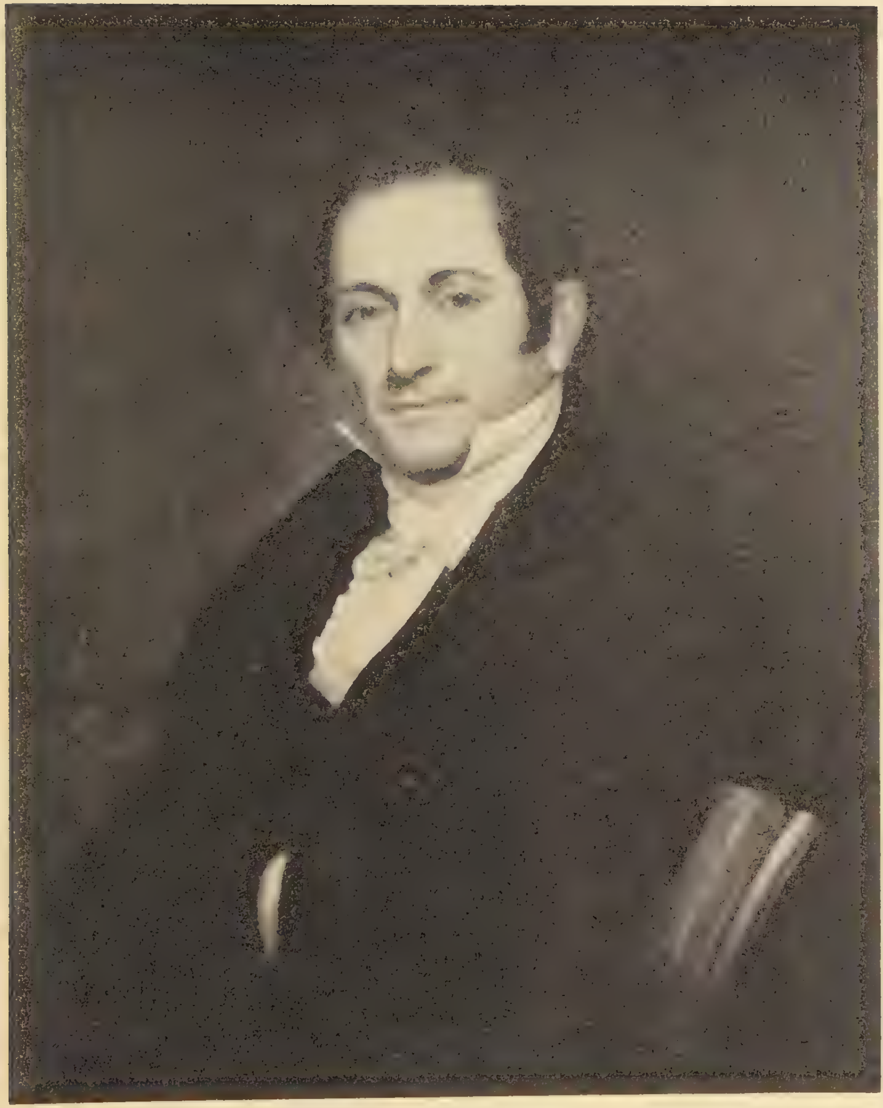
Portrait by Vaudechamp



17. The Samuel Hermann Home in New Orleans

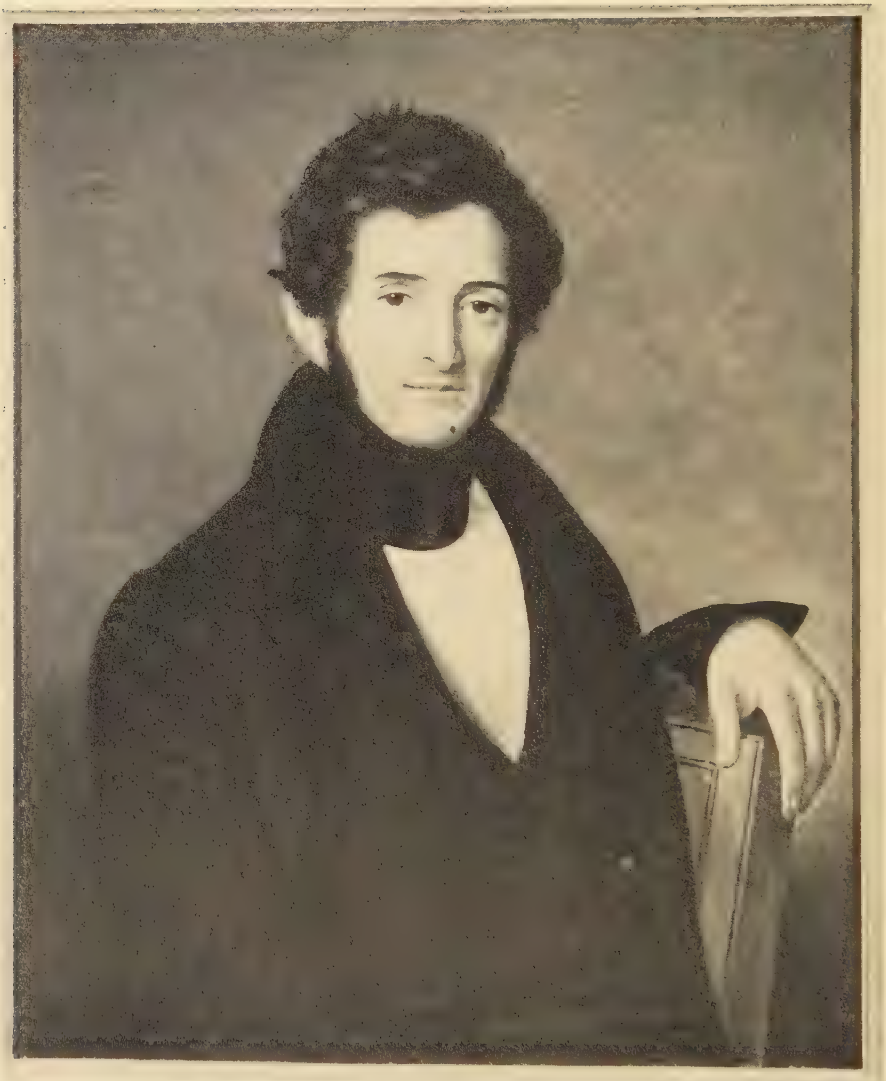


18. Garden Patio of the Hermann Home



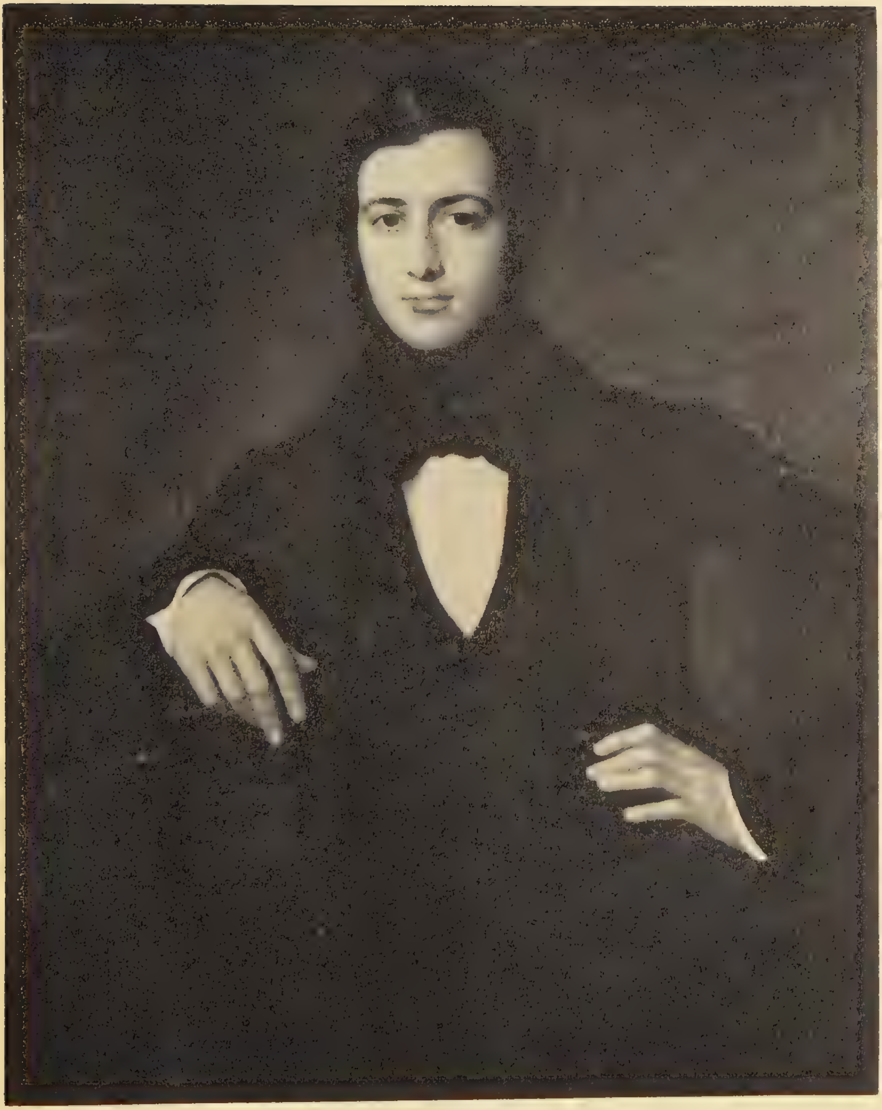
19. Samuel Kohn

Portrait by Unknown Artist



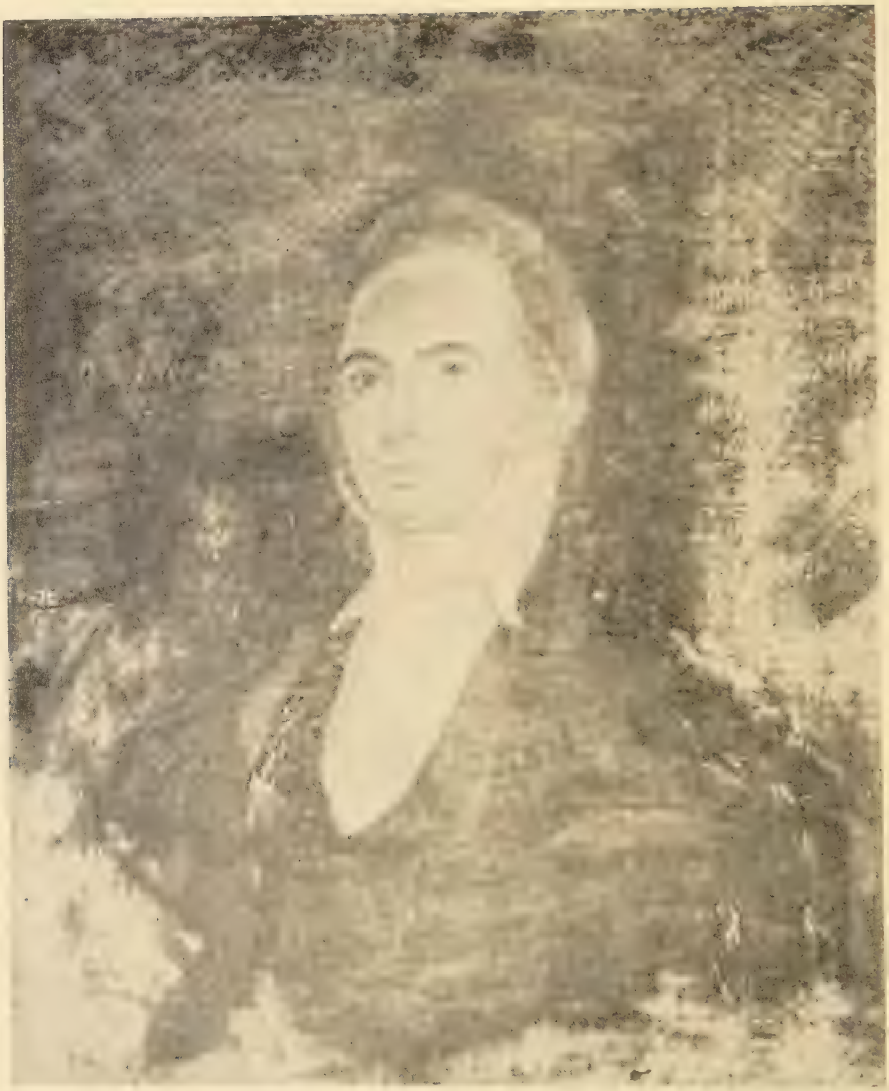
20. Joachim Kohn

Portrait by Vaudechamp



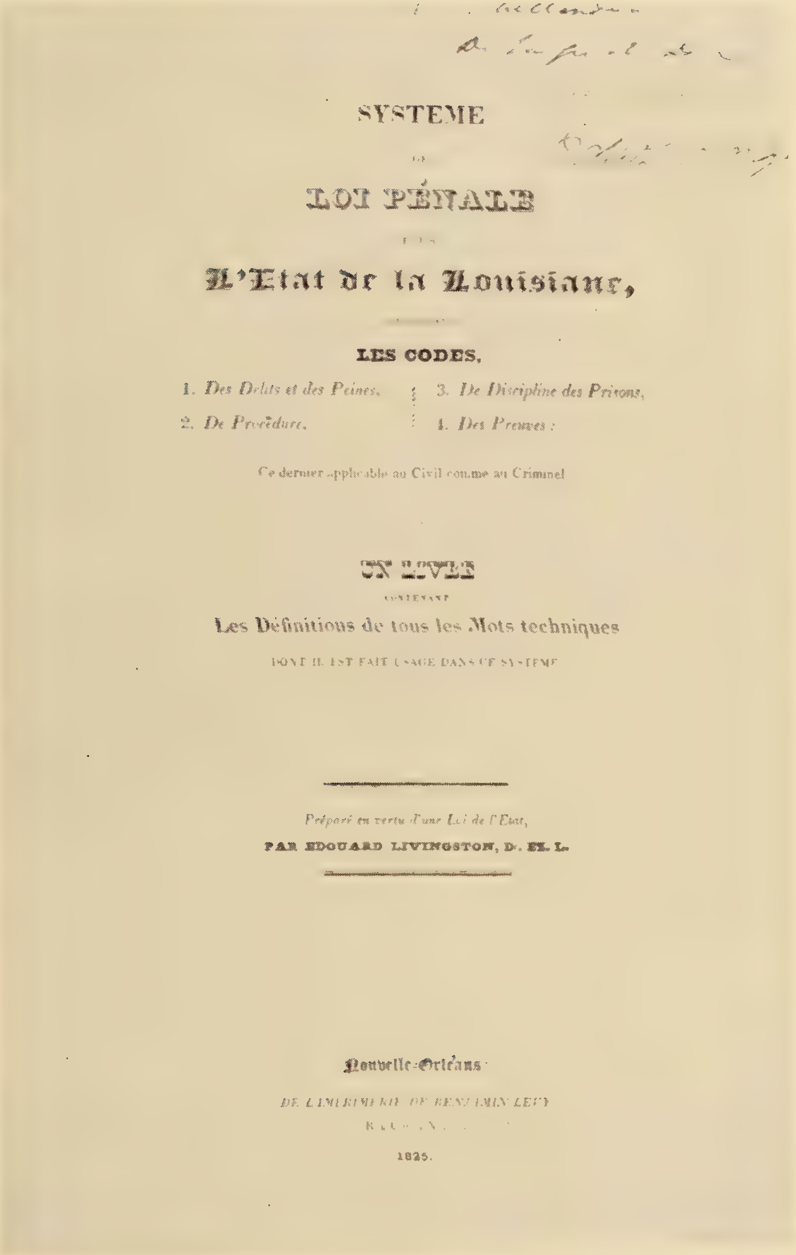
21. Carl Kohn

Portrait by Jacques Amans



22. Alexander Hart — The Widow Kokernot's Second Husband

Portrait by Unknown Artist



SYSTEME

DE

LOI PÉNALE

POUR

L'Etat de la Louisiane,

LES CODES,

1. *Des Delits et des Peines.*
2. *De Procédure.*
3. *De Discipline des Prisons.*
4. *Des Preuves :*

Ce dernier applicable au Civil comme au Criminel

UN LIVRE

CONTENANT

Les Définitions de tous les Mots techniques

DONT IL EST FAIT USAGE DANS CE SYSTEME

Préparé en vertu d'une Loi de l'Etat,

PAR EDOUARD LIVINGSTON, D. EX. L.

Nouvelle-Orléans

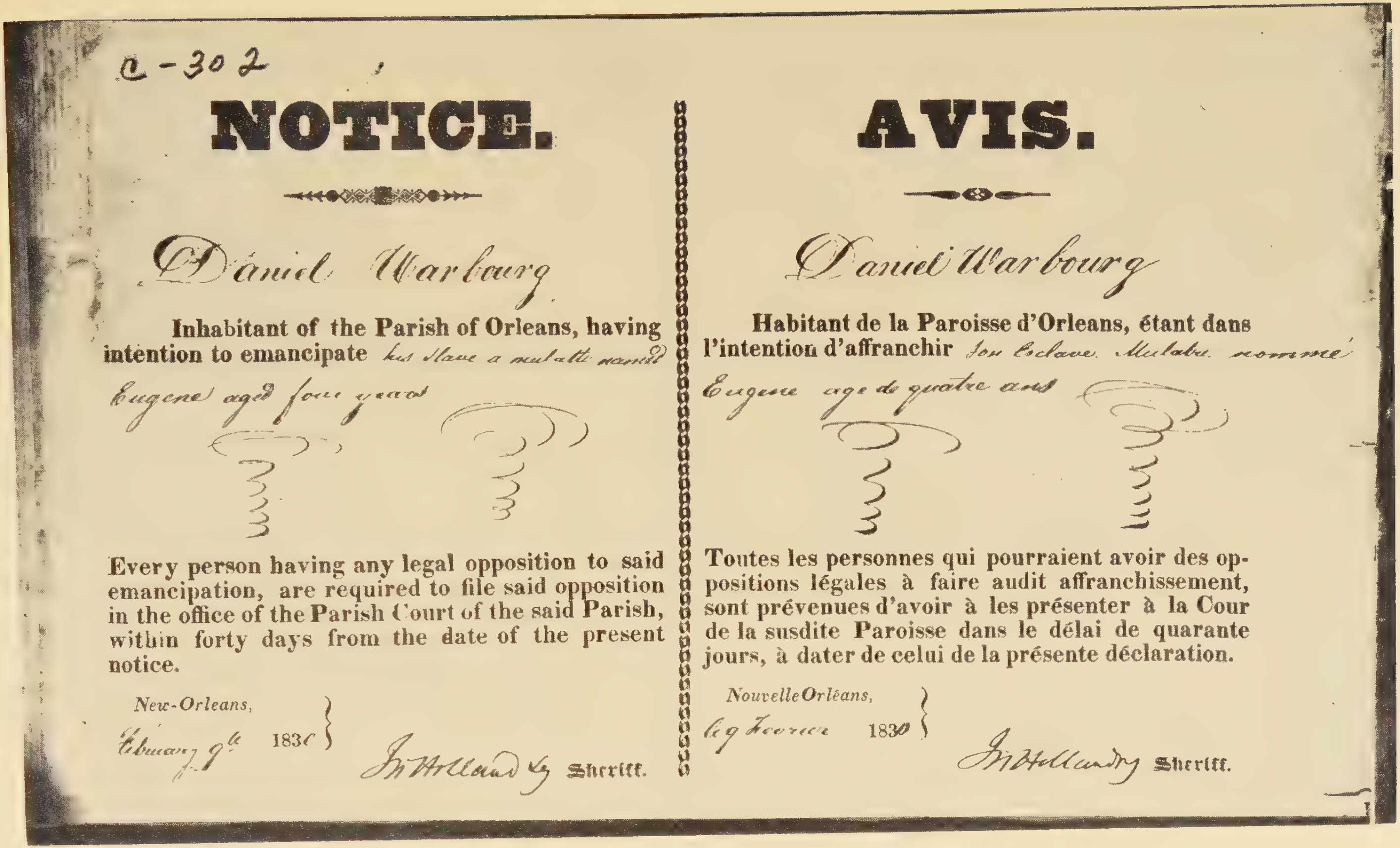
DE L'IMPRIMERIE DE BENJAMIN LEVY

[illegible]

1825.

23. A Levy Imprint: Title Page of a Section of Livingston's *Penal Code* in French

24. Louis Moreau Gottschalk



c-302

NOTICE.

Daniel Warburg

Inhabitant of the Parish of Orleans, having intention to emancipate his slave a mulatto named Eugene aged four years

Every person having any legal opposition to said emancipation, are required to file said opposition in the office of the Parish Court of the said Parish, within forty days from the date of the present notice.

New-Orleans,
February 9th 1830

Jn Holland by Sheriff.

AVIS.

Daniel Warburg

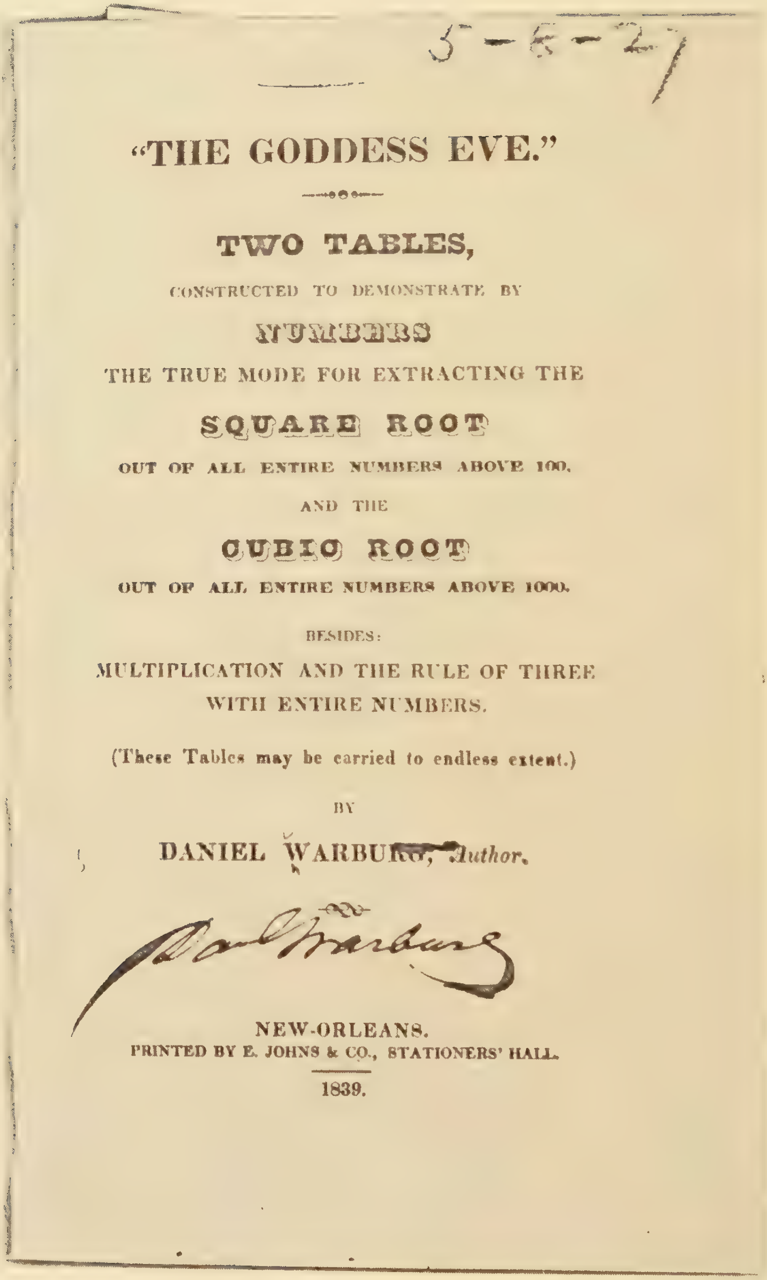
Habitant de la Paroisse d'Orleans, étant dans l'intention d'affranchir son Esclave Mulatre nommé Eugene agé de quatre ans

Toutes les personnes qui pourraient avoir des oppositions légales à faire audit affranchissement, sont prévenues d'avoir à les présenter à la Cour de la susdite Paroisse dans le délai de quarante jours, à dater de celui de la présente déclaration.

Nouvelle Orléans,
le 9 Fevrier 1830

Jn Holland by Sheriff.

25. Daniel Warburg Frees His Son, Eugène



5-5-27

"THE GODDESS EVE."

TWO TABLES,

CONSTRUCTED TO DEMONSTRATE BY

NUMBERS

THE TRUE MODE FOR EXTRACTING THE

SQUARE ROOT

OUT OF ALL ENTIRE NUMBERS ABOVE 100,

AND THE

CUBIC ROOT

OUT OF ALL ENTIRE NUMBERS ABOVE 1000.

BESIDES:

MULTIPLICATION AND THE RULE OF THREE

WITH ENTIRE NUMBERS.

(These Tables may be carried to endless extent.)

BY

DANIEL WARBU~~RG, A~~*uthor.*

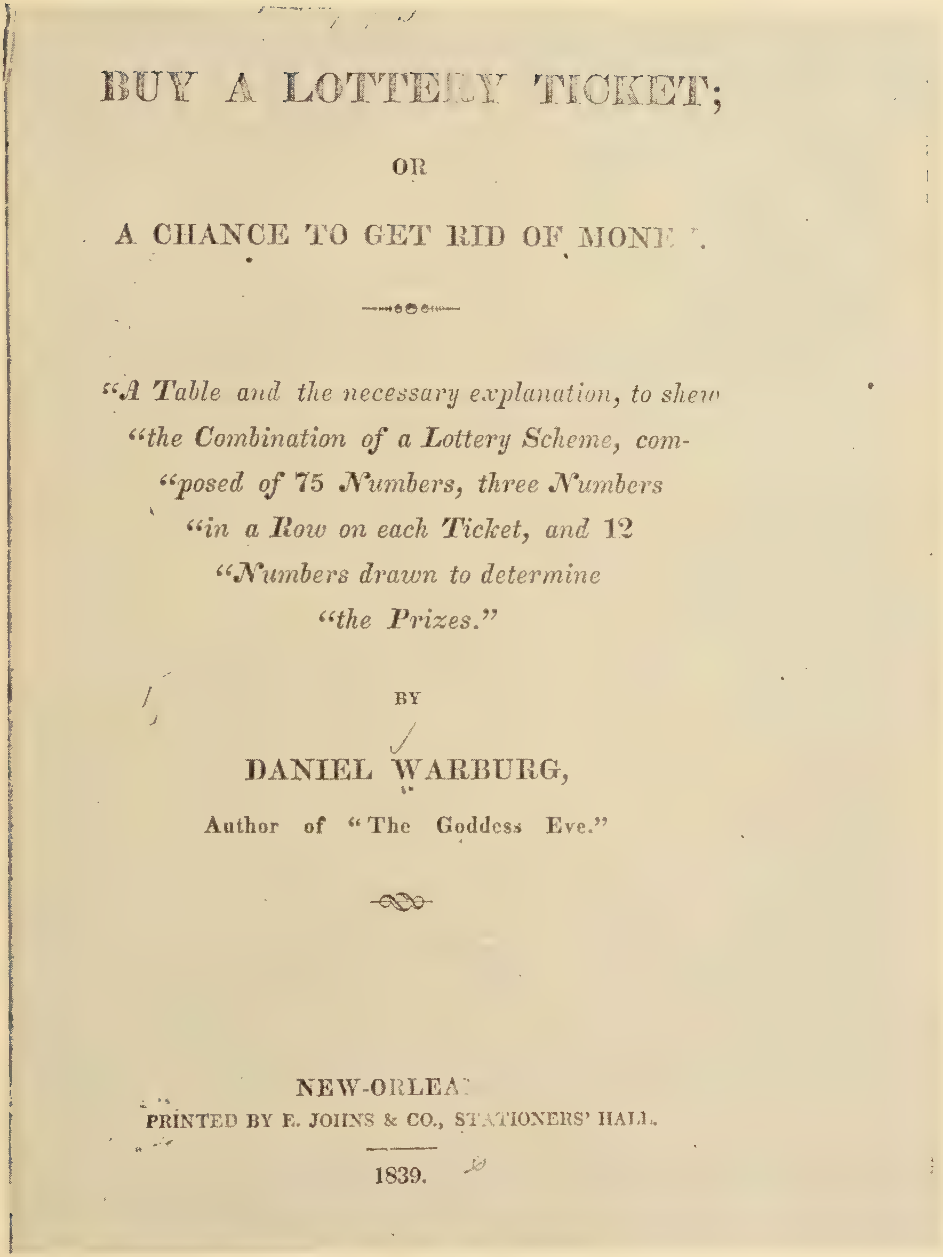
Dan Warburg

NEW-ORLEANS.

PRINTED BY E. JOHNS & CO., STATIONERS' HALL.

1839.

26. Title Page of Warburg's *The Goddess Eve*


BUY A LOTTERY TICKET;

OR

A CHANCE TO GET RID OF MONEY.

"*A Table and the necessary explanation, to shew*
"*the Combination of a Lottery Scheme, com-*
"*posed of* 75 *Numbers, three Numbers*
"*in a Row on each Ticket, and* 12
"*Numbers drawn to determine*
"*the Prizes.*"

BY

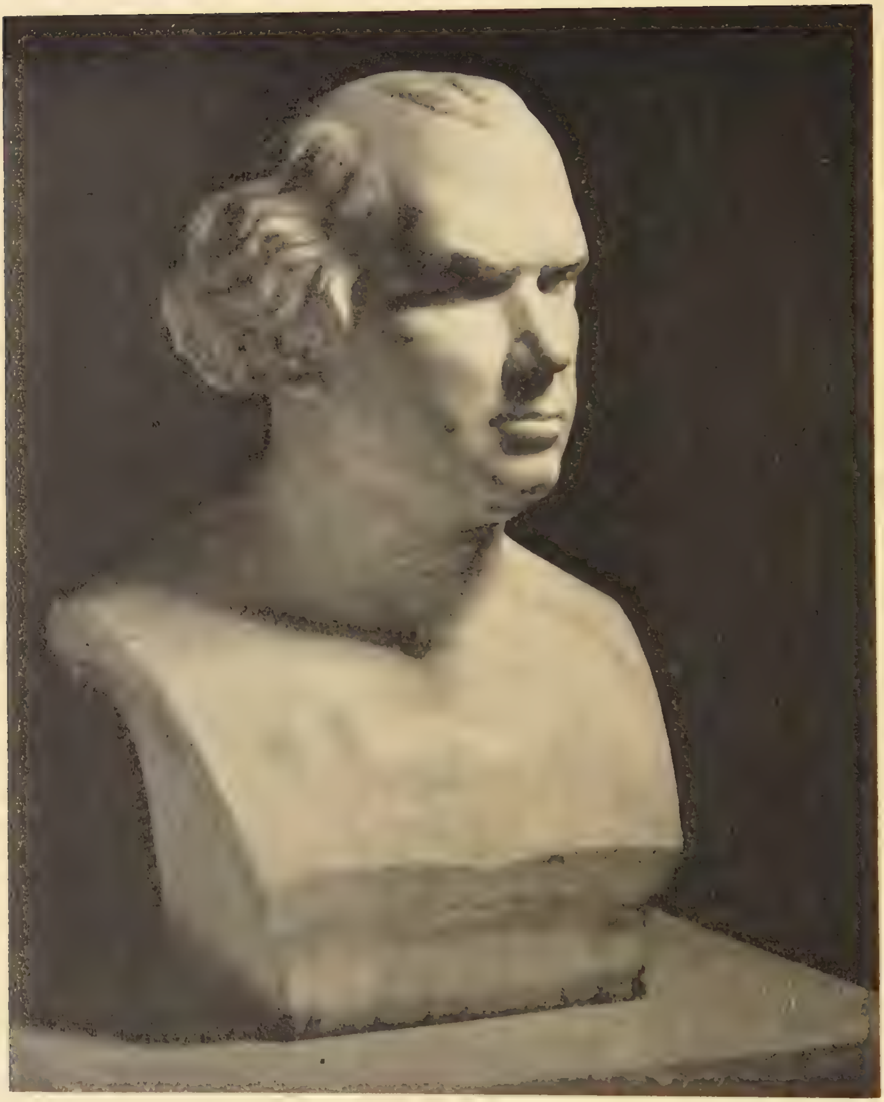
DANIEL WARBURG,

Author of "The Goddess Eve."

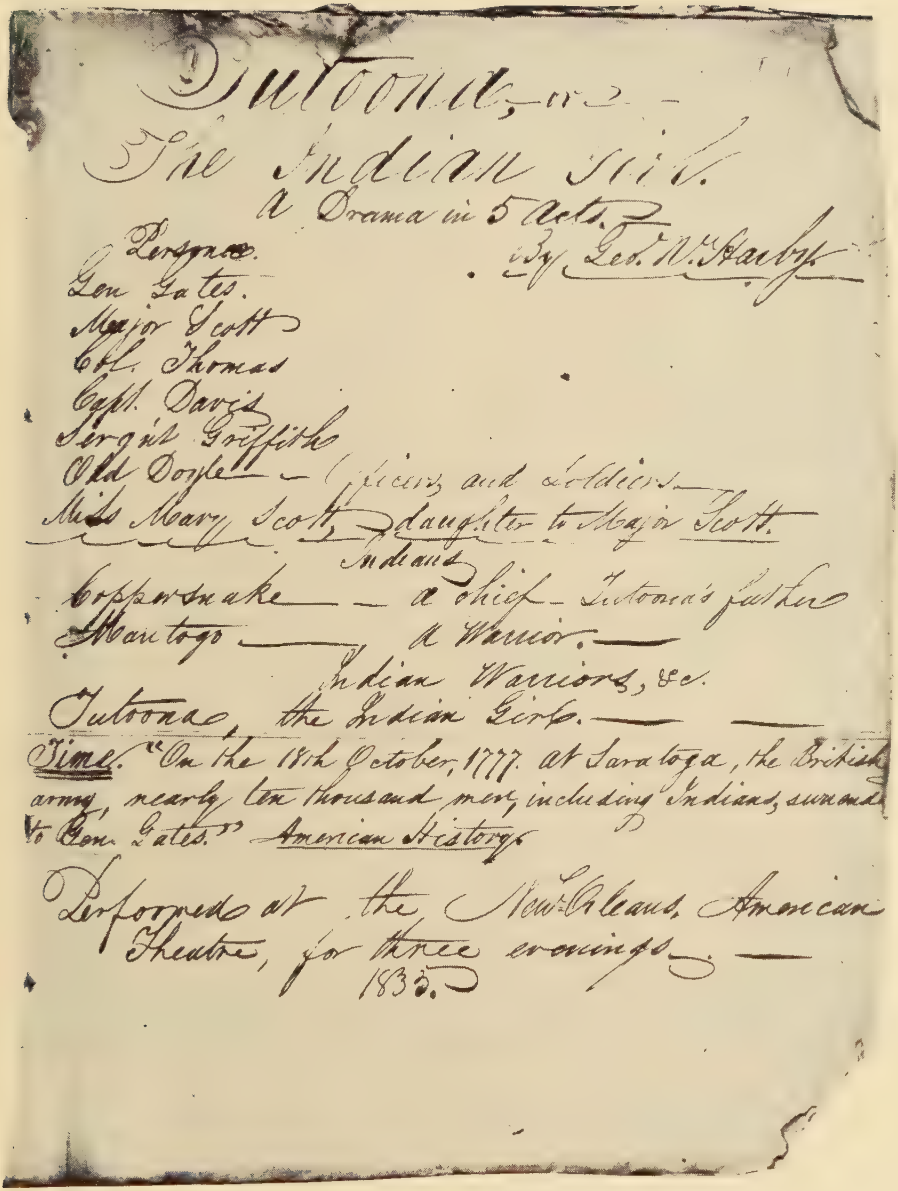
NEW-ORLEANS
PRINTED BY E. JOHNS & CO., STATIONERS' HALL.

1839.

27. Title Page of Warburg's *Buy A Lottery Ticket*



28. Eugène Warburg's Bust of John Y. Mason



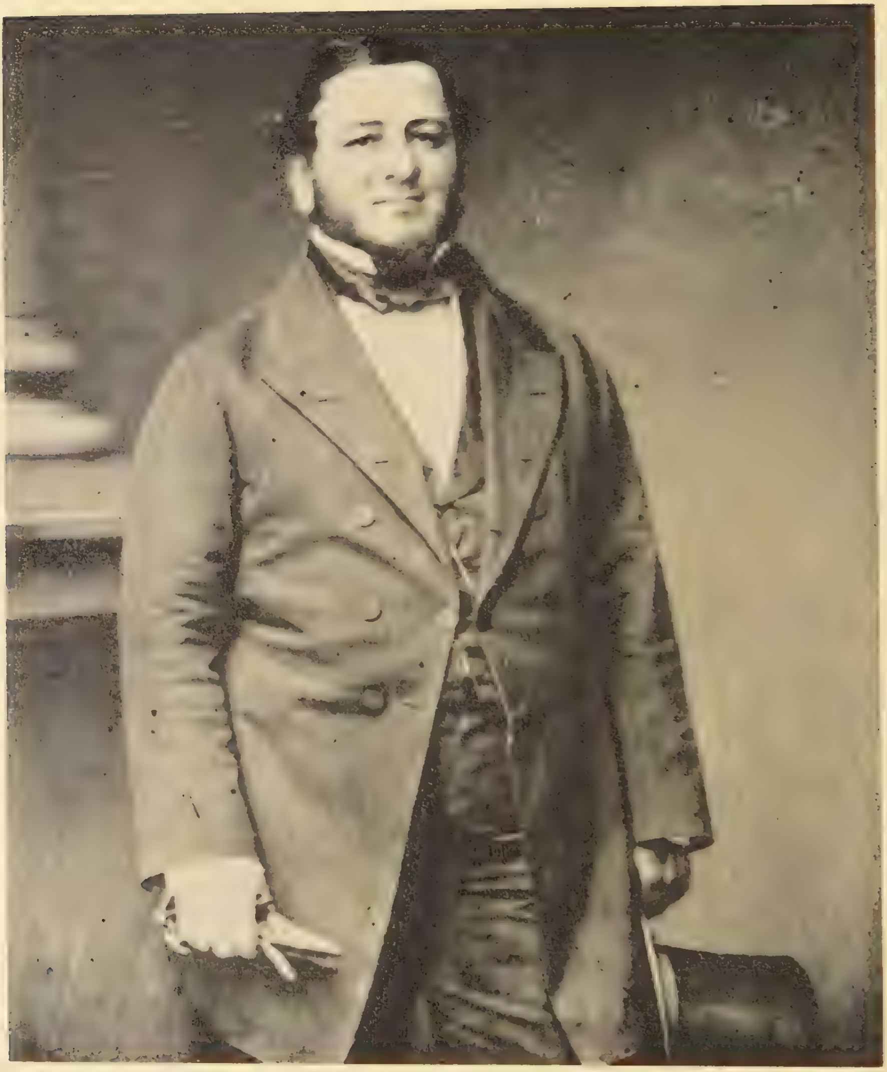
Tutoona, or
The Indian Girl.
A Drama in 5 Acts.
By Geo. W. Harby.

Persons.
Gen Gates.
Major Scott
Col. Thomas
Capt. Davis
Sergt. Griffiths
Old Doyle — Officers and Soldiers.—
Miss Mary Scott, daughter to Major Scott.
Indians
Coppersnake — a chief — Tutoona's father
Mantogo — A Warrior.—
Indian Warriors, &c.
Tutoona, the Indian Girl.— —

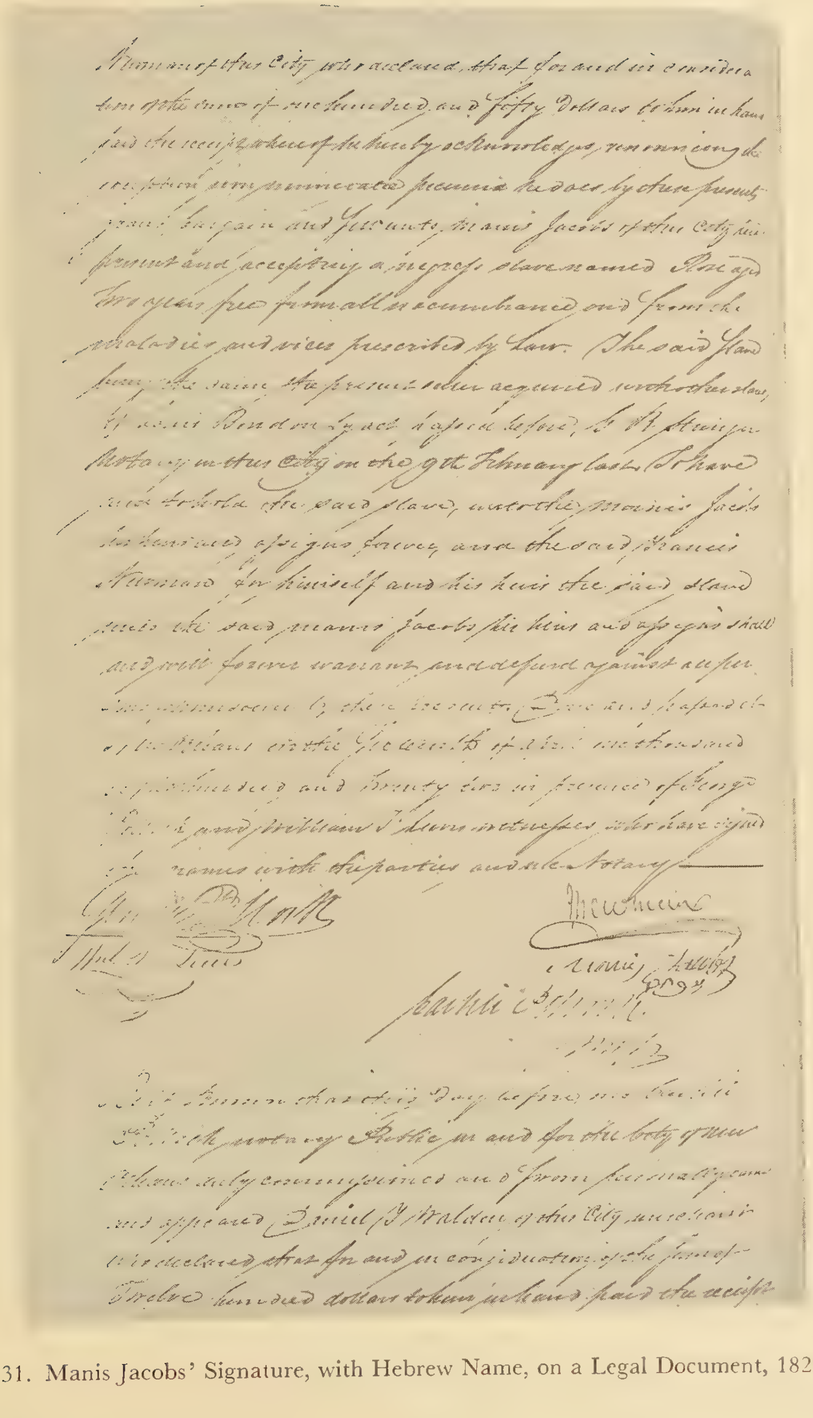
Time. "On the 18th October, 1777. at Saratoga, the British army, nearly ten thousand men, including Indians, surrend
to Gen. Gates." American History.

Performed at the New-Orleans American Theatre, for three evenings.— —
1835.

29. Title Page of Manuscript of G. W. Harby's *Tutoona*



[illegible]0. Judah P. Benjamin

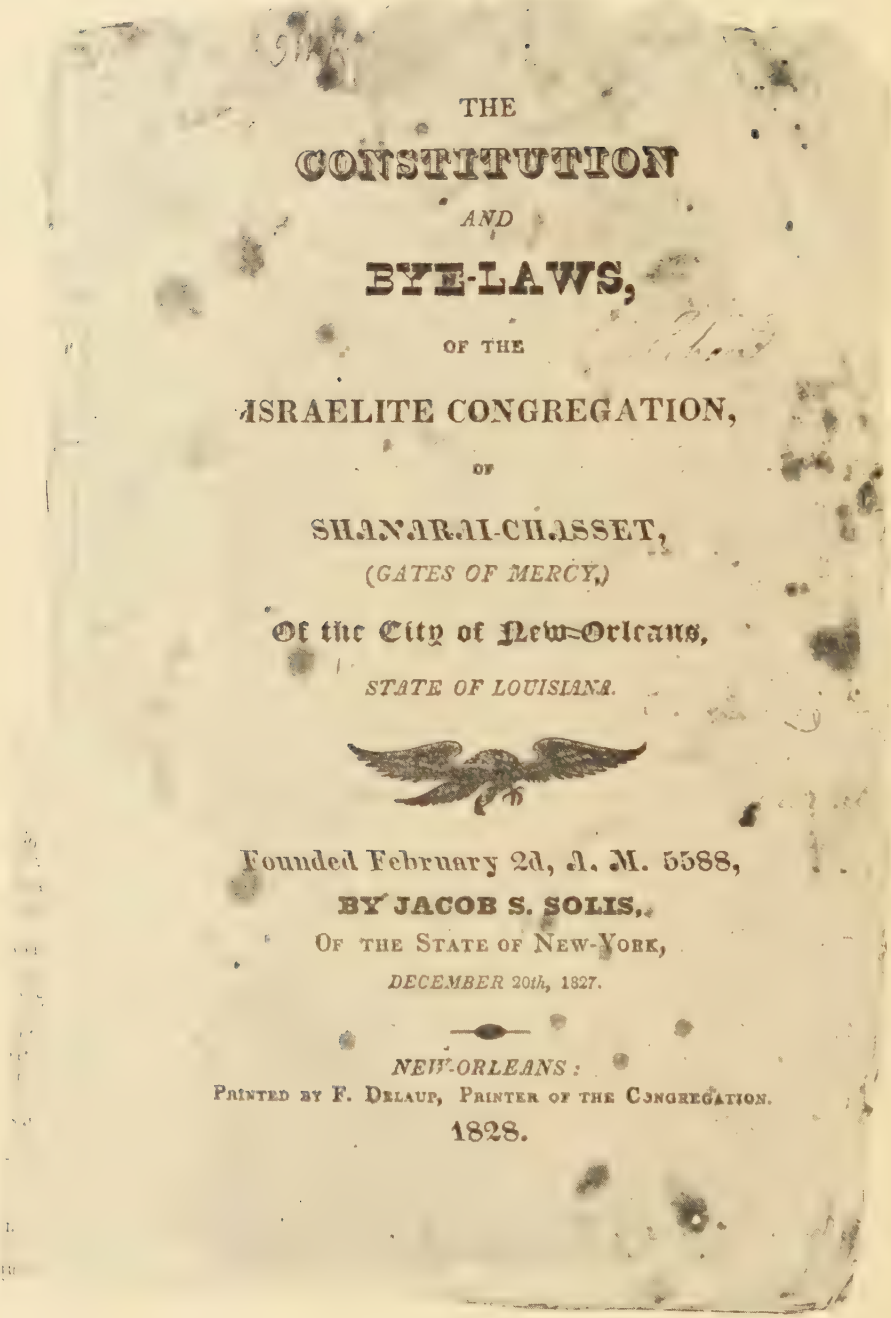


Herman of this City who declared, that for and in consideration of the sum of six hundred and fifty Dollars to him in hand paid the receipt whereof he hereby acknowledges, renouncing the exception of non numerata pecunia he does by these presents grant bargain and sell unto Manis Jacobs of this City here present and accepting a negress slave named Rose aged two years free from all incumbrance and from the maladies and vices prescribed by law. The said slave being the same the present seller acquired with other slaves by [illegible] by act passed before [illegible] Notary in this City on the 9th February last, To have and to hold the said slave unto the said Manis Jacobs his heirs and assigns forever and the said Francis Herman for himself and his heirs the said slave unto the said Manis Jacobs his heirs and assigns shall and will forever warrant and defend against all persons whomsoever by these presents. Done and passed at New Orleans on the seventh of [illegible] one thousand eight hundred and twenty three in presence of George [illegible] and William [illegible] witnesses who have signed their names with the parties and me Notary

Manis Jacobs

Be it known that this day before me [illegible] a Notary Public in and for the City of New Orleans duly commissioned and sworn personally came and appeared Daniel [illegible] Walden of this City merchant who declared that for and in consideration of the sum of Twelve hundred dollars to him in hand paid the receipt

31. Manis Jacobs' Signature, with Hebrew Name, on a Legal Document, 1823

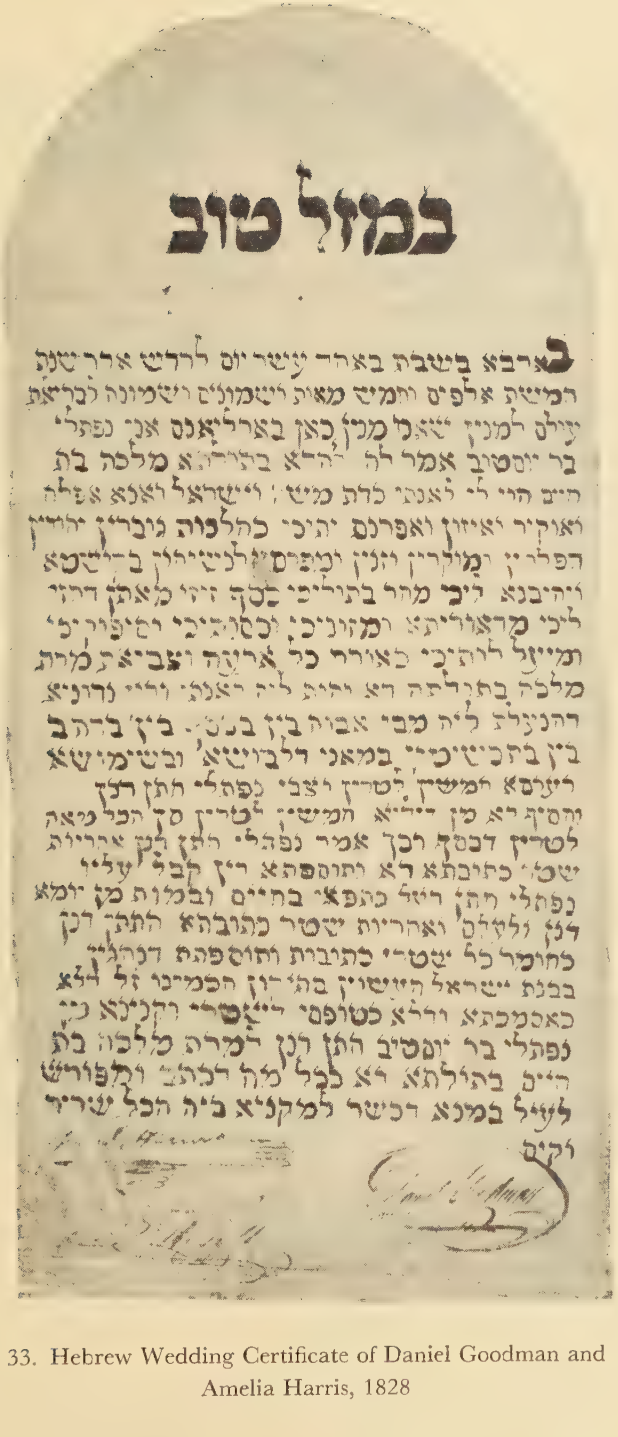


THE
CONSTITUTION
AND
BYE-LAWS,
OF THE
ISRAELITE CONGREGATION,
OF
SHANARAI-CHASSET,
(GATES OF MERCY,)
Of the City of New-Orleans,
STATE OF LOUISIANA.

Founded February 2d, A. M. 5588,
BY JACOB S. SOLIS,
OF THE STATE OF NEW-YORK,
DECEMBER 20th, 1827.

NEW-ORLEANS:
PRINTED BY F. DELAUP, PRINTER OF THE CONGREGATION.
1828.

32. Title Page of the 1828 *Constitution*

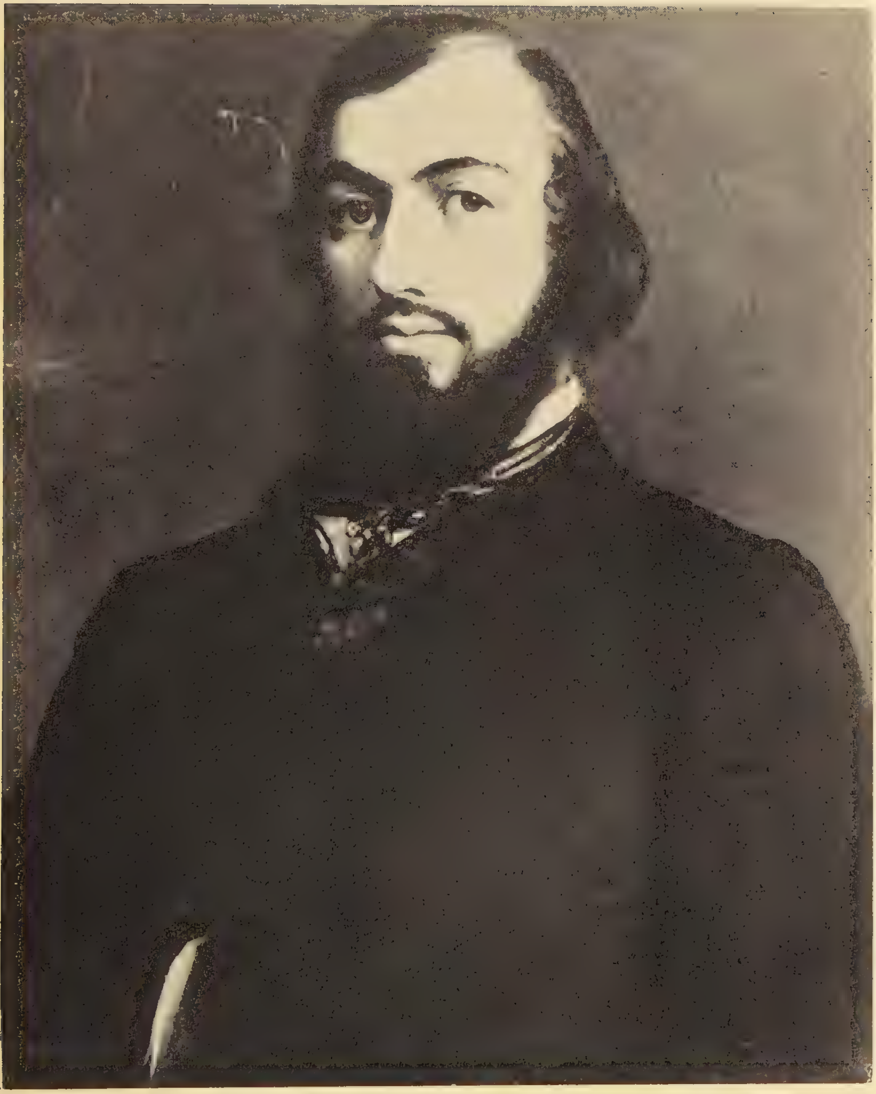


במזל טוב

בארבא בשבת באחד עשר יום לחדש אדר שנת
חמשת אלפים וחמש מאות ושמונים ושמונה לבריאת
עולם למנין שאנו מנין כאן בארליאנס אני נפתלי
בר יום טוב אמר לה להדא בתולתא מלכה בת
חיים הוי לי לאנתו כדת משה וישראל ואנא אפלח
ואוקיר ואיזון ואפרנס יתיכי כהלכות גוברין יהודין
דפלחין ומוקרין וזנין ומפרנסין לנשיהון בקושטא
ויהיבנא ליכי מהר בתוליכי כסף זוזי מאתן דחזי
ליכי מדאוריתא ומזוניכי וכסותיכי וסיפוקיכי
ומיעל לותיכי כאורח כל ארעא וצביאת מרת
מלכה בתולתה דא והות ליה לאנתו ודין נדוניא
דהנעלת ליה מבי אבוה בין בכסף בין בזהב
בין בתכשיטין במאני דלבושא ובשמושא
דערסא חמשין ליטרין וצבי נפתלי חתן דנן
והוסיף לה מן דיליה חמשין ליטרין סך הכל מאה
ליטרין דכסף וכך אמר נפתלי חתן דנן אחריות
שטר כתובתא דא ותוספתא דין קבלית עלי
נפתלי חתן דנן להתפרע בחיים ובמות מן יומא
דנן ולעלם ואחריות שטר כתובתא החתן דנן
כחומר כל שטרי כתובות ותוספתות דנהגין
בבנת ישראל העשוין כתיקון חכמינו ז״ל דלא
כאסמכתא ודלא כטופסי דשטרי וקנינא מן
נפתלי בר יום טוב חתן דנן למרת מלכה בת
חיים בתולתא דא לכל מה דכתוב ומפורש
לעיל במנא דכשר למקניא ביה הכל שריר
וקים

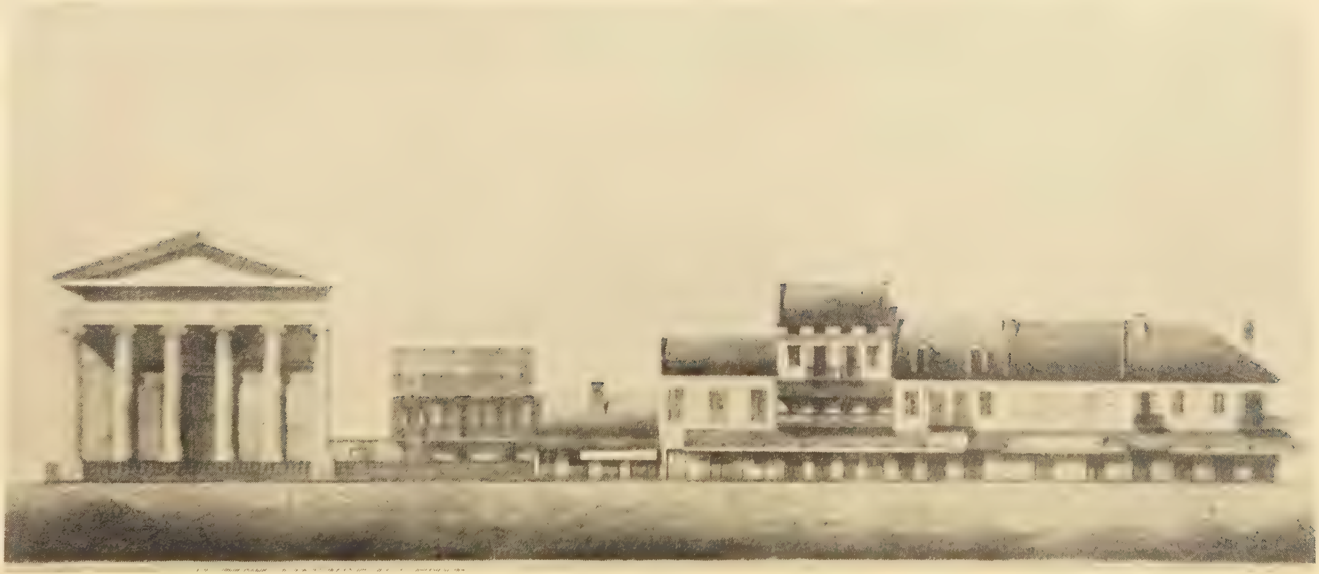
33. Hebrew Wedding Certificate of Daniel Goodman and Amelia Harris, 1828

34. Isaac Leeser



35. Gershom Kursheedt

Portrait by Unknown Artist



36. Christ Church (extreme left) Before Its Transformation into
Nefutzoth Yehudah Synagogue

VI

Why Had It Taken So Long?

Assimilation or Continuity?

When Manis Jacobs wrote to Jacob Solis, asking him to try to borrow five or six thousand dollars from New York Jews so that the New Orleans congregation might undertake the building of a synagogue, he was reminding him of something that both of them knew: the wealthiest and most successful Jews in New Orleans could easily have contributed that amount of money if they had wanted to participate in the project. Samuel and Joachim Kohn, Samuel Hermann, Asher Moses Nathan and Hart Moses Shiff would neither join the congregation nor contribute to its support; Judah Touro and Edward Gottschalk both made contributions, probably very small ones, but had no interest in joining or helping the congregation in any substantial way. Any two of these men could probably have built a synagogue out of their own funds without missing the money at all. But they did not. What was different about them as Jews? Why had they who were among the earliest Jewish settlers in New Orleans—all but Gottschalk—never undertaken the establishment of a congregation themselves, in the early years? Why did it take so much longer to found a synagogue in New Orleans than in any comparable location?

1. The Kind of Jews They Were

Difficult as it is to generalize about men whose personalities and characters were vastly different and complex, it is surely obvious that the men who came to New Orleans in the early years, before 1815, were strong and courageous individualists. They arrived alone, without a relative or a friend; they dared to confront the challenge of a new life without any help. Each of them was poor, armed only with a willingness to work hard. They were independent men. All this is to their credit; it demonstrates something admirable about their inner spirit—they were the stuff of which pioneers are made, hardy, determined, self-reliant. New Orleans needed their kind of imaginative vigor desperately. They contributed greatly to the city's growth and prosperity. But this quality of mind and spirit also tells us something about their feelings towards Judaism and the Jewish community. They simply did not care if they were distant from the heritage of their families. They were willing to leave the protective shelter of a full Jewish life at home, in Frankfurt, Hamburg, Amsterdam, London or New York City, in order to find fortune and success on a frontier where Judaism did not exist. They did not need the security of fellow Jews, of kosher food, of synagogue services, of holiday celebrations, even of memorial prayers for their departed. They knew in advance that they could do without the warmth and the familiar customs of Judaism. Touro could have gone to Charleston where there was a congregation, a community, and economic opportunity; Asher Nathan had even been there before he came to Louisiana; Alexander Phillips could have remained in Philadelphia. The Europeans could have immigrated to one of the cities of the Atlantic seaboard where there were established Jewish communities. That they did not settle in any of those cities, but decided to come to New Orleans, is primary evidence that Judaism was not very important to them.

As early as 1807, it was apparently well known that the Jews who had settled in New Orleans were not particularly loyal to their faith. The sensitive, intelligent Rebecca Gratz had already heard this, and sent a warning to her brother Joseph, before he took a trip to New Orleans:

> ". . . At New Orleans, there are many who call themselves Jews, or at least whose parentage being known are obliged to acknowledge themselves such, but who neglect those duties which would make that title honorable and then respected—among such my dear Jo, I hope you will never make one; be assured the worthy & the thinking part of the community will ever estimate a man, by his attention to the serious, domestic duties which speak more truly his character than the external forms in which he presents

> himself to the world; who would depend on a man's engagements with his fellow men, if he violates his more important engagements with God?"[1]

The Jewish community of the United States in 1807 was very small. News traveled swiftly. Those Jews who observed the traditions knew each other well. It did not take long for Rebecca Gratz in Philadelphia to hear from some traveling merchant, or perhaps from David Seixas' family in New York City, that men like Judah Touro and Jacob Hart paid little or no attention to the observances of the Jewish faith. After all, Jacob Hart's father had been a congregational leader in two cities, and Judah Touro's father had been a cantor and teacher. And here were their sons, in New Orleans, neglectful of their religious obligations. But Rebecca Gratz did not and could not understand that the ambition which drove these men to the entrepreneurial center of the South did not leave much room for feelings of religious devotion. Nor did New Orleans judge a man's worth by his "engagements with God," as Rebecca would have preferred. It judged him by the success of his enterprises. If he made good, he was a man of worth. These men had come to New Orleans because they thought that this was a city in which they would find fortune.

But perhaps it was not only indifference to Judaism which permitted these men to go so far from home or any place resembling home. The late years of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth century were a period of rapid disintegration of the traditional modes of Judaism. The old hold was being loosened. The rigid restrictions were no longer accepted without question. Jews who moved into the modern world beyond the strict bounds of the Jewish community were wondering if there was really any aspect of Judaism that was worth retaining. The first stirrings of what was to become Reform Judaism, the effort to help the Jew to adjust to life in the new world of constant contact between Jews and Christians by "modernizing" Judaism, had not reached the ears and hearts of very many young Jews. Not until 1824 did the first attempt to modify traditional practices lead to the formation of a new kind of congregation in Charleston, under the leadership of

George Harby's brother Isaac. There was as yet no alternative to traditional Orthodoxy for men who asked any sort of questions. But it may have been something even more personal than this generalized dissatisfaction with traditional Judaism. We do not know enough about the individual experiences of the European immigrants to evaluate their response to the ritual of their childhood days. But it is possible that men like Judah Touro and Benjamin Levy, whose fathers were so closely identified with the synagogue and its life, had been repelled by the rigid insistence on observance, by the inevitable separation from non-Jews, by too great a concern with religious matters. It is not only self-reliance and self-assurance that send a man far from home to a strange new world, all alone. It may also be alienation and rebellion against the past. Perhaps it was with relief that some of these early Jews came to New Orleans to find a life that would be free of the restrictions of Judaism.

There was another factor which motivated the Europeans more strongly than the American-born men: escape from the degradation associated with being Jewish. Nowhere on the European continent were Jews treated with true equality or were they granted true freedom. Always there were reminders of disability and inferiority. All of these early settlers must have been grateful to be far away from a Europe that still despised Jews. Only Carl Kohn left testimony of the anguish and resentment that a young Jew felt at the treatment accorded to Jews in Europe, but we may be certain that he was expressing something that all of them understood. Written in 1833 to his Uncle Samuel who had visited the Kohn family in rural Bohemia, these words of Carl's are worth pondering:

> ". . . The accounts you give of our relations are indeed sorry enough but alas! what can we expect otherwise—it is a sad thought, that those who are so near & dear to us, in spite of your exertions & sacrifices for them can still not succeed to better their situation—It is indeed a miserable country they live in—New Orleans with its . . . fevers & cholera is by far a preferable place—there at least a man inclined to labour can gain a livelihood, not only for himself, but also for his children, and can amass sufficient means, to exempt him from want in his old age; but in our wretched country, an honest man with a large family to support,

> despised and trodden-under-foot as he already is by religious prejudice, is still not allowed to enjoy in quiet the fruits of his own limited industry; continually preyed upon by an oppressive & partial government, it is no wonder that the word Jew has become proverbial for *s*[*ala*]*ud*. . . ."[2]

Here is a sort of helpless anger that has to be choked down, because there is no hope for the future, just more pain for Jews. But it spills over, this anger, against the Jews themselves. Even though he indulged in sentimental recollections of his childhood, and wrote with longing of the "*Kichlach* [little cakes] on the table" in his home, Carl could not help speaking with some scorn of his fellow Jews in the Bohemian village:

> ". . . I can well imagine the inconvenience you were subject to during your stay in our native country—but in a country where ignorance reigns to such a degree, where all information is banished from our class, and where no change takes place . . ., a man like you, so nearly related to the family [,] an American, and particularly a 'richard' will always collect crowds of the curious, who stare at him with surprise, in seeing nothing supernatural about the man, who had resolution enough to raise himself thus high above his cast, and as to the crowd of beggars, that astonishes me less, for ours is a land of beggars, where an honest man cannot but be a beggar, & the only land, where a man like my poor dear father, whose ideas of honor are a little more elevated than those of others, cannot, in spite of hard labor, bodily & mental exertions advance himself beyond the humble limits, which fate has set for him . . ."

Jews are a "class," and a "cast[e]." And Carl will not identify himself with the class and the caste, nor can he speak of his uncle as one of them—he "had resolution enough to raise himself thus high above his cast." Carl was undergoing a struggle that had been characteristic of ambitious and sensitive young Jews since the first glimmering of hope for escape from the Jewish "fate" appeared with the Enlightenment—the struggle between resentment against anti-Semitic prejudice and oppression, and alienation from the Jews themselves, as though they were partly responsible for their condition. Carl was delighted to know that Samuel planned to help his father "find himself a place of refuge from persecution & trouble in some other part of Germany," but advised against it; one difficulty he foresaw was that

> ". . . should he settle elsewhere, he will then be among strangers, the odium of being a Jew will yet be upon him, & among them it would require a long time, before the qualities became known, which distinguish him from the common class. . . ."[3]

Carl had already become something of a snob. Freedom, opportunity, affluence, knowledge, had drawn him away from his Jewish identity; Jews were a "common class" with whom he no longer associated himself. Jews, in his mind's eye, represented suffering, degradation, beggardom, poverty, ignorance. Perhaps these were feelings that most of these early European Jewish immigrants had about Judaism: they wanted to establish themselves as human beings, not as Jews, for Jews represented something they had been compelled to regard as contemptible.

The extent of intermarriage during the early years is yet another point of reference from which we can measure the distance of their drift away from Judaism. Of the fifteen Jews who established permanent residence in New Orleans between 1802 and 1815, seven remained bachelors, seven intermarried, and one, Manis Jacobs, married a Christian woman after his first, Jewish, wife died. There is no evidence that any one of the bachelors remained single because he would not marry a Christian. Even after larger numbers of Jews, including whole families, arrived in New Orleans, a high degree of intermarriage continued, probably as much as fifty percent, well into the 1830's. While it is sometimes suggested that intermarriage leads to the disintegration of Jewish loyalties, it is more likely, at least in this New Orleans experience, that the decision to settle in Louisiana, and therefore to marry a Christian, stemmed from a weakening of consciousness of Jewish identity. These men had already, to some degree, abandoned their Jewish nature and become secularized. Practically all of the children of these intermarriages, as we have seen, were reared as Christians. Alexander Phillips had two daughters who married Jews, but it is not known whether they considered themselves to be Jewesses. Their feelings may have been similar to those of Maurice Barnett's daughter Hélène, who married Sol Audler, the secretary of Shanarai-Chasset, but who had her children baptized in the St. Louis Church, and was buried in the same Catholic cemetery as her mother. While it is true that there was not a Jewish girl within hundreds of miles of New Orleans whom one of these men might have married, it is at least equally significant that none of them seems to have made any effort to preserve his children from absorption into the Christian population. Although in some cases there was a delay of a few years, baptism was the inevitable rule. The fathers were just not interested in bearing any responsibility for the perpetuation of Judaism. The extent of intermarriage was not lost on Jacob Solis; when he and his co-workers drew up the constitution and by-laws of the congregation they broke every Jewish law in their formulation of rules and regulations which concerned "strange" wives and the children of intermarriages. To have forbidden intermarried men from joining the congregation or contributing to it, to have refused any recognition of Christian wives or unconverted children of Christian mothers, would have been tantamount to rejecting a large proportion of the Jews in town. As it was, they need not have worried; many of the intermarried men would have nothing to do with the congregation. None of their children, even Manis Jacobs', identified themselves as practicing members of the community.

Yet it is equally important to emphasize the fact that of all the men who married Christian women, only one, Victor Souza, formally abandoned Judaism and adopted Christianity. All of the others, with the exception of Simon Cohen, alone and fatally stricken at the time of his baptism, remained what they were, secularized Jews, unaffiliated Jews, estranged Jews, but still Jews. Some were buried with Christian rites, but not because they had become Christians—this was the decision of their families. Perhaps it was pride, perhaps some primitive feeling of stiff-neckedness that made them resist baptism. But if they had wanted to become Christians, to endure the indignity of adopting a religion which was meaningless to them, in order to secure acceptance by their neighbors, if they had wanted to pay the price of baptism for the "ticket" of admission to Western culture, as Heinrich Heine called it, they could have done that in Europe. Perhaps many another might have sent the message back home, which Dr. Gerson Adersbach did, in his will, that despite everything, he "died without quitting the religion into which he had been born."[4]

Paradoxically enough, some of these men were even willing to give financial support to Judaism elsewhere, if not in New Orleans. It was almost as though they were saying that they had no objection to the perpetuation of Judaism in other places—just so long as it made no personal claims on them. When Ruben Rochelle was in New York City in 1819, he gave an offering to Shearith Israel. He also contributed $250 to the building fund of Mikveh Israel Congregation of Philadelphia early in 1824; at the same time Asher Nathan sent $250, Samuel Hermann and Hart Shiff $100 each, and Judah Touro $300. In 1827, Hart Shiff donated some money to the building fund of B'nai Jeshurun Congregation of New York City. The New York Jews of whom we have written, Sol Soher, and the members of the Cromelien-Davies clan, also made contributions to Shearith Israel and B'nai Jeshurun, and later, in 1845, to another New York congregation, Shaaray Tefila, but perhaps their situation was different, because they may never have intended to stay in New Orleans. Samuel Hermann, on a visit to Germany in 1836, gave one thousand gulden (the equivalent of about $2,500 today) to his old congregation in Roedelheim . . . but he appears not to have given even one dollar to the New Orleans congregation. It is apparent that these men had no dislike for Judaism; they simply had no interest in personal identification with a congregation.[5]

Perhaps historians have underestimated the cluster of complex meanings which these immigrants associated with the concept of freedom. Freedom from reactionary political controls, economic deprivation and anti-Semitic prejudices, yes; but perhaps also the freedom to be whatever one wanted, including the freedom not to be Jewish. Even intermarriage was an expression of freedom from parental and traditional authority—for it would not and could not occur in most European countries, where state churches regulated such matters as marriage and family life, where intermarriage without a Jew's conversion was unacceptable.

2. Judah Touro and Judaism

When Shanarai-Chasset was organized in 1827–28, Judah Touro made what was probably a token contribution, but refused to join as a member. This must mean that he did not want to worship at its services. Prior to this he had been the recipient of at least three appeals for funds for new synagogue buildings, from Shearith Israel of New York City in 1817, from Mikveh Israel of Philadelphia in 1824, and from Bene Israel of Cincinnati in 1825. The only request to which he responded was the one from Philadelphia, and it would appear as though it was Rochelle who solicited his fellows in New Orleans, even though Touro sent the draft to Philadelphia. Rochelle probably had closer, friendlier contacts with the foreigners Hermann, Nathan and Shiff than Touro did.[6] As we shall see, it was not until about 1847 that Touro took any genuine interest in Jewish life. Rabbi Isaac Leeser said, after his death, that "it was late in life when Mr. T. became impressed with the necessity of being an Israelite in more than in mere words."[7] Touro's magnificent philanthropy to Jewish causes in his will has been read back into earlier years. But there is no evidence to justify the assumption that he was always interested in giving of his substance to institutions which strengthened and perpetuated Judaism. As a matter of simple fact, he was far more interested in supporting Christian than Jewish religious institutions. As early as 1816 or 1819, he purchased a pew in Christ Church, the Episcopal church which Dr. and Mrs. Dow attended, and of which Touro's friend Shepherd had been a founder and warden.[8] In 1822, when there were more than enough Jews in New Orleans to form and benefit from a congregation, Touro bought the First Presbyterian Church for $20,000 so that the building would not be torn down and the land sold to pay the church's debts. This deed of generosity, together with the $25,000 received from the sale of a legal lottery for the benefit of the church, enabled Parson Theodore Clapp to stave off ruin. Touro was the legal owner, the landlord, of the church, but he did not charge any rent for the use of the edifice. According to Parson Clapp, Touro

> "incurred an additional expense of several thousand dollars for keeping it in repair. For myself he professed the strongest personal regard, and showed it by giving me almost the entire income of the church—the pew rents—for about twenty-eight years. He might have torn the building down at the beginning, and reared on its site a block of stores, whose revenue by this time would have amounted to half a million dollars at least. He was urged to do so on several occasions, and once replied to a gentleman who made a very liberal offer for the property, that there was not money enough in the world to buy it . . . Most of my friends are not aware of the magnitude of the benefits which he was actually pleased to confer on me . . . he gave me in small sums, from time to time, not less than twenty thousand dollars."[9]

It was well known in New Orleans and elsewhere that Touro owned the church; Isaac Leeser quoted Touro as saying, "I am a friend to religion, and I will not pull down the church to increase my means."[10] This was indeed an unusual procedure, even an unprecedented one, for a Jew to own a church building, but perhaps no greater anomaly has ever existed than the request of a Jewish community for a loan of five or six thousand dollars from someone a thousand miles away in order to help them to build a synagogue, while in their own midst at that very time a co-religionist owned a Christian church building for which he had paid twenty thousand dollars!

Touro's interest in and contributions to Christian institutions continued for many years. In 1840, during the depression, when Christ Church was in financial difficulties, he paid $25,000 for the church's rectory on Canal street; he lived in this home until his death. The price he paid for the building was very generous. It was really more a contribution than an investor's purchase of a property—the inventory of Touro's estate included six parcels of property on Canal street, including this home. Altogether they were appraised at only $54,150. Even if the home was far more valuable than the other lots, it could still not have been worth as much as all the others put together, back in 1840, when the price of real estate was very depressed. Touro's purchase of the rectory was probably arranged by Rezin Shepherd, who also served as the intermediary in 1847 when Touro traded a lot of ground which he owned at the corner of Canal and Dauphine for the outmoded Christ Church sanctuary—which was then remodeled into a synagogue for the use of the Dispersed of Judah Congregation. Shepherd loaned his church $14,000 at interest so that it might proceed with its new building plans. Touro not only made an outright contribution, but also bought a $1,000 bond at the same time.[11]

In 1851, the new St. Louis Cathedral was finally completed, after almost two years of construction, at a cost of $139,238. At the time of his death, Touro's papers included $14,000 in St. Louis Cathedral bonds, about ten per cent of the total cost. No list is known to be available which includes the names of the purchasers of bonds and the amounts of their holdings, but it would be interesting to know whether any Catholic resident of New Orleans invested as much in the bonds as Touro did.[12]

In 1850 or 1851, Parson Clapp's church burned to the ground. It was now a Unitarian, no longer a Presbyterian, church. Clapp appealed to other Protestant churches for permission "to hold meetings . . . occasionally," in their buildings, but "the favor was denied on the alleged ground that by showing such a kindness, they might encourage the dreadful heresies which we were laboring to promulgate." Touro again came to Clapp's assistance; "he purchased a small Baptist chapel for us to worship in, free of charge, till he could put up a larger building for the use of the congregation." The inventory of Touro's estate notes that the First Baptist Church's land and building had been bought by Touro, on June 25, 1851, for $12,000.[13]

It seemed as though Touro was a friend to every religion except his own. He helped Presbyterians, Unitarians, Episcopalians and Roman Catholics. It may have been true, as Clapp quoted Touro as saying, that "although an Israelite to the bottom of his soul, it would give him the sincerest pleasure to see all the churches flourishing in their respective ways, and that he was heartily sorry they did not more generally *fraternize with*, love, and help each other," but Touro was demonstrating that he was "an Israelite to the bottom of his soul" in a very peculiar fashion.[14]

In the next chapter, we shall attempt to evaluate the influences which finally led Touro to build a synagogue, and to make contributions in his will to a large number of congregations and other Jewish causes. But this is surely the place to wonder what kind of inverted and perverted thought and feeling led him to such consistent support of Christian churches, while neglecting the need for a synagogue. We do not pretend to have a satisfying answer to this question, because Touro himself never explained this curious facet of his character. Clapp seems deliberately to have avoided discussing it. There is the suggestion of an answer in an oblique comment by Isaac Leeser that ". . . for a period of more than thirty years . . . but few Israelites resided in New Orleans, and with the greater proportion of the few Mr. Touro held no intercourse, if we are correctly informed." Leeser referred to what he thought was Touro's waiting until "respectable men" came to New Orleans to take the lead in Jewish affairs.[15] But this was a description of a situation, rather than an explanation of Touro's feelings. If the implication was that Touro had nothing in common with Hermann, Kohn, Phillips, Jacobs, Nathan, Barnett, Shiff, because they were uncouth foreigners, how explain the fact that he was close enough to Rochelle, another Ashkenazic immigrant, to act as an executor for his estate—unless the reason is that Rochelle, like Touro, was friendly with the leading Yankee merchants in New Orleans? But if Touro did not want to have anything to do with foreign Jews, what of native-born men like Jacob Hart and Benjamin Levy, who stemmed from backgrounds similar to Touro's? And in the 1820's, many more men of similar experience had come to New Orleans: Harby, the Florance brothers, other Charlestonians and New Yorkers, and especially Jacob Solis, determined that the new congregation should follow the Sephardic pattern in which he and Touro had been reared. It makes little sense to think of Touro as a snob, holding himself aloof from Jews with whom he had nothing in common in 1827, but building a synagogue for some of these very same people in 1849. Leeser's information about the paucity of Jews in New Orleans was, of course, quite wrong—there were several hundred by 1830. Perhaps the truth is that Touro did not want to have anything to do with Jews or Judaism during most of his life. We admittedly end up with more questions than answers: Was Touro so thoroughly ashamed of his father's Tory preferences that he associated the Tory-father with the rabbi-father image, and atoned for his father's lack of Americanism by his own support for "American" (Protestant, Anglo-Saxon) religion? Was it guilt over his disloyalty to Jewish tradition which prevented him from helping to found a congregation? Was it self-hatred for himself as a Jew which drove him to attempt to buy friendship and good-will by supporting Christian institutions? Could it have been an ever-present fear of anti-Semitism which pressed him to outshine Christians in "Christian" philanthropy and generosity?[16] We will probably never really comprehend this peculiar quality in the character of a man who was otherwise quite consistent and coherent. It may well be that he himself never saw the contradiction, never perceived the paradox. All the more strange and incomprehensible.

3. The Influence of New Orleans

Whatever attitudes to their personal identity as Jews Touro and the other Jewish immigrants may have brought with them, New Orleans itself exerted a profound influence on their self-perception.

There is, for instance, the undeniable fact that religion was quite unimportant in the lives of most of the inhabitants of the city. The French and Spanish Creoles were not devout Catholics. Most of the men acted as though religion was a formality designed only for women and children. Roman Catholic leaders believed that New Orleans had been infiltrated with the libertarian ideas of the French Revolution; certain it is that there were numerous and influential French-speaking Masonic lodges in the city—and the Catholic hierarchy always conceived of Masonry as a source of danger to faith and morals. An official report on conditions among Catholics in New Orleans, sent to Rome before the Battle of New Orleans, though perhaps somewhat exaggerated, indicates some of the impressions which churchmen had gathered about the religious life of the city:

> "Many Catholics die without the sacraments, many children are unbaptized; others scarcely see a priest once in a lifetime; marriages are contracted without a blessing; Christian doctrine is not taught, and such a decay of Catholic life is to be observed, that within a few years the Catholic faith will be entirely obliterated . . . There is rife in the city of New Orleans, a spirit of unbelief, or rather of godlessness which is gradually corrupting the whole mass. This plague is to be attributed to the coming of a great number of free-masons and hucksters of every description, to the spread of French maxims, to infrequent preaching of the Gospel, to love of lucre and pleasure, so much intensified by the climate and the number of female slaves; above all to the scandals given by the clergy."[17]

We need not accept every word of this hostile view as true—nor those of the Protestant clergyman, Joel Parker, in 1834, who believed that Catholic "men are, almost without an exception atheists [who] regard religion as intended only for women and servants, and they do not give themselves any trouble on the subject"—to recognize that religion was not a major factor in public and private life in New Orleans.[18] Business, success, wealth, property, pleasure, excitement, were far more important. A young Jewish college graduate wrote in his diary in 1835 that he planned to leave Charleston, and go to "that emporium of wine, women and segars, etc., etc., New Orleans. . . ."[19] If the Jews had found in New Orleans a devout and pious society, they would have felt impelled to identify themselves religiously—either with the environment or with their ancestral heritage; they would not have remained in the middle-ground of indifference and disinterest.

The only other factor which could have forced these Jews to organize a congregation and establish a semblance of Jewish life would have been a general antagonism towards them. But all available evidence indicates that anti-Jewish prejudice was notable for its absence. A careful reading of the New Orleans newspapers from the very beginning of their publication until the early 1840's has uncovered only one vicious attack on Jews as Jews that is of local origin. In 1824, a resentful friend of one John Clay launched this tirade against Samuel Hermann and Ruben Rochelle or Hart Shiff, when they foreclosed on Clay's mortgage:

> "COMMUNICATED.
>
> To the Editor of the Louisiana Gazette.
>
> Sir—Be pleased to insert the annexed in your respectable Gazette; it is the commencement of the memoirs of *Levy Smile Chops*, who has his nefarious and corrupt office in Chartres Street, and the *memoirs* are dedicated to *Mordecai Turtleface*, who must necessarily figure in some future & more enlarged additions of Levy's Memoirs, which I am now preparing for the press, and which will be promulgated through the medium of your paper and finally be in pamphlet form.
>
> Should *Levy* or *Mordecai* cut any capers and wish to know my real name, you are hereby at liberty to come out and afford it to them, but to no other person.
>
> *Levy*, is a German or Holland Jew, and keeps his office in Chartres-street, near the New Exchange, and *Mordecai* keeps his *speculation* office in St. Louis-street, also near the New Exchange, and is also a Jew, whether from Holland, Germany or Denmark, it is still the same, he is a *Jew* and not a Gentile.
>
> Yours Respectfully,
>
> HENRY INTREPID PERSEVERANCE.
>
> June 24th, 1824.

> "TO LEVY SMILE CHOPS,
>
> SIR,—You have chosen to be the *cats paw* for others who do not or dare not wish to shew themselves. You even bring suits for your principals and take your solemn oath that the debt is your own, when you know at the time that such an oath is false. Where is your conscience? Is there not a God who looks down upon you? You have attacked a gentleman

> in this way who resides in Royal-street; you, under your invidious name, persecute him, and even want to sacrifice his property to oblige your *principal*, when you knew that there was no necessity for it; you know that your *Principal's* debt was safe, and you know also, that this unfortunate, though worthy and honorable man, was in the act and doing all he could to raise funds, the first object of which was to pay the very *debt* in question; but to foster your *Principal's interest*, and to emit your own spleen and perhaps both of your spleens are emitted to persecute this gentleman. You let the dogs of war loose upon him by bringing suits, and to distract his credit and endeavoring to prevent his procuring funds—appal his exertions and to get his house, which your *Principal* wants upon your own terms, you even employ one of your ungodly band to appraise his property—but Sir, you will not succeed, your ends will not be met.
>
> Beware then Sir how you sport with yourself! the dark ages are passing by and a Messiah is coming; the day of retribution will arrive, when all evil doings will be ripped up—it behooves you then to be circumspect, and I beseech you to stop at the mark you have advanced in treating my friend amiss, else, you may be called upon to answer for your own sins;—a thousand leaves are folded away ready for you.
>
> Do you recollect the cotton transaction, T. M., foreman of the Jury?—*mark* the sugar speculation, M.R. & P. at Richmond. Pause! don't make another step:—there are pens ready dipt in *gall* for you, not to be used by my friend in Royal-street—his lofty mind has no such guile: he is like Job, suffering under his pains and looking forward for better days. But there is a host of honest souls who are watching your motions and ready to join in your downfall.
>
> HENRY INTREPID PERSEVERANCE"[20]

This was the only nasty attack on Jews which was ever published in a New Orleans paper during this period. Occasionally the columns of the papers included news of Jewish activities throughout the world; mostly these were pieces of exotic information used as filler. Sometimes they had reference to the persecution of Jews abroad, or to the activities of distinguished Jews. Mordecai Noah's attempt to create a Jewish colony on Grand Island in New York aroused more than passing attention. In New Orleans, as elsewhere, the Rothschild fortune was a subject of fascinated interest. One such story, quoted from some other newspaper, gave an unkind characterization to banking families like the Rothschilds and Goldsmids: "They settled exchanges, and put up or put down stocks at their will. But, except in the business of turning and making, what is called money, these 'great dignitaries' are very common and indifferent men. Indeed, some of them are extremely ignorant and stupid, though always prompt as to what they think the summum bonum—the getting of money."[21] While this sort of scorn for rich Jews may have been current in New Orleans, too, and hatred such as John Clay's friend expressed may have seethed in other breasts, there is no evidence that such feelings were widespread.

To the contrary, every indication points to a broad-scale acceptance of Jews by both the Creole and Yankee societies of New Orleans. The frequency of intermarriage is one measure of the welcome which was accorded to Jews. Even the church, until sometime in the 1830's, ignored the religious problem. The difference of religion was not even noted in the church registers which recorded their marriages. Apparently it did not matter very much to anyone that these men were Jews. We may be certain that the men who remained bachelors did so out of choice, and not because they were rejected or deprived of the opportunity for social contact with non-Jewish families. It is difficult for us to judge the social position of all of the families into which these early Jewish men married. Certainly none of them made any pretense of being aristocrats, nor was any of them wealthy; but the young men themselves had little to offer other than the hard work they were willing to perform. Wealthy, upper-class Creole families would hardly have considered accepting into their midst even young men of French or Spanish Catholic background who could not bring wealth, land or family prestige to their daughters. If the earliest Jews were cut off from relationships with families on the highest level of society it was not because they were Jews, but because they were poor. Once they had established themselves on a firm financial foundation, however, the sons and daughters and nephews and younger brothers of these earliest Jews were accepted everywhere—in homes, in schools, in social circles that matched their own wealth and position. Edward Gottschalk, Joachim Kohn, the Hermann sons and daughters, and Carl Kohn went to the very top of the social ladder, because they or their fathers or brothers had achieved affluence and social prestige.

Judah Benjamin's marriage to Natalie St. Martin seems to be an exception to our general rule. He was still poor, just beginning to establish his career. Although Natalie brought with her a dowry of $3,000 and two slaves, the young couple had to live with her parents for three years before they could move into their own home. The reason for Benjamin's acceptance into a family of high social caste will always be as inexplicable as the nature of his relationship to Natalie throughout all the years of his life. Perhaps the ugly rumors about Natalie's premarital escapades which still persist in New Orleans today had some factual basis. Certainly she never displayed any of the customary signs of love or even affection for Judah once they were married. She maintained a separate household in Paris throughout most of the years which he spent in Washington, Richmond and London. At any rate, it was a very unusual marriage from the very beginning.

Worthy of note, too, is the fact that non-Jews were involved in intimate, personal occasions in the lives of these Jews, as witnesses at weddings, as godparents at baptisms, as friends and executors of the signing of wills and the settling of estates, and at family meetings in connection with the guardianship of children and the like. It was far more than a pleasant business relationship which led Ruben Rochelle to leave a bequest to William Montgomery's son, and to ask Montgomery and Stephen Henderson to serve as his executors. Equally impressive is the evidence that Jews were willingly accepted into the Masonic lodges and fancy military units which were apparently the most prominent social organizations in town; that they served on the committees which conducted the balls that flourished during the social season, and on civic as well as business boards of every sort. Families of prominence sent their children to Harby's school, and the most intelligent men in town flocked to "Professor" E. A. Cohen's New Orleans Chess Club.[22] When the New Orleans Histrionic Association was organized in 1848, Joseph Soria was the leading man in most of the early productions, Isaac N. Marks took many comedy leads, and the ever-present "organization man" of New Orleans, M. M. Cohen, was legal advisor.[23] Whatever their interests, abilities, wealth and occupation, the Jews of New Orleans seem to have had no trouble in finding non-Jewish friends and associates to enrich their lives and share their leisure as well as their business hours.

There was probably less prejudice against Jews in New Orleans during the ante-Bellum period than in any other important city in the country. It takes us beyond these early years which we are considering in such detail, but it is worth emphasizing that Louisiana elected Jews to high political office earlier than any other state in the Union. At one and the same time, just before the outbreak of the Civil War, Judah Benjamin was serving in the Senate of the United States, Henry M. Hyams was Lieutenant-Governor, and Dr. Edwin Warren Moïse—who had already served as Attorney-General of the state—was Speaker of the legislature. All three of these men were originally Charlestonians, but no matter how cultured the Charleston Jewish community was, South Carolina showed no sign of electing Jews to such high office. During the secession crisis, Salomon de Rothschild, the twenty-four-year-old scion of the Parisian branch of that noted family, was on a grand tour of the United States; from New Orleans he wrote back home about these Jewish men of consequence:

> "What is astonishing here, or rather, what is not astonishing, is the high position occupied by our coreligionists, or rather by those who were born into the faith and who, having married Christian women, and without converting, have forgotten the practices of their fathers.
>
> "Benjamin, the Attorney General of the Confederate States, is perhaps the greatest mind on this continent. Hyams, the [lieutenant-] governor of Louisiana, Moyse . . . And, what is odd, all these men have a Jewish heart and take an interest in me, because I represent the greatest Jewish house in the world. . . ."[24]

Carl Kohn's reports to his Uncle Samuel reflect his acceptance into the highest society of New Orleans. Despite the many references he made to anti-Semitic prejudice in Bohemia, he wrote not even one word that was suggestive of rejection in New Orleans. He and other Jews, and sons of Jews, were later welcomed into the two exclusive clubs of New Orleans, clubs which today are closely associated with socialite Mardi-Gras organizations and which are reported to exclude persons of Jewish birth. Carl and his nephew Gustave were members of the Boston Club, as were Judah P. Benjamin, Isaac and Samuel Delgado, Benjamin Franklin Jonas, Charles, H. O. and J. M. Seixas, Adolph and Victor Meyer and Julius Weis, among others. Jonas was a member of the Board of Governors and Vice-President during the period 1894–1904. Armand Heine was a founding member of the Pickwick Club; he and his brother Michel actually owned the clubhouse from 1884 to 1894, long after they had gone to live in Paris. Edward Barnett and Cohen M. Soria were presidents of the Pickwick Club. Not all of these people were practicing Jews, but they were all born Jews or their fathers were. What an ironic commentary on manners, mores and morals that folk who are welcomed in one generation should be scorned in another. Thus New Orleans eventually turned its back on the open society which was one of its happy characteristics in this early period.[25]

This large-scale acceptance of Jews into almost every nook and cranny of social, political and cultural life, in addition to the more obvious opportunities of the market place, meant that there was no negative pressure upon Jews to create a congregation or to develop an intensive Jewish life. Their energies were directed outward rather than inward. Certain social and economic factors made New Orleans an exceptional American city in this regard, during this period: the turbulent growth of the city, bringing into its midst people of every kind of background and heritage, and turning it into the most heterogeneous city in the country; the strong rivalry of Creoles and Yankees, both sides eagerly seeking both Christian and Jewish recruits; the absence of a tradition of hide-bound, narrow evangelical Protestantism on the one hand, and of defensive, separatistic and suspicious Catholicism on the other; the constant need for men of talent and ability to take leadership in a society where many young men were unambitious, effete dandies; the tremendous economic potential of the city, never really exploited to its fullest, constantly in need of rich imagination and strong direction; the periodic financial crises which shook out the incompetent and the incautious, and made room for new risk-takers. All of these aspects of the city's growth made it possible for Jews to be accepted as human beings, rather than Jews; as a result, they did not feel compelled to consider themselves Jews in any primary sense, unless they wanted to—and most of them did not.

But this distinctiveness of New Orleans society should not be exaggerated. It is possible that most frontier areas into which Jews moved as separate individuals, rather than as groups, offered similar opportunity for acculturation and assimilation. Jewish historians have, somewhat understandably, been reluctant to evaluate this negative aspect of the American Jewish experience in precise detail. Jacob Rader Marcus has forcefully demonstrated, however, that every Jew who settled and remained in colonial Connecticut ultimately merged into the overwhelmingly Christian environment which surrounded him. It would be worth investigating the first generation of Jewish settlement in every geographical frontier area—before mass immigration—to discover whether the experience of Jews in New Orleans was characteristic, rather than unusual.[26]

4. An Irreducible Residue of Jewishness

Despite the centrifugal forces which drew these people away from their Jewish identity—their own disinterest in Judaism and an environment which offered them a warm acceptance into the general community—these early Jews should not be regarded as conscious, deliberate assimilationists who wanted to have nothing to do with Jewishness. To the contrary, most of them gravitated toward each other, especially the immigrants, as though drawn by a magnet, and established friendships with each other that flourished throughout the years. Ruben Rochelle and Hart Shiff shared a business partnership which was severed only by illness and death. A. M. Nathan had commercial relations with almost every Jew in Louisiana as early as 1811.

Touro, Hermann, Rochelle and Shiff were co-owners of a steamboat in 1817. Nathan and Hermann were partners for a few years during the 1820's and remained close friends afterwards. Jacob Hart's cotton press was located in buildings which Rochelle and Shiff owned. As soon as Aaron Daniels came to New Orleans, he seems to have become acquainted with almost every Jew in town; many times he testified at probate hearings that he had known such and such a man since 1822. Solomon Soher was in partnership first with De Jonge, then with Daniel Goodman. Maurice Barnett sent his oldest son, Maurice, Jr., to Soher and Goodman, so that he could learn business procedures from them. Edward Gottschalk worked for Rochelle and Shiff. Shiff and Samuel Kohn owned a great deal of property together. Edward Shiff for a time held Kohn's power of attorney. Samuel Hermann took care of Shiff's business while he was out of town. And so it went from one business and family to another: a constant interplay of partnerships and friendships.

This "irreducible residue of Jewishness," this affinity of Jews for each other, did not stop at the door of a store or counting-house; these men established deep and abiding friendships which involved the most important events in the life-cycle. Ruben Rochelle and Samuel Hermann were two of the five witnesses at Hart Shiff's wedding. Rochelle was the godfather at the baptism of Shiff's daughter Luisa who was probably named for him—his middle name was Louis or Luis, and that was the way he was listed in the religious record of the event. A. M. Nathan was a witness at the baptism of Shiff's daughter María. This ceremony was held on the same day in 1824 as the baptism of Edward Shiff, for which event Samuel Kohn was asked to be a witness. Samuel Hermann and Samuel Kohn were witnesses at the Jewish wedding of A. M. Nathan's niece in 1828, and a few months later Samuel Hermann performed the same role at Edward Gottschalk's Catholic wedding. In 1830, Samuel Kohn was a witness at Florian Hermann's wedding. Both Samuel Hermann and his son Samuel, Jr., were witnesses at Joachim Kohn's wedding in 1834, and Hart Shiff's wife was the godmother for Joachim and Marie's son Arthur's baptism in 1838. It was almost as though their common background in a Jewish world they had left behind still bound them together in a day when the formal ceremonies of birth, marriage and death took place within a Catholic cathedral. If Catholicism had no spiritual meaning for them, the presence of their Jewish friends did.

This same intimacy prevailed in the area of wills, executorship, and the like. When Henry Hartman, of whom so little is known, died in 1818, his will said that if his executor was out of town, he was certain that his "good friends Abraham [*sic*] M. Nathan and Mr. Samuel Kohn" would accept the responsibility—was it just because they were Jews, even though he did not know Asher Nathan's correct first name, that Hartman called these men his "good friends?" Alexander Phillips was a witness at the signing of the will of Benjamin Levine, who died the same year as Hartman. When Louis E. Cohen died of yellow fever in 1826, Emanuel Stern acted as the executor and took the inventory of the estate; even though there was yet no congregation, Stern was fulfilling the religious duty of caring for the effects of a coreligionist—he was not a creditor, and Cohen's little stock of jewelry and dry goods was worth only $95.62, but Stern went to the trouble of taking care of matters, and even complained to the Probate Court that one of the Kokernot boys had taken some books from Cohen's place before the effects were sealed.[27] When Joachim Kohn's young wife died, A. M. Nathan and Armand Heine were present at the formal meeting to discuss the welfare of the children, as required by law. Armand Heine, Joachim Kohn, Edward Gottschalk and A. M. Nathan joined members of the family in administering the affairs of their old friend Hart Shiff. Carl Kohn was one of the executors of the will of A. M. Nathan. Carl was also involved in the settlement of Edward Shiff's estate—this was carrying the relationship into the second generation. And so it went. These people felt close to each other and depended upon each other. They may have believed that they understood each other better because they were Jews.

Perhaps there was even some nagging feeling of regret for what had been left behind, some longing for Jewish warmth. The formation of the Association for the Relief of Jewish Widows and Orphans in 1854, the first agency of its kind in the entire United States (because mortality rates in the area were so much higher than elsewhere, and because New Orleans continued to be a port of high immigration) seems to have offered some of these people an opportunity to demonstrate their concern with Jewish needs on a humanitarian rather than a religious level. Alexander Phillips, Asher Nathan and Edward Shiff made contributions to the Association at its very inception. Joachim and Carl Kohn were elected honorary members, along with such distinguished American Jewish leaders as Rabbis Isaac Leeser, David Einhorn and Isaac Mayer Wise. Armand and Michel Heine were honored with the same life membership which was extended to Alfonse de Rothschild. Henry M. Hyams, who gave $100 to the building fund, was a vice-president of the Home from 1855 to 1857. When Asher Nathan died in 1864, he bequeathed $5,000 to the Jewish Widows' and Orphans' Home, in addition to $3,000 to each of two Catholic institutions. Carl Kohn also remembered the institution in his will; among charitable requests of $1,000 he left $250 to the Jewish Home, and $100 to Touro Infirmary. One has the feeling that even though he was a member of "high society" in New Orleans, Carl did not want to be too far away from his Jewish background. His daughter Eveline, reared as a Christian, married a Jew, Victor Meyer, the brother of Adolph Meyer, a Louisiana congressman from 1891 to 1908. Eveline and Victor were married in Christ Church. But by that time social prejudice against Jews was rising, and Carl may have viewed with some satisfaction the marriage of his daughter to a man who had been born into the same heritage in which he himself was reared. Carl remained close to his European cousins; he had business dealings throughout the years with Edouard's banking firm, Kohn, Reinach and Company, and was its agent in New Orleans during the 1870's. He must have been aware of Edouard's intense interest in the activities of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, and perhaps derived some pride from it. Without any documentary evidence to prove such a conclusion, we sense in Carl's life some of the ambivalence which frequently characterizes the inner life of a sensitive, intelligent Jew who assimilates into the non-Jewish environment, some yearning, perhaps only a silent sigh of regret.[28]

The support and encouragement which Carl Kohn and others gave to the Widows' and Orphans' Home stand in stark contrast to Judah Benjamin's total indifference to Jewish life. While he was quite willing to accept Jews as clients in his law practice, and probably had a few social friends among Jews, Benjamin took no part at all in Jewish religious or philanthropic activities. Even when a matter of Jewish significance was brought before the United States Senate, as for instance, the question of discrimination against American Jews by the Swiss cantons, Benjamin continued to follow what can only have been a conscious policy of aloofness. The vicious attacks which were directed against him as a Jew during the trying years of his leadership in the Confederate cabinet did not evoke from him any expression of pride in or warm memory of the heritage into which he was born. There was no ambivalence in Judah's decision to ally himself with the larger world in which he played so conspicuous a role; he was a Jew only in the sense that he was born one, and that he was not converted to another religion, at least not until he was on his deathbed, and, in all likelihood, probably unconscious.[29]

But the stirrings of Jewish affinity which all of these men other than Benjamin felt were no substitute for a vigorous determination to preserve one's Jewish identity intact. So long as the poorer, less successful Jews, who had to struggle to make a living, to learn the language, to adjust to the ways of this bewildering country, received no positive Jewish leadership from men who were already established, even they, who wished to remain loyal Jews, were rudderless. What they required was a catalyst, an insistent, knowledgeable leader who would set an example for them, who would show them the way, who would help them. It was unfortunate that so much time had to elapse before a man like Jacob Solis arrived in town and helped them to organize a congregation. But they could be grateful that they did not have to wait even longer, until 1840 perhaps, when the next committed, affirmative Jewish leader, Gershom Kursheedt, came to New Orleans.

VII

Toward a More Normal Jewish Communal Life

The organization of a congregation, in 1827–28, did not mean the automatic solution of the problems of Jewish existence in America in personal or communal terms. It was only the beginning of the confrontation of the challenges and dilemmas implicit in the very life of Jews in a free and open society. The long delay in the founding of Shanarai-Chasset masked the real problem: whether Judaism was to find the means to survive and flourish in this new environment where many of the old assumptions could not stand up to reality. Without a congregation there was not even the effort; with a congregation, for the first time, the inherent difficulties became evident.

1. A Congregation's Role and Functions

New Orleans Jewry now had to endure what many another community had already experienced, a long period of false starts, difficult practical problems, unrewarded efforts and uncertain direction. The congregation was in existence, but it was frail and weak. Lay leadership changed constantly; professional, trained rabbinic leadership was altogether missing. Since neither Hendricks nor Touro nor anyone else was willing to lend enough money to the congregation to make the building of a synagogue possible, a structure at the corner of St. Louis and Franklin streets, across the street from the St. Louis Cemetery, was rented or purchased, and remodeled for use by the congregation.[1]

Some insight into the inability of the leaders to provide even a modicum of ritual guidance to the congregation, and the length of time that it took them to obtain the basic tools of

Jewish worship—prayer books, lists of the traditional Scriptural readings for services, Torah scrolls, a ram's horn—is derived from a letter that Manis Jacobs and Isaac Phillips sent to the officers of Shearith Israel of New York City in 1833, five years after the organization of the congregation:

> New Orleans May 31, 1833
>
> To the Presid^t & Governing Rulers of the
> Israelite Congregation Shearith Israel of New York
>
> Gentlemen—
>
> Having now commenced in a Country where no more than 33 years ago the name of an Israelite was an abomination to establish a small place to Worship the God of our Fathers and Wishing to read in the holy written Book his command every Saturday We therefore have accepted the offer of Mr. Jacob Luria and are willing to pay you what he may owe you on it you will be so kind and have it sealed with your Seal, and send it by the first Packet with his Bill in the hands of the Captain, which will be paid to him on delivering the Sephar [Torah scroll], you will also be so kind and send us a list of all the [Sidras] and Maftarim [Torah and prophetic readings] to be read every Sabbath and holy days.
>
> We remain for ever and ever your affectionate brethren.
>
> Marius [Manis] Jacobs Treasurer
>
> Isaac Phillips Vice Presid^t
>
> Address
>
> Isaac Phillips Vice Presid^t of the
> Israelite Congregation of New Orleans
> Sharri Haset, New Orleans Louisiana
>
> P.S.—If you can send us a few Setts of Detuska Machzerim [Ashkenazic prayer books] in Hebrew and translated in English and also a few Daily praying Books they will be paid for with the greatest thanks but they must be after the Minhag [rite] of the Teduskai for we have no holy days praying Books here after that Minhag which are translated into English neither praying Books for every day, neither have we a Shofar [ram's horn] if you will send us these articles at the same time the Vice President bonds himself in behalf of the Congregation to pay the said Bill to the Captain who may be the bearer thereof.

> Know all men by these presents that I will at delivery to the Bearer of four Setts of Prayer Books of our holy days, in hebrew and translated in English and Six Daily praying Books also translated in English all after the Minhag of the Teduskas and two Shofars whatever the regular charge may be of them and again if the said Society were to send a spare Sephar at a reasonable price I also will pay for it at their estimation signed by me and Sealed with the Seal of the
>
> Congregation Sharri Haset New Orleans—Isaac Phillips Vice Presid^{t}[2]

The Shearith Israel trustees agreed to forward the scroll to New Orleans, if the Shanarai-Chasset people would pay the $14.90 that Luria or Lurie owed for pledges he had made, and directed their president to take care of the other requests. If Solis had lived, we may be certain that he would have moved much more swiftly in gathering together these ritual requisites for worship, and that he already had enough reference volumes in his library to provide the guidance that the congregation needed. But at least Manis Jacobs and Isaac Phillips were trying to provide the essential paraphernalia for their congregation's ceremonial life. Two other references in the communication to New York require comment. The first is the very strong statement that under Spanish domination "the name of an Israelite was an abomination." Manis Jacobs had come to New Orleans no later than 1812. Was it his impression that the Creoles had hated Jews? Or had he perhaps met Angélica Monsanto Dow and heard from her some description of the experience of 1769? To have reported that there were very few Jews when he came to New Orleans would have been one thing; to say that the very name Jew was "an abomination" was another. The second interesting piece of information in this letter is the emphasis on Ashkenazic or, to use the word for German that Sephardim used, Tedesco, prayer books. Solis had presumably provided Manis Jacobs and the congregation with Sephardic volumes of prayer. Surely the four sets of Ashkenazic Holy Day prayer books and six volumes of prayers for daily and Sabbath services which he requested were insufficient for the entire congregation's needs. This order ought therefore not be interpreted to mean that the congregation had decided to adopt the Ashkenazic rite, not yet—but it was an augury of things to come. Some members were undoubtedly complaining that the Sephardic rite was unfamiliar to them, and wanted prayer books they could use. Manis was probably attempting to keep them loyal to the congregation by supplying them with these volumes; he may have feared that otherwise they might not remain members. Precisely when the congregation abandoned the use of the Sephardic rite and shifted over to the Ashkenazic is not revealed in any record, but it may possibly have been after Manis' death.

Shearith Israel presumably did not have an extra Torah to send to New Orleans. A second scroll was not obtained until 1837. Strangely enough, the dedication of this new Torah was not held in the synagogue, but in the home of a former president, Louis Levy, at 119 Bayou road. The reason may be that Levy was the donor of the scroll. Jacob Bensadon, the father of the future medical director of the Touro Infirmary, was the chairman of the committee on arrangements for that occasion.[3]

Manis Jacobs probably conducted most of the weddings and funerals. On March 12, 1837, he married a future president of the congregation, L. A. Gunst, to Jeanette Nathan, the widow of J. B. Broome. He continued to perform such ceremonies until shortly before his death. But he was probably not Orthodox enough for the taste of one Moses B. Reas, otherwise unknown, who conducted three weddings on April 29, 1835. Two of the brides were Moses' own daughters, Jeanette and Minette. The third was Adele Lam. The grooms were, respectively, Jacob Myer, Penel Levy and Leopold Dalsheimer.[4]

Unfortunately no congregational minute books survive from this period. We have therefore to piece our information together from various sources. Occasionally, the newspapers reported the names of the congregation's officers. In 1834, Benjamin Van Ostern was secretary. In 1835, Louis Levy was president; Isaac Phillips, vice-president; A. M. Plotz, treasurer; A. J. Marks, secretary; and Joseph De Pass, Asher Phillips and Solomon Ferth, trustees. The following year the officers were shuffled around again: A. M. Plotz was president; Joseph De Pass, vice-president; P. Hart, treasurer; A. J. Marks, secretary; S. Hyams, L. A. Levy and B. Voorsinger, trustees. In 1838, Plotz and Marks held the same offices, but Hart became vice-president, and Manis Jacobs returned to office as treasurer; three new men became trustees, A. De Jonge, Daniel Levy and J. Mayer. Plotz and Marks were reelected in 1839, but J. Mayer moved up to vice-president and L. A. Gunst became treasurer, while S. Jacobs and F. Hearnsheim joined S. Hyams as trustees.[5]

The most important service which the congregation extended to its members, and to the itinerant Jews who died in their midst all too frequently, was in connection with funerals. A committee of members prepared the corpses for burial in accordance with the prescriptions of Jewish tradition, and made all of the arrangements for the services. In 1839 the estate of David Lewis was charged with the following costs: $10 for a coffin and hearse; $25 for five carriages; $3 for digging the grave—these are the normal expenses connected with a funeral. In the case of the death of a pauper, the president was authorized to draw on congregational funds for as much as $25 to pay for the ritual shroud, a coffin and hearse, two carriages, and the opening of the grave. Members of the congregation who had contributed toward the purchase of the cemetery, and who paid the regular dues of $40 a year (a very large sum of money at that time), were entitled to graves without further payment. In addition to accepting responsibility for funeral arrangements, the congregation also seems to have undertaken to fulfill the role of surviving family for Jews who died in financial difficulty or who had no immediate family. Thus in 1833, for instance, Joseph Lasalle and Manis Jacobs seem to have performed a congregational duty when they witnessed the will of Sarah Jessurun Cohn, who had been married only two days previously to Salomon Cohn; she died a week after her wedding. In 1836, when Marius Cohen, a forty-two-year-old immigrant from Amsterdam, died, Plotz made the official certification of death to the probate court, as the president of the congregation, and the vice-president and secretary reported the inventory of Cohen's effects to Plotz. It was a brief list, showing how small the stock of a petty trader or peddler might be: a trunk of old clothing (his own?); a basket containing four glasses, one pair of glass fruit dishes, four flower pots, nineteen glass and china cups, and seven wine glasses; and one "lot" of gilt jewelry, consisting of earrings, finger rings, breast pins and beads. This was all that Marius Cohen owned at the age of forty-four. David Lewis, who died in 1839, was a little better off—his possessions were worth $460.98. In Lewis' case, A. J. Marks and Isaac Phillips made the report of the death to the office of the Recorder of Births and Deaths, and Phillips acted as curator of the estate. After Alexander Hart married the Widow Kokernot and moved to New Orleans, he may have taken some role in the congregation's life, but the only reference to his activity which we have been able to discover is a funeral which took place at his home on August 29, 1837; the deceased was an artist named J. E. Levie, thirty-seven years old, a native of England, more recently a resident of New York City, a victim of yellow fever. Hart probably conducted the funeral services.[6]

Dire emergencies must have arisen frequently in a port city like New Orleans. Death struck new immigrants more frequently than older settlers. Many a needy widow and orphan were thrust upon the community's charity. Without specific records, it is possible to judge the extent of the need for help only from the frequency of death notices, and the importunate references to concern for the widow and orphan in the printed obituaries of such men as Asher Phillips, Manis Jacobs and Alexander Hart. The new by-laws adopted by the congregation in 1841 authorized the president to give $10 to anyone in need of help; "but in case of extreme necessity the President and Vice-President may increase the sum to fifty dollars, provided they jointly agree to do so." It was not until 1844 that a Hebrew Benevolent Society for the relief of the aged, the sick, the poor, the widow and the orphan, so characteristic of other Jewish communities, was organized in New Orleans.[7]

That the officers of Shanarai-Chasset attempted to create a program of relatedness to the larger world is demonstrated by two surviving reports. In 1831, the congregation passed a resolution of tribute to the memory of Abbé Grégoire, the champion of Jewish emancipation in revolutionary France in 1789, as soon as news of his death reached New Orleans, and sent it to the leader of French Jewry, Adolphe Crémieux. Because his reply expressed so well the feeling of gratitude for the Abbé's humanitarian principles which animated Jews throughout the world, Crémieux' letter was printed in the New Orleans newspaper. It is interesting that the Jews of New Orleans felt that they had a special relationship to the orbit of France, and that the communication from Crémieux was printed in the *Bee's* French section, but not in the English portion. In terms of local community relations, Shanarai-Chasset appears to have been the first congregation in the history of American Jewry to invite non-Jews to come to the synagogue for a lecture on the ceremonies of Judaism, and the foundations of Christianity in Judaism. Manis Jacobs made two such public presentations—one in English and one in French—during successive weeks in October, 1834. The public announcement said that these lectures were offered "at the request of many French Israelites and of other persons of different religions." So long ago did Manis Jacobs and his colleagues anticipate the "open house Sundays" which the Catholics, Protestants and Jews of New Orleans conducted with nationally acknowledged success during the 1960's.[8]

2. Albert J. "Roley" Marks

Even though Jacob Solis was not an ordained rabbi, he would have been able to give learned, firm direction to the congregation's religious program, had he lived to return to New Orleans. He was sufficiently knowledgeable about the basic traditions—the conduct of services, the observance of the holidays, the laws of kosher food, weddings, funerals and other rites of passage—to have guided those who knew far less than he. Alexander Hart, too, might have given this sort of leadership to the Jews of New Orleans, but he was probably too busy making a living during his few years in town. Manis Jacobs certainly did the best he could, but his background was far from satisfactory; no matter how hard he tried to fulfill his responsibilities, he was a pale substitute for a rabbi. Once he had died, the leadership of the congregation passed to even weaker hands—those of Albert J. Marks, who was the secretary of Shanarai-Chasset, probably the only paid officer, from 1834 on. Following Jacobs' death in 1839, and until about 1842, Marks officiated at most weddings and other religious events and services. The congregation printed a special volume for its wedding records, which included formal authorization for "Mr. A. J. Marks of the Hebrew Congregation to join in the bonds of matrimony Mr. . . . . and . . . . in compliance with the formalities required by the laws of the state of Louisiana," and signed by the parish judge. Marks's Hebrew name was given as "Israel the son of Tzvi the righteous, Rabbi." On the certificate which was presented to the bride and groom, Marks signed his name opposite the printed title Rabbi, and the president, secretary and another officer of the congregation countersigned the document to make it official.[9]

Marks was an actor by profession. Born probably in England, he first appeared in a theatrical performance in New Orleans in 1826. When he actually established his residence there is not known, although he was in and out of town from then on. He must have been the Mr. Marks who complained to Manis Jacobs, in 1828, that the mourners' services were too long. Albert appeared with local theatrical companies in New Orleans, and with the well-known troupes that toured to Mobile, Natchez, Nashville and St. Louis. At one time he was with Samuel Drake, George Harby's friend, in Kentucky; he was also a member of companies which were led by Noah Ludlow and Sol Smith, the two leading impresarios of the South. In Ludlow's reminiscences, we are told how Marks received his nickname "Roley":

> "He was generally known among his professional brethren as 'Rowley Marks,' having obtained this *sobriquet* from having, in Charleston, South Carolina, gained some credit by performing old *Rowley*, in the 'School for Scandal,'—the only character he had ever been given credit for in the public prints, and which he was very fond of showing and bragging on; but he was old *Rowley* in every thing. 'Rowley' Marks was a short, fat, round-faced, good-natured little Jew, and was somewhat a favorite with the public, inasmuch as that he contrived to make the people laugh, which some seemed to think was all that was required of a comedian. He had a wife, a pretty little woman, without much

> talent, but much respected by all who knew her. In New Orleans, in after years, I believe Mr. Marks occasionally officiated as a rabbi, being of the tribe of Levi, and a lineal descendant from Aaron, the ancient high-priest."

Sol Smith described Marks at greater length, and in more humorous vein:

> "Rowley is a character. I first became acquainted with him in 1830, but his fame had reached my ears as early as 1826, when he formed a part of Mr. Alexander Drake's traveling company in Western New York and Kentucky. Rowley is an Israelite, and has been for many years high-priest of the Jews in New Orleans and parts adjacent, receiving a handsome income from the chosen people for the performance of marriage ceremonies, funeral rites, and other *little* operations indispensible to the proper starting of young Jews of the male sex into their second week's journey of life.
>
> "Rowley is an actor of no inconsiderable talent—that is to say, of a peculiar kind—*very* peculiar, I might say. Comic old men are his hobby, and it would do your heart good to see one of his laughs. I say *see* one of them, for nothing particular is *heard* when he laughs; a sort of turning up of his eyes, a filling of his cheeks with wind, and suddenly letting it burst forth, at the same time giving himself a half turn, stooping as if to spit, indulging in a sly wink at the public, and swinging his cane about—and it is done."

Smith had a knack for descriptive narrative. His readers throughout the generations since his book was first published in 1868 have been amused by his vivid portrait of Marks's comic antics:

> "Rowley was once stage-manager in a traveling company under the direction of my brother, and during the whole of a very hot summer he luxuriated in the performance of *Gov. Heartall*, *Old Smacks*, and *Andrew Mucklestane*. Andrew Mucklestane! Ah! how often have I witnessed his impersonation of this character, which is nothing more or less than a sentimental Scotch fisherman, very benevolent in his feelings, and ever ready to rescue runaway countesses and drowning children! And to see Rowley sweating through the 'business' of this character is a treat to all lovers of the romantic drama. Rowley introduces thirteen *falls* in this

> performance, and more than once has it been found necessary to *prop* the stage before subjecting it to his energetic manoeuvres . . .
>
> "In appearance Rowley Marks is a little *below* the middle size, measuring in his stockings, about four feet and some inches. A gleam of good humor is always beaming on his countenance, except when he experiences a twinge of the gout (unfortunately pretty often), and he is one of the best-natured fellows in existence."

Roley was obviously not much of an actor. Bit parts were all he could fill. The traveling theatrical life was a hard, unremunerative one. Not being able to make much of a living at acting alone, he had to supplement his income in all sorts of ways. He became a jack-of-all-trades, served as paid secretary and "rabbi" of Shanarai-Chasset (hardly at the "handsome income" reported by Sol Smith), and also as a part-time inspector at the custom house and a fireman. He began his activity in the Washington Fire Company, No. 4, in 1834. In 1836 he was elected its (paid) secretary; four years later he became second assistant foreman of the company, and was made a director of the Firemen's Charitable Association. In 1841, when he was president of the fire company, he opened a business as a custom house broker, and, during the summer months, conducted some theatrical entertainments out in the country; these were burlesques, more of the sort of nonsense in which he specialized, a different title every day of the week, but virtually the same melange made up of miscellaneous bits and pieces.[10]

More in keeping with Marks's role as part-time rabbi was his secretarial service to the Young Men's Philanthropic Association, a group which was organized in 1839 in response to one of the recurrent yellow fever epidemics. He also took part in theatrical benefits for charitable purposes, and composed "A Fireman's Song" for presentation at a fund-raising performance for the Fireman's Charitable Association, which led him to be called the "Poet Laureate of the Firemen."[11]

In the description of New Orleans Jewish life in 1842, to which we have already referred, Dr. M. Wiener described Marks as a "stain on the Jewish clergy," and reported that he did not observe the dietary laws, did not have his sons circumcised, and sometimes was too busy with his many other activities to conduct services—on the festival of Purim, for instance. One Rosh Hashonah, when an observant member of the congregation commented that it was a shame that a man should act as rabbi who did not have his sons initiated into the covenant of Abraham, and who got "beastly drunk on the day when his two sons died," Marks, "beside himself with rage, pounded on the pulpit and cried out, 'By Jesus Christ! I have a right to pray!' " Wiener also reported that in only four Jewish homes in town were forbidden foods avoided; in only two was the Sabbath strictly observed; two-thirds of the Jews did not have their sons circumcised; not even fifty of the Jewish boys could read Hebrew; the synagogue could accommodate only fifty persons, but was thinly attended even on the High Holy Days; the one Torah scroll was "so shot through with holes that even ten years ago no one would have ventured to read it." But whatever Marks's failings as a "rabbi," and they were obviously many, the neglect of religious duty in New Orleans could not be blamed on him. To the contrary, he was a symptom of the problem. Indifference, ignorance and impiety permitted a man like Marks to take the pulpit by default. Roley Marks never pretended to be more than a makeshift, a fill-in. He was a bustling comic, attempting to make a living in a profession that offered few rewards to any but the most accomplished of dramatic actors. To help fill the gap, he joined any organization that could use his services as a paid secretary, and served as rabbi because the congregation had no member capable of leading its services better than he, and its members were not sufficiently interested to offer enough salary to attract a *hazan* to New Orleans from some other American city or, perhaps, England. Whatever Marks did for the congregation was apparently more than anyone else was willing or able to do. His reputation in New Orleans as a family man was quite respectable, and his colleagues in the theater found him likeable, if somewhat ludicrous. But, ultimately, resistance to Marks's service as spiritual leader of the congregation seems to have mounted, and he drifted back onto the stage. During the 1840's he rejoined his friends on the road, and appeared once more in Natchez and Mobile. He took part in a large number of productions at the Olympic Theater in New

Orleans during 1848 and 1849, and then faded from view. We have been able to find no record of his death, any more than of his birth—perhaps he died while on tour away from New Orleans.[12]

3. Isaac Leeser and Gershom Kursheedt and Judah Touro's Return to Judaism

Because New Orleans was so distant from the major centers of Jewish population, it had to put up with the worst of the lot of amateur, untrained, uncommitted, uninspiring religious leaders upon whom most American Jewish communities were dependent until the 1850's. Congregations in Philadelphia, New York City, Baltimore and Charleston, during the 1840's, were making a major effort to enhance their religious program, to bridge the gap between the old world and the new, between need and reality, between license and authority. As early as 1824, George Harby's brother Isaac had attempted to create a new, liberal approach to Jewish traditions in Charleston, but his departure for New York City in 1828 doomed "The Reformed Society of Israelites" to slow disintegration. But Reform congregations were founded in New York City and Baltimore during the early 1840's and continued this experimentation with a modernist approach. Meanwhile, rabbis with stronger educational qualifications began to come to the United States from England and Germany, men who were willing to devote all their time, energy and imagination to the solution of the problems of Jewish living in the new American society.

Characteristically, however, the first great religious leader of American Jewry was not an ordained rabbi who had been fully trained in Europe, but a self-motivated and inner-directed young man named Isaac Leeser who was only eighteen years old when he came to the United States. Born in Westphalia, Germany, in 1806, Leeser had received a sound, traditional Jewish education in Europe before he came to Richmond to work in his uncle's store. Leeser had not been trained as a rabbi, nor had he ever thought of entering the profession. But within a few years of his immigration to the United States, he had so thoroughly demonstrated the superiority of his own knowledge to that of the average Sephardic or Ashkenazic cantor or minister, that the old Sephardic congregation of Philadelphia, Mikveh Israel, invited him to become its *hazan*. Leeser had continued to study, had begun writing about Judaism, and had already perceived the great need of American Jewry for a broad range of educational media and institutions. During the first twelve years of his ministry in Philadelphia, he instituted regular weekly preaching in English and published many of his sermons for broader distribution; produced and published a well-edited Sephardic prayer book with an English translation; published the first of a series of basic religious school textbooks on Jewish beliefs and the Hebrew language; issued the first of a number of volumes on Judaism designed for the instruction of adults; created the first Jewish Sunday School Society in the land with the help of Rebecca Gratz; and attempted to organize a national conference of representatives of American Jewish congregations. Leeser was serious, creative and stubborn. He knew full well that a large number of educational and other institutions had to be developed if American Jews were to remain Jews in any meaningful sense.[13]

Leeser became, directly and indirectly, a major influence in the transformation and maturation of American Jewish life. New Orleans was one of the many communities which were profoundly affected by the impact of his personality and labors. Jews in New Orleans, as almost everywhere else, were stimulated and edified by his prayer book translations, his collections of sermons, and other published volumes, as well as by the monthly issues of the journal, *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, which he began to publish in April, 1843—a creative milestone in the development of American Jewish communication and articulation. The pages of the *Occident* brought the texts of sermons, and articles on Jewish religious problems, to the eyes of people throughout America who had never seen anything about Judaism in print before; it conveyed news about congregational life in various communities to the attention of people everywhere, and gave them a sense of cohesiveness. The *Occident* aroused a feeling of urgency among some of those who had previously been utterly indifferent to anything Jewish, and established the earliest foundation for a sense of national relatedness among those scattered Jews who did care about the future of Judaism in America. The *Occident* was perhaps the greatest contribution which Leeser made to American Jewish life. He edited it single-handedly, and always lost money on its publication costs. If he had married, and needed to support a family, he could never have carried it off.

Leeser's strongest influence on New Orleans Jewish life was through his disciple, Gershom Kursheedt, who moved to town from New York City in late 1839 or early 1840. Gershom's father, Israel Baer Kursheedt, a learned Jew who had studied for the rabbinate in Europe, had met Isaac Leeser on the latter's first day in Richmond, May 5, 1824, and the Kursheedt family and Leeser were extremely close from then on. His father transmitted to Gershom a passionate love for Jewish learning and a profound concern with Jewish causes, which were also nurtured by his mother, the daughter of the Revolutionary War patriot rabbi, Gershom Mendes Seixas, for whom he was named. Gershom instinctively responded to Leeser's remarkably creative ideas and activities, and gave him his full support and encouragement. Leeser had other followers in New York City, but Gershom became his first in New Orleans. It was probably his sister Rebecca's husband Benjamin Florance who drew Gershom to New Orleans, where he went into business as a broker. From 1845 to 1849 he was co-editor and publisher of the *New Orleans Commercial Times*, a paper that was similar to Levy's *Price-Current*. After an unpleasant break with his erstwhile partner, he returned to the brokerage business. Kursheedt was a Mason, a member of the Howard Association, the philanthropic society which rendered splendid service during the recurring epidemics, and an active Whig. But his greatest love was Judaism.[14]

Kursheedt was one of the earliest subscribers to the *Occident*, and probably solicited subscriptions for the journal in New Orleans as soon as its publication was announced—a total of fifteen men signed up during the first year, including Judah Touro. Kursheedt probably also sold Leeser's prayer books and other publications in New Orleans. He was active in Leeser's 1845 venture to create the first American Jewish Publication

Society. Although he must have corresponded with Leeser from the very beginning of his stay in New Orleans, the only letters which survive in the Leeser manuscript collection at Dropsie College start in 1847. It would be interesting to know Gershom's opinion of what had been happening to Shanarai-Chasset. Some time during the late 1830's the congregation had discarded the Sephardic ritual and adopted the Ashkenazic, probably because of the large influx of German-born Jews, and the inability of any leader to conduct the Sephardic ritual. Kursheedt had joined the congregation when he came to New Orleans, and was one of the fifty-one members who signed the new by-laws of 1841 which, among other changes, noted that the services should be "in conformity with the rules and customs of the German Israelites," and henceforth banned the membership of any man who had intermarried. When the Hebrew Benevolent Society of New Orleans was established in 1844, Gershom became its first treasurer.

Shortly after the High Holy Days of 1845, Kursheedt organized a new Sephardic congregation, called the Dispersed of Judah—Nefutzoth Yehudah; in the year and a half prior to its receipt of a charter from the state, Kursheedt succeeded in persuading forty men to join the congregation. The reason for the formation of the new group may not have been only ritualistic, but also social. Native-born Jews like the Florance brothers, members of the Labatt, Harris, Hyams and Harby families, as well as men with such Sephardic names as Soria, Rodrigues, Bravo, De Pass, Mendez, Da Vega, and Peixotto—possibly including recent immigrants from the West Indies—must have felt much happier with each other than with newcomers from Germany. There is no doubt, also, that Kursheedt and others must have been altogether appalled at the antics of a man like Roley Marks. But perhaps there was a clever—not to say almost diabolical—reason for the organization of the new congregation: Gershom Kursheedt's hope to secure Judah Touro's cooperation, at last. Shanarai-Chasset had undertaken a campaign for building funds in 1843; an appeal was printed and circulated throughout the country, signed by four men, Benjamin Florance, Leopold Levy, S. Ries, and, of all people, Alexander Phillips, now apparently willing to take leadership in communal activities.

When Kursheedt discovered that Touro still would not do anything for the congregation, he must have decided to organize a new one in the hope that he could arouse Touro's interest. How else explain the name, Dispersed of Judah, but in honor of Judah Touro, or in recollection of the original name of the Newport congregation? There is evidence in Kursheedt's later reports to Leeser that he had already, in the early 1840's, been seeking, unsuccessfully it must be noted, to gain Touro's support for some of Leeser's pet projects—a Jewish high school and college in Philadelphia, a national congregational union, and the Publication Society.[15]

Although Touro would not consider joining the Dispersed of Judah Congregation, he was somehow persuaded to accept the financial responsibility of providing it with a synagogue. How Gershom accomplished this is an "enigma wrapped in a mystery"—unless it was not Gershom who was the successful advocate, but Rezin Shepherd. It is surely more than a coincidence that Touro finally bestirred himself to do something concrete for the Jewish community of New Orleans at the very same time that Shepherd's church had outgrown its building and was planning a new structure. Our best judgement is that Shepherd—according to Kursheedt, the one man who knew how to deal with Touro—told Touro of Christ Church's plans and suggested that it would be a good idea for him to trade some desirable land that he owned in exchange for the Church, and then to remodel the building into a synagogue. But, even so, it may have been Kursheedt who suggested the idea to Shepherd.

Shortly afterwards, Touro took another step to identify himself with Judaism. He gave $500 to the president of the University of Louisiana to endow a gold medal which would be presented annually to the student who demonstrated excellence in the cultivation of the Hebrew language.[16] It would almost seem that some crisis or new development had sent Touro back to Judaism. Perhaps it was so simple a thing as a frightening illness or the onset of old age, with accompanying fears of death and retribution—but we will probably never learn precisely what it was that made him amenable to Kursheedt's pleadings.

Kursheedt, as the president of Dispersed of Judah, had the headache of securing designs for the renovation of the church building, which had to be approved by Touro who, a good deal of the time, could not make up his mind. As Kursheedt reported to Leeser in December, 1847:

> "Mr. Touro is the very impersonation of a snail, not to say of a crab whose progress (to use a paradox) is usually backward. My patience is well nigh exhausted with him and I am interrogated by so many concerning his intentions that it is not unusual for me to dodge a corner in order to avoid meeting certain parties who seem to think that I am making a mystery of the matter.
>
> "Your advice to me to urge Mr. Touro is also very good & I have profited by your counsel but the only answer I get is 'well we will see' 'there is time enough' &c &c. I can not order the man and as Mr. Shepherd tells me I must be very careful to humor him or in one instant all may be lost . . .
>
> "Our people here with very few exceptions are a strange set. I am as honorable as I can be and they are incapable of understanding me. Mr. Touro keeps me in hot water with them all the time & I sometimes wish myself anywhere but in N. Orleans. . . ."[17]

The people undoubtedly thought that Kursheedt had found the way to appeal to Touro, and now expected Kursheedt to get everything done in a hurry, but it was months before he secured Touro's approval, and then he had to negotiate with the carpenters and builders who were to do the work:

> "I am about to contract for finishing the inside of our new Synagogue & what with Mr. Touro on the one hand with his peculiar notions, & the mechanics on the other, with their attempts to make a good bargain I assure you I am not a little perplexed. . . ."[18]

The workmen labored all through the spring, summer and autumn of 1848, and then, when Kursheedt and Leeser were discussing the liturgical appurtenances and furnishings which were to be ordered in Philadelphia, disaster struck. Kursheedt discovered that the roof of the building "was so defective as to be really dangerous & after some weeks lost in convincing Mr. Touro of this he acceded to my wish to have it taken down." Kursheedt kept reporting to Leeser that Touro was "dreadfully slow" . . . "very *slow*"—but probably no slower than the carpenters and other workmen. The building was not finished until the spring of 1850—three years after Touro had first agreed to the conversion of the church into a synagogue. Nowhere in the correspondence does Kursheedt mention the amount of money that Touro was spending on the building, but it may have been more expensive, in the long run, to renovate and convert the old building, than to put up a totally new one.[19]

In January of 1849, Kursheedt, Leeser and Touro began to review the names of possible candidates for the ministry of the congregation—Kursheedt presumably had been conducting services himself. The most prominent candidate, and the successful one, was Moses N. Nathan, who had been serving congregations in St. Thomas, in the Virgin Islands, and in Kingston, Jamaica. This clergyman was, coincidentally, the nephew of Asher Moses Nathan, and the cousin of the Harris brothers and sisters. Rev. Nathan reached New Orleans only a few days prior to the dedication of the new building. Joining him in the conduct of the services on May 14, 1850, was Isaac Leeser, who came down from Philadelphia at Touro's expense, and stayed with Kursheedt, in whose kosher home he could safely eat. Also participating in the service of dedication was Rabbi James K. Gutheim, who had recently been called to New Orleans by the Shanarai-Chasset Congregation, now stimulated to renewed, or new devotion, by the competition offered by Kursheedt's congregation. A private service was held in the morning, when Judah Touro sealed a commemorative stone in the portal; a very small number of people was invited, it was reported, because of Touro's shyness. Late in the afternoon the public ceremonies were conducted; the building was thronged with Jews and non-Jews who were admitted by ticket only. It was a day of triumph for Kursheedt, who had made all of the arrangements for the dedicatory program, even to the training of the choir. Everyone expected that this new synagogue would give the kind of lift to New Orleans Jewish life for which it had been waiting these many years. On Touro himself, it did have a profound influence. He seems to have returned to Judaism in a most determined way. He attended services regularly, built a schoolhouse next to the synagogue in 1851 and provided rooms there for Gershom Kursheedt to live, and gave regular contributions to the congregational treasury. He also became a strict observer of the Sabbath. In a letter which he wrote to the Firemen's Charitable Association after a fire which destroyed some of his property, the major portion of which was rescued, however, through the efforts of the local fire companies, he said that he would not write on the Sabbath:

> New Orleans, January 5th, 1852.
>
> "H. Bier, Esq.,
> President,
> Firemen's Charitable Association:
>
> Sir:—
>
> Having been made aware of the exhausted state of your treasury, and knowing the usefulness of fire departments, as exhibited on Saturday morning last, when through the activity of several companies, a considerable portion of my property was saved, I beg to present the enclosed one thousand dollars and hope that it may temporarily relieve the widows and orphans dependent on the association for support.
>
> Saturday, on which the fire occurred, being my Sabbath, has prevented me from sending this until this morning.
>
> Very respectfully,
>
> J. Touro"[20]

The Dispersed of Judah Congregation did not, however, prosper as had been anticipated. Everyone expected Touro to do everything, or rather Kursheedt to do everything, and Touro to pay for it. Moses N. Nathan was miserable; he felt as though he were altogether dependent on Touro's charity. In early 1853 he left New Orleans in disgust, writing to Leeser:

> ". . . the folks here . . . are very willing to employ the best minister possible, but the truth is, they don't want to pay. They would like Mr. Touro to do that duty. It is quite honor sufficient that they have accepted his gift, and having secured that effectually, their obligations are ended. They have been playing a farce with me during the last fortnight . . . [Touro] is heartily tired of these

> continual drains on his purse, and I will no longer submit to be a pensioner on his bounty . . . Since my first engagement in Feby. 50, he has paid nearly two thirds of my salary. . . ."[21]

The situation had really not changed very much. The rich were disinterested—Asher Nathan, the rabbi's uncle, neither joined the congregation nor contributed to it—and the poor were unable to pay anything.

As a matter of fact, Shanarai-Chasset Congregation was faring much better. The 1843 appeal for funds to build a new synagogue had been a dismal failure. But in 1845 the congregation moved from St. Louis and Franklin streets to a building on Rampart street between Conti and St. Louis, and in 1850 brought Rabbi Gutheim from Cincinnati. Spurred on by the example of the Portuguese congregation, and, under the strong leadership of Alexander Hart's son Isaac, the members of Shanarai-Chasset determined to build a synagogue for themselves. It was more modest than the building which Touro had presented to the Dispersed of Judah, but it was the product of the effort of many people rather than the largesse of one man. One hundred members bought shares of $50 each, in addition to outright contributions which were made by others. A transformation had indeed taken place in Touro's nature: he gave the German congregation, as it was frequently called, $5,000, and loaned them an additional $6,528, for which he held notes at the time of his death. The new synagogue was erected at the same location on Rampart street on which the temporary quarters stood, at a total cost of $16,000, and was dedicated on March 5, 1851. Gutheim, who was to be identified with New Orleans Jewry's religious life for almost forty years, ultimately as the founding rabbi of the Reform Temple Sinai, left Shanarai-Chasset in 1853, and succeeded Nathan in the ministry at Dispersed of Judah. It was therefore he who officiated at the funeral of Judah Touro in January, 1854. One more word needs to be said about the members of the Portuguese congregation, however: no sooner had Touro died, than they sold the building and ground which Touro had presented to them, and moved to a new location, more convenient to the residences of the members. The land on Canal street was very valuable, and, together with the adjoining properties which Touro gave to the congregation in his will, brought $70,000. It would seem as though they were saying, however, that the synagogue renovated at such expense and trouble was not at all satisfactory, had been accepted only because it was a gift, and had not been a wise project after all. Sad commentary, perhaps, on the capacity of a man to help a community.[22]

Not only did both congregations now have their own synagogue buildings, but a third congregation was organized in the Lafayette suburb. An abortive effort was made in this direction in 1848, followed by the establishment of a benevolent society in 1849, and, finally, the founding of Congregation Shaarei Tefiloh (Gates of Prayer) in January, 1850. Lafayette was not too far from town, but the trip was uncomfortable and difficult. As New Orleans Jewry entered the sixth decade of the century, then, it had three centers of worship.[23]

It is not our intention to report on the details of Jewish life in New Orleans in the 1850's. That is another story, similar to the story of many other communities throughout America—the gradual integration into communal life of large numbers of recent immigrants from Germany, the struggle with problems of Jewish education and philanthropy, the creation of a host of Jewish organizations, lodges and charities, the gradual emergence of Reform tendencies, further losses through intermarriage and assimilation, and, in New Orleans, the crises of secession, conquest and Reconstruction. That story is not a distinctive one; it is a duplication of the experiences of other communities in the South, in the North and in the Mid-West, and is best told in conjunction with an analysis of the gathering crisis in American Jewish life which finally culminated in the recognition of the truth of Leeser's contention that American Jewish communities would never be able to solve their problems in isolation, but had to band together to create a national union of congregations and a central Jewish theological seminary. These were finally established in the 1870's under the creative leadership of Rabbi Gutheim's friend, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise of Cincinnati.

But this early period of Jewish life in New Orleans which we have been tracing comes to an end only with Judah Touro's famous will. If Touro had died during the 1820's or 1830's, although he might have left large sums of money to charitable organizations, they would not have been Jewish ones. But he lived long enough for Leeser and Kursheedt to reach his heart. Whether it was the building of the Nefutzoth Yehudah synagogue which had a profound emotional and spiritual influence upon him, or whether his willingness to pay for the remodeling resulted from a repentant acknowledgement of his prior errors, is impossible to tell. But he had returned to his religion. He was now once more a Jew by more than birth. His regular attendance at Sabbath services demonstrated that. And, apparently, he had decided to leave part of his wealth to Jewish causes. When he fell ill, Touro brought Shepherd and Kursheedt to his bedside to discuss his ideas with them. Shepherd never wrote down what had happened in these talks, but Kursheedt did. He had argued mightily to persuade Touro to adopt Leeser's vision of a network of national American Jewish cultural institutions—a university, a rabbinical seminary, a publication society, a national synod of rabbis—but this was beyond Touro's power to comprehend. "Poor old man," wrote Kursheedt, "he had noble impulses, but his great misfortune was in his want of education. Some of his notions were good, and to the extent that I can, I will carry them out." Touro's emphasis was on charity for the needy, and help for struggling congregations and congregational schools, tokens of esteem for rabbis like Leeser and Nathan, the creation of the Touro hospital in New Orleans, and tangible help for the poverty-stricken Jews of Palestine. The larger vision of national American Jewish unity would have to wait. Kursheedt's emotion-laden explanation to Leeser is full of frustration:

> ". . . Oh my dear friend, if you knew how I had to work to get that Will made and how I strove to serve you, you would pity me. Alas, it was not altogether what I wanted, yet I am thankful to God that even if I injured myself I got the most of what I wanted for Israel—arguments, changes and counter-changes in the sums for Institutions, till my heart sickened. I appeared calm, but indeed was almost crazy, ever dreading that nothing would be achieved in the end. The list of Jewish Institutions I made up as well as I could. I had dreadful hard work to raise your Education Society from 10 to 20,000."[24]

Touro's bequests should not be underrated, however, because we now recognize how late he was in returning to the faith of his father, or because we understand how difficult it was for Kursheedt and Leeser to transmit to him the urgent awareness of the problems of American Jewish life. No one could force him to do what he did do. The decision was his alone. And it was a meaningful one. He recognized the need for the great gesture, a concrete expression of good will and optimism in broad, magnanimous terms. It is worth counting his benefactions. We do not know of any previous American will, written by Christian let alone by Jew, which ever before had spread such largesse among so many institutions. $75,000 went to various individuals and friends, including the executors, Parson Clapp, and Rabbis Leeser and Nathan; Shepherd was, of course, the residuary legatee. Gifts to orphans' homes and other Christian welfare agencies in New Orleans, and for the construction of a new almshouse, totalled $120,000. Philanthropic institutions in Boston, to which his brother Abraham had been devoted, received $20,000. In Newport, Rhode Island, his old home, $10,000 was given to the Old Stone Mill park, and $3,000 to the Redwood Library. The Jews of New Orleans received a total of $108,000, including property worth $48,000 to Dispersed of Judah, $40,000 in property (the Paulding estate) for a Jewish hospital (Touro Infirmary) in New Orleans, $5,000 for Shanarai-Chasset, and $15,000 for local benevolent societies including the utopian effort to send assistance to the dwindling Jewish community in China. An endowment of $10,000 was established for the Newport synagogue and cemetery. A total of $60,000 went towards the relief of the poor Jews of Palestine, $50,000 to be used at the discretion of the distinguished British Jewish leader, Sir Moses Montefiore. Congregations, religious schools, benevolent societies and Jewish hospitals in Boston, Hartford, New Haven, New York City, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Richmond, Charleston, Savannah, Mobile, Memphis, Louisville, Cincinnati, Cleveland, St. Louis, Buffalo and Albany, received a total of $143,000.[25]

Even generosity brings problems in its wake. Gershom Kursheedt and Sir Moses Montefiore had to make several trips to Palestine to attempt to carry out Touro's wishes, and

Montefiore complained that Touro's bequest cost him a great deal of money—but it was worth the trouble: instead of the hospital they originally intended to build, they constructed a number of homes in the first Jewish suburb outside the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem—a district called Mazkeret Moshe—Remembrance of Moses (Montefiore). The city government of New Orleans had a difficult time establishing the Touro Almshouses, and they were no sooner constructed than they were taken over by the victorious Union Army. It was many years, too, before the Jews of Philadelphia finally used Touro's bequest to build an educational structure which was named for him. Some Jews complained that Shepherd had gotten too much out of his friendship for Touro, and Jewish organizations which were left out of the will were very upset. Kursheedt reported to Leeser just a month after Touro's death that the Jewish organizational squabbles embarrassed him terribly:

> "... You cannot imagine the disgusting communications that come to Shepherd from some of our Societies, giving recitals of congregational difficulties, jealousies, etc. I have to blush frequently, and try to put the best face on it. . . ."[26]

Yet these were minor difficulties, at worst. The news of the terms of Touro's will was received with undisguised astonishment; tributes of the most laudatory character were published in New Orleans and throughout the country. The funeral services in New Orleans, despite the man's innate shyness, became a virtual public triumph; the *Bee* said that "it was one of the largest assemblages of citizens we have ever beheld . . . The funeral train was immense, almost every carriage in the city being filled." The final burial service, which was held in Newport, Rhode Island, early in June, was another occasion for public praise for Touro's magnanimity.[27]

Touro became in death what he had never been, never wanted to be, in life: a local and national hero; a leader of men; a dignitary; a man of inspiring presence; an exemplary Jewish philanthropist. His significance in American Jewish history, by reason of the remarkable manner in which he disposed of his wealth, is a major one. To dozens of Jewish congregations and institutions throughout the country, many of them newly created, practically all in financial straits, he gave both material and moral encouragement. To thousands of newly-arrived immigrants, hesitating on the threshold of a new life, he offered the example of a happy combination of self-respecting Judaism and avid Americanism, together with a high level of material success and generosity, which served to spur their own ambitions and hasten their acculturation to the new land. To the minds of many Americans he contributed a benevolent portrait of "the Jew" which contrasted forcefully with distorted folk-images tainted with prejudice. To Jews in Europe, from the exalted Sir Moses Montefiore to the lowliest villager in unhappy Poland, he gave a new impression of the American Jew which helped to counteract the concept of the rough, uncouth, materialistic, irreligious American-Jewish frontiersman. It was a supreme irony, and a strange twist of fate, that this simple man, so distant from Judaism throughout most of his life, should have brought such renown to the Jewish community of New Orleans which had been notable only for the extent of its accommodation to the environment, and for its delay in establishing the foundations of religious and communal continuity.[28]

NOTES

Abbreviations of Sources in Notes

(All newspapers cited in notes were published in New Orleans, unless otherwise indicated.)

AGI	Archivo General de Indias, Manuscript Collections in Seville and Cuba, divided into two main groups, Audiencia de Santo Domingo, and Papeles procedentes de la Isla de Cuba. Most of our citations are from photostats, microfilms or typescripts in the Library of Congress, Manuscript Division.
AJA	American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati
AJHQ	*American Jewish Historical Quarterly* (New York, 1961–)
AJHS	Library of the American Jewish Historical Society, Waltham, Mass.
DAB	*Dictionary of American Biography* (New York, 1946)
JE	*Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York, 1901–1905)
JRBD	Joseph R. Rosenbloom, *A Biographical Dictionary of Early American Jews* (Lexington, Ky., 1960)
LC	Library of Congress
LG	*Louisiana Gazette* (New Orleans, 1802–26)
LHQ	*Louisiana Historical Quarterly* (New Orleans, 1917–)
LSML	Louisiana State Museum Library, New Orleans: documents are from translations and summaries of originals in the Cabildo safe; death data from cemetery card files.
MSAJD	Malcolm H. Stern, *Americans of Jewish Descent* (Cincinnati, 1960)
NCC	Natchez Court of Chancery Manuscript Records, summarized in May Wilson McBee, *The Natchez Court Records, 1767–1805* (Natchez, 1953), but references are to Manuscript Transcripts of 1817–18.

NOCD	*New Orleans City Directories*, of varied titles, followed by year, as listed in Dorothea N. Spear, *Bibliography of American Directories through 1860* (Worcester, 1961), 222–29.
NOG	*New Orleans Genesis* (New Orleans, 1962–)
NONA	New Orleans Notarial Archives, Civil District Court, some numbered in series by notary's name, some identified only by year.
NOOR	New Orleans Office of the Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths.
NOPC	New Orleans Probate Court Records, Civil District Court.
OCC	*Occident and American Jewish Advocate* (Phila., 1843–69)
PAJHS	*Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* (Baltimore, New York, 1893–1960)
REJ	*Revue des Etudes Juives* (Paris, 1880–)
SC	*Synopses of Cases in the U. S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana, Cases #1 to 3000, 1806–1831* (WPA Mimeographed Volume) (Baton Rouge, 1941)
SLCBR	St. Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, Baptismal Registers, arabic numbers from 1771 on.
SLCCB	St. Louis Cathedral Confirmation Book, 1790–1840, published as *Confirmaciones* by Genealogical Research Society of New Orleans (New Orleans, 1967).
SLCFR	St. Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, Funeral Registers, unnumbered.
SLCMR	St. Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, Marriage Registers, arabic numbers from 1777 on.
SWFP	*Archives of the Spanish Government of West Florida* (WPA Mimeographed Volumes) (Baton Rouge, 1937–38), references are to the original volumes and pages as summarized in these transcriptions and translations.
WFP	British West Florida Provincial Papers, Public Record Office, London, Colonial documents, Section 5, from photostatic copies in the Library of Congress.

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

[1] Samuel Oppenheim, "The Early History of the Jews in New York, 1654–1664," *PAJHS* No. 18 (1909), 9–11.

[2] Ab. Cahen, "Les Juifs dans les Colonies Françaises au xviiie Siècle," *REJ*, IV (1882), 127–43, 236–48; V (1882), 68–92, 258–72; Nellis M. Crouse, *French Pioneers in the West Indies, 1624–1664* (New York, 1940), 179, 211, 265; I. S. Emmanuel, "New Light on Early American Jewry," *American Jewish Archives*, VII (1955), 22; I. S. Emmanuel, "Les Juifs de la Martinique," *REJ*, CXXIII (1964), 511; Lee M. Friedman, *Jewish Pioneers and Patriots* (Phila., 1943), 81–94.

[3] Friedman, *Jewish Pioneers*, 87; Cahen, "Les Juifs," IV, 128 ff; Arthur Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews* (New York, 1968), 22–25.

[4] Friedman, *Jewish Pioneers*, 88; Zosa Szajkowski, *Franco-Judaica* (New York, 1962), 1.

[5] Friedman, *Jewish Pioneers*, 90; Arthur Daniel Hart, *The Jew in Canada* (Toronto, 1926), 5–12; *JE*, VI, 63–64; Hertzberg, *French Enlightenment*, 88–92; B. G. Sack, *History of the Jews in Canada* (Montreal, 1926), 13–33; Z. Szajkowski, "The Jewish Status in Eighteenth-Century France and the 'Droit d'Aubaine,' " *Historia Judaica*, XIX (1957), 150, 154–55; Simon Wolf, *The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier and Citizen* (Phila., 1895), 476–82.

[6] Edwin Adams Davis, *Louisiana, A Narrative History* (Baton Rouge, 1961), 58.

[7] Anita L. Lebeson, in *Pilgrim People* (New York, 1950), 114–18, seems firmly convinced that Louis-Elias Stutheus, an agent for John Law's speculative Company of the Indies colonization scheme popularly known as "the Mississippi bubble," who came to Louisiana in connection with his official duties about 1720, was Jewish. It is difficult to discern from her footnotes whether or not she relies solely on J. Hanno Deiler's undocumented statement in *The Settlement of the German Coast of Louisiana and the Creoles of German Descent* (Phila., 1909), 21, where reference is made to Stutheus as "the Jewish business manager of Law." Professor Marcel Giraud, the leading authority on the early colonization of Louisiana, who has for many years studied the documents relating to Law's Company, has discovered no contemporary reference to Stutheus as a Jew. The name in the notarial records is spelled that way, rather than "Stultheus" as given by Mrs. Lebeson. Giraud bases his belief that Stutheus was not Jewish on the absence of any such positive identification and on the following facts: firstly, that Stutheus was, before joining Law's venture, a "commissaire de la marine," an unlikely post for a Jew; secondly, that one M. Pauger, referring to Stutheus' death in 1721, says that he died with "great sentiments of piety," a characteristic Christian comment of the time, hardly to be applied to a Jew. Father Charles O'Neill of Loyola University, New Orleans, has been in contact with Prof. Giraud about such matters as these in connection with his own research for his recent volume, *Church and State in French Colonial Louisiana*

(New Haven, 1966), and has been kind enough to share his correspondence with M. Giraud with me. Giraud refers to Stutheus in the third volume (1717–1720) of his *Histoire de la Louisiane Française* (Paris, 1966), 234, 241, 244. The Pauger letter (to M. de La Tour, April 14, 1721, Archives Nationales, 3 JJ 201 [5]) is not mentioned in this volume since it relates to 1721. The name Stutheus, which no Jew is known to have borne, may be of German, Dutch or Swiss origin; perhaps somewhere there is a reference to Stutheus as a Swiss which may have been misread by Deiler or someone else as "Juif." Father O'Neill has explained to me the error made by Pierre Margry, *Découvertes et Établissements des Français dans l'ouest et dans le sud de l'Amérique septentrionale, 1614–1754* (Paris, 1879–83), V, 576, in his published transcription of André Pénicaut's *Relation* . . . (Bibliothèque Nationale mss. Fr. 14613, p. 355). In the passage "In the beginning [of 1720] . . . there arrived seven ships . . . These ships had brought over more than four thousand persons, French as well as Germans and Swiss . . .," Margry, or his amanuensis, misread Pénicaut's handwritten "Suisses" with the old-style "ss" as "Juiffes." This is apparent when the Pénicaut manuscript is compared with the Margry transcription (B.N. mss. Fr. 9298, p. 358). See R. G. McWilliams, translator and editor of Pénicaut's narrative, published under the title *Fleur de Lys and Calumet* (Baton Rouge, 1953), 240, 257, for confirmation of this explanation. McWilliams, 241, transcribes "M. Lias" for Margry's reading of "Elias."

[8] Louisiana Historical Records Survey, *Inventory of the Church and Synagogue Records of Louisiana. Jewish Congregations and Organizations* (Baton Rouge, 1941), 1, and Samuel Proctor, "Jewish Life in New Orleans, 1718-1860," *LHQ*, XL (1957), 111, among others, contain these questionable references.

[9] Deiler, *The Settlement of the German Coast*, 84. Mrs. Lebeson (*Pilgrim People*, 116–17) is convinced that some of these people were Jews, but offers no evidence other than names which today are frequently regarded as Jewish. Many Central European Jews, however, did not even possess family names until much later into the eighteenth century.

[10] Father O'Neill had thought that "les nommés Isaak," who were working to develop a type of cotton gin in 1732–33, mentioned in a ministerial communication to Salmon, September 8, 1733, Archives Nationales, AC, B 59, f. 584–85, might be Jews simply on the basis of the name, but he recognizes the risk of such ascription without positive evidence of Jewish identification. In his own meticulous study relating to Catholics and non-Catholics in this early period, he has found no evidence of the presence of Jews in French Louisiana: *Church and State*, 269–70, 282.

[11] *Le Code Noir, ou Edit du Roi* (Paris, 1728), 2.

[12] *The History of Louisiana* (New Orleans, 1903), I, 362–63.

[13] Pope Gregory the Great (590–604) distinguished between slaves held temporarily by Jewish traders, and those permanently possessed by Jewish individuals, thereby encouraging Jewish merchants to take part in the slave trade. No definitive study of this subject has been published, but see Israel Abrahams, *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages* (second edition, revised by Cecil Roth) (London, 1932), 112–17; Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* (Phila., 1957), III, 30–31,

219, 243–44, 252–53; IV, 9, 187–96; Jacob R. Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World* (Cincinnati, 1938), 5, 39.

Father O'Neill, *Church and State*, 269, regards the *Code Noir* ban on Jews as evidence of the concern of the French authorities for the loyalty of the colonial settlers; if they were all Catholics, they would have no political leaning towards a rival power, presumably Protestant. But there is no contemporary evidence that Jews constituted any kind of political force anywhere in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. If this was indeed in the minds of the French authorities, it is another indication of the utter unreasonableness of attitudes towards the Jews.

The *Code Noir* was officially reprinted in New Orleans as late as 1803 by order of Pierre Clément Laussat, who was the French Commissioner of Louisiana during the brief period between the announcement of the cession of the territory by Spain to France, and the occupation of the area by United States forces after the Louisiana Purchase. But a covering statement indicated that all provisions which were in contradiction to the U. S. Constitution were void. A copy of this rare pamphlet is in the Favrot Collection, at the Tulane University Library.

[14] Ms. Mémoires, Archives Nationales, Colonies, C13A, 4, p. 934, cited in O'Neill, *Church and State*, 265.

[15] Jacob Rader Marcus, *American Jewry. Documents. Eighteenth Century* (Cincinnati, 1959), 326–29.

[16] *LHQ*, XIX (1936), 1117; XX (1937), 222–23. Henriques was the grandson of Yeosua Henriques who was in Curaçao as early as 1654 and who died there in 1704. This Henriques family has been in longer continual residence in Curaçao than any other Jewish family. I. S. Emmanuel, *Precious Stones of the Jews of Curaçao* (New York, 1957), 203–204.

[17] This synopsis of a long and involved matter is based on the narrative and translations of relevant documents in A. P. Nasatir and Leo Shpall, "The Texel Affair," *AJHQ*, LIII (1963), 3–43. The *Annual Report, John Carter Brown Library, 1948–1949* (Providence, 1940), 14–20, gives some bibliographical data on the conflict. There is also an extensive description of the affair in Marc de Villers du Terrage, *Les Dernières Années de la Louisiane Française* (Paris, 1904), of which I have used Henri Delville de Sinclair's 1937–38 WPA mss. translation, in the Tulane University Library, hereafter cited as Terrage, *Last Years of French Louisiana.* The references to the *Texel* affair in this translation are pp. 158–70. The data on Dias Arias are in Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, 295.

[18] Nasatir, "The Texel Affair," 27. This was a report to the Minister of Marine in Paris, dated March 25, 1759. Among the many other documents in the case, a letter of Pierre Henry Derneville, a military officer and one of Rochemore's associates, to Le Normand (Archives Nationales, Colonies, C13A, 41, p. 341) portrays the Jews as a serious economic threat: "The Jews who have established stores in this city for approximately the last eighteen months, are carrying off [monopolizing] all of the coined money, are negotiating bills of exchange at twenty per cent, are carrying off all the indigo and furs, with the result that if one of our vessels should come, I doubt that he could find anything to take back. . . ."

Derneville's reference would date Jewish settlement in New Orleans as early as the fall of 1757.

[19] State of Rhode Island Archives, Dept. of State, Providence, Public Notary Records, VI, 436, June 8, and November 23, 1757; Letters to the Governor of Rhode Island, VI, 15, May 11, June 22, 23, 1759; Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague, Old Curaçao Archives, No. 601, f. 375; *LHQ*, XXV (1942), 1178 (petition of Guillaume, September 27, 1763); XXVI (1943), 217–19 (answer of Monsanto, October 12, 1763); LSML: Doc. 63/109a (decision of the arbiters, November 19, 1763); Doc. 63/109 (petition of Monsanto, December 1, 1763); Doc. 63/109c (advice of Lafite, arbiter, undated and incomplete); Doc. 93/109c–2 (recommendations of Carresset, chief arbiter, December 2, 1763). No record of the case can be found in the incomplete Saint-Domingue records in the Archives Nationales in Paris.

[20] *LHQ*, XVIII (1935), 293, 301, 314.

[21] There is a mystery about Ester Levy which we have not been able to solve. The entry in the Gemeente Archief at The Hague, Recht. Arch. 75g, f. 2, which notes her civil marriage to David Monsanto on February 3, 1732, clearly states that she was born in the "Land van Munster." Yet the wills or death records of three children give the mother's name as Ester Barro, Bareo or Bareau, two stating that she was from the Barbados Islands: Gracia's will, Francisco Broutin, VII, 83, December 8, 1790, NONA; Manuel's first will, Francisco Broutin, XI, 56, March 8, 1792, NONA; Eleanora's death record, SLCFR, 1793–1803, p. 45. There are a number of alternative explanations: That Ester Levy Barrow had been born in Münster but lived in the Barbados before her marriage, but why is the Barrow name not given in any of the records at The Hague? That David married an Ester Barrow from the Barbados after Ester Levy Monsanto's death in 1747, and had by her a number of younger children, including Gracia and Eleanora, but Manuel was one of the oldest children, certainly born to Ester Levy Monsanto! That David married an Ester Barrow from the Barbados after the family moved to Curaçao, and she became so devoted a mother to the children of the first Ester that they regarded her as their mother. It may never be possible to resolve this contradiction which is largely of genealogical significance.

[22] The approximate date of Isaac's birth is recorded in the civil antenuptial agreement between Esther and David Monsanto, Gemeente Archief, The Hague: Notarial Archives, J. Sydhoff, no. 2053, act 17, January 28, 1732. The earliest reference to David Monsanto's connection with de Medina is in the latter's first will, November 20, 1715, also in the Sydhoff Notarial Archives. A thorough investigation of The Hague Gemeente Archief would undoubtedly reveal many transactions in which Monsanto represented de Medina and held his power of attorney. Two examples are given in J. H. Buzaglo, "Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis der Portugeesche Israëlieten en Hunner Gemeenten te s'-Gravenhage van ±1690 tot ±1730," *Die Haghe Jaarboek* (The Hague, 1939), 98–99. In the first, Monsanto acted for de Medina in the sale of a property in Princessegracht to the directors and treasurers of the Honen Dal Congregation, March 12, 1725, for 1,100 florins; in the second, on February 14, 1729, he fulfilled a similar role in the sale of a property south of the synagogue for 4,200 florins. Data about de Medina is in Albert M.

Hyamson, *The Sephardim of England* (London, 1951), 54–55, and Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews in England* (3rd ed.) (Oxford, 1964), 287–88. Dr. Oskar K. Rabinowicz of New Rochelle has permitted me to consult his unpublished monograph on de Medina and Marlborough. The final wills of de Medina and his wife are in the Sydhoff Notarial Archives, no. 2046, June 3, 1727. Monsanto was involved in the sale of de Medina's home for the large amount of 30,000 guilders to Rachel Teixeira Suasso in 1737–39 (Gemeente Archief, RA 519, November 12, 1737; Notarial Archives no. 2279, June 3, September 12, 1738). Some indication of de Medina's limited means or, at least, of the small amount of ready cash which he had at hand is revealed by the relatively small contribution which he made to the Honen Dal Congregation of The Hague, at the service on the eve of the dedication of its new synagogue building in 1726. Twenty-seven contributors gave a total of 4,225.5 florins. Eight of the contributors, Monsanto among them, gave 5 or 5.5 florins each. Eight others gave 500 florins each; de Medina was not one of them—his contribution was only 20 florins, four times as much as Monsanto's. But it is difficult to believe that he gave as much as he was able—perhaps he was just not interested (Buzaglo, "Bijdragen," 67).

[23] Most of these details are from reports by Dr. H. M. Mensonides, Director of the Municipal Archives of The Hague, September 22, October 5, November 4, 1966, and May 23, 1967, based on the manuscript archives of both the city and the synagogues. Grateful appreciation must be expressed to Dr. Mensonides for his extremely generous expenditure of time and effort. Some of the references to David Monsanto are as follows: civil records—Buurtboek 84, f. 70, 86; Rechterlijk Archief 556, November 2, 1739; 802, December 19, 1741; Tax List, O.A. 4763, 4764; synagogue records—Honen Dal Arch. 1, pp. 44–45; and entries for Cheshvan 11, 5503 (1742); Sivan 15, 5509 (1748–49); Teves 22, 5512 (1751/52); "Livro longo no. 4 de Promessas & Noticias do K. K. Honendal," entries for Nisan 5509 (1749) and Hanukah 5511 (1750). The antenuptial agreement referred to in the previous note states that Ester brought no dowry to David, but stipulated that if he predeceased her, she was to receive the substantial sum of 1,000 guilders from his estate. Even though he was not in The Hague at the time, David Monsanto was included in the 1743 list of members of the united congregation, Beth Jacob-Honen Dal. Interestingly enough, it indicates that just prior to that time he was associated with Beth Jacob, and was no longer a member of the Honen Dal Congregation in which he had been active in the 1720's and 1730's. Is this, perhaps, to be explained by his sense of embarrassment over the change in his financial status? (M. Henriquez Pimentel, *Geschiedkundige Aan Teekeningen, bettreffende de Portugesche Israelieten in Den Haag En Hunne Synagogen Aldaar* [s'-Gravenhage, 1876], 81).

[24] Unless more precise birth records can be discovered in Holland, we shall have to be content with the age variations offered in various legal documents. Manuel is called "about 50 years old" in his death record, July 10, 1796, SLCFR, 1793–1803, p. 32; but since he was the last of the Louisiana siblings to die, and none of the brothers or sisters remained to give his age, it is more likely that his own testimony that he was fifty years old in 1785 is correct: *LHQ*, XXVIII (1945), 617. Gracia's death record, January 3, 1791, SLCFR, 1784–93, p. 31, unfortunately does not give her age; in 1766 she was reported as being twenty-two years old:

LSML, Doc. 1957 (September 10, 1766), which also gives Angélica's age as twenty-one. But Angélica's tombstone and death record on a Girod St. Cemetery card in LSML list her as seventy-two years old at her death on October 21, 1821; the tombstone is in the possession of Dean Kenneth Trist Urquhart; the ms. eulogy of Angélica by General James Wilkinson, in Prof. Urquhart's collection of family memorabilia, says that she was born in June, 1749, in The Hague. Jacob's death record for June 5, 1789, SLCFR, 1784–93, p. 20, lists him as forty-three years of age, but he testified that he was thirty-seven years old in 1785; *LHQ*, XXVIII (1945), 617. Benjamin said that he was thirty-five years old in 1785, *LHQ*, XXVII (1944), 862, but the St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 card in LSML says that he was forty at the time of his death, September 30, 1794; the card also says that he was a native of Spain, undoubtedly an error . . . either Benjamin's widow made the mistake, or there was a deliberate effort to mislead. Eleanora's death record, SLCFR, 1793–1803, p. 45, says that she was about forty-five at her death on April 8, 1796. Angélica's marriage contract and wedding record indicate that she was born in Amsterdam (L. Mazange, Book I, 778–79, NONA; SLCMR, I, 114, September 9, 1781), but this mistaken information may have been supplied by her second husband, Dr. Robert Dow, unless her parents lived briefly in Amsterdam; this is the only Monsanto family record referring to Amsterdam as its city of residence, although David Monsanto is recorded in his civil marriage record as a native of that city. Sara's death is registered in O.I.T.B., Gemeente Archief, The Hague, for January, 1736; she is therefore not the same as the Sara Rodrigues Monsanto who died in Curaçao, December 20, 1754 (Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, 508, no. 644). The births of two unnamed Monsanto children are recorded in Buurtboek 84, May, 1733, and May 25, 1734, Gemeente Archief. Ester's burial record is in O.I.T.B. 13, f. 1 g.

[25] Excerpt from *Livro de Termos, Rezolucoems do K. K. Honendal*, No. I, 73, entry for Teves 14, 5515 (1754/55), Gemeente Archief, The Hague.

[26] The reader is advised that Monsanto was a very common family name, but confusion is avoided to some degree by the realization that most Sephardic families had two names. Thus our Monsanto family was specifically the Rodrigues (or Rois/Roiz, a shortened form or abbreviation of Rodrigues) Monsanto clan; other Monsanto families in Holland and the Caribbean area were known by the names Abendana Monsanto, Gonzales Monsanto, Israel Monsanto, Mendes Monsanto, Molina Monsanto, Moreno Monsanto, and Nunes Monsanto. Strangely enough, a sister-in-law of David Dias Arias, Ester Yesurun, married an Isaac Monsanto, but he was of the Israel Monsanto family, and he died in Curaçao on September 12, 1758 (Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, 295, 503). The decision to leave The Hague may have been motivated not only by failure and poverty; it is possible that the Monsanto family was attracted to Curaçao because David may have had a sister who lived there. Judith Roiz Monsanto, the wealthy widow of Raphael Alvares Correa, of Curaçao, may have been David's sister. David is not mentioned in her will (Old Curaçao Archives, Algemeen Rijksarchief, Vol. 862, dated March 15, 1747), but certain legal documents in the Old Curaçao Archives index to Vol. 836 seem to indicate a family relationship. Unfortunately the documents themselves have been lost, but the index notations, viz. no. 531, power of attorney

from Judith Roiz Monsanto to David Roiz Monsanto; no. 532, a transaction of her son, Manuel van Raphael Alvares Correa, with David; no. 533, a transaction of Abigael Alvares Correa, her daughter, with David, seem to indicate more than business relations. Some data about Judith Monsanto Correa are in H. M. Alvares Correa, *The Alvares Correa Families of Curaçao and Brazil* (The Hague, 1966), 23–24, but no reference is made to her parentage or family. Judith married Correa in Amsterdam on June 19, 1716, but unfortunately no information about her family is given in the civil record of the wedding (Amsterdam Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst, D. T. & B, no. 710, p. 291) other than that her parents were deceased. If she was indeed David's sister, perhaps she helped David and his sons to establish themselves in business in Curaçao after their transfer from The Hague. This would explain how they so swiftly became men of some success.

[27] David's name occurs in a list of inhabitants of Curaçao who petitioned the directors of the Netherlands West India Company, in 1757, in regard to the capture of Dutch ships by the British: Arch. Neth. West India Company, 421, f. 381. Certificates for Isaac and Jacob to act as brokers in 1758 are listed in the Old Curaçao Archives, 836, numbers 171 and 238. Documents authorizing David and Jacob to act as legal representatives of other persons are in the Old Curaçao Archives, 836, no. 498 (January 15, 1758) and no. 502 (January 16, 1758); 875, no. 310 (October 19, 1759); and 877, (June 6, 24, 1760). All of these records are in the Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague. If the Jacob Monsanto referred to in these documents is a member of our Rodrigues Monsanto family, then he must have been born a good deal earlier than 1746. On the other hand, since no middle name is given, he may have been a member of one of the other Monsanto families, and unrelated to ours. The tradition that David Rodrigues Monsanto was attorney-general of Curaçao has flourished for more than one hundred years; it appeared in print most recently in Edwin Adams Davis, *The Story of Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, 1960), IV, 141.

[28] The last record in the Old Curaçao Archives, Algemeen Rijksarchief, relating to this Monsanto family is OAC 889, No. 250 (August 12, 1763), Manuel's assignment of his power of attorney to his father. OAC 889, no. 187 (June 16, 1763), describes Manuel still as a merchant in Curaçao. A reference to Britto as a member of the business partnership of Britto and Monsanto (Isaac?) is in OAC 887, April 28, 1760. Our knowledge of the activities of Joseph and Judith is very skimpy, due largely to the relatively small number of manuscript records from Saint-Domingue which survived the ravages of revolution, and are preserved in the Outre-Mer Section of the Archives Nationales in Paris. We know only that Joseph was living in the Limonade district of Sainte Suzanne in 1783, when he purchased from Françoise Nicholas Dibonne for 3,960 livres two plots of ground, a main house, an outbuilding and a family of slaves (Michel Not. Arch., August 27, 1783, February 6, 1784). Judith and Moïse Julien are referred to as the parents of Abraham Julien who was married on November 30, 1788, in a ten-page marriage agreement (Pardevani Not. Arch.) in which the elder Julien is said to have been a native of Curaçao. It is natural to wonder if Moïse and Judith first met in New Orleans. A man named Julien, of the firm of Julien and Rodriquez, from the Caribbean area, was in New Orleans for an extended period of time before September 30,

1765. He was involved in business dealings with the Monsanto firm which resulted in litigation (LSML, Doc. 65–A–79). There may have been other Monsanto relatives in Saint-Domingue. One Daniel Monsanto had already settled on the island by 1765, and was still doing business in 1779–80, but since his middle name is not given, he may belong to another Monsanto family (Cahen, *Les Juifs*, IV, 245; Bordier jeune, Not. Arch., January 23, 1779, May 10, December 26, 1780).

[29] The documentation of Manuel's partnership with Fastio is in Old Curaçao Archives, Algemeen Rijksarchief, 889, No. 187 (June 16, 1763): the claim of Johan Jacob Faesch upon them for 1,777 pesos. The information about the departure of Ester Rodrigues Fastio, then thirty-one years old, from Bordeaux, is in the Archives Départementales de la Gironde, Bordeaux, Fonds de l'Amirauté de Guyenne, 6B.52, f. 93-verso, dated April 21, 1757. It lists Ester erroneously as the wife of Abraham Rodrigues, while giving her name correctly as Ester Rodrigues Fastio, Fastio must have gone on ahead, decided it was worth staying in Curaçao, and then sent for Ester and the children, to be accompanied by her brother and the servant. The recording officer at the port probably assumed that the man heading the family on such a trip was the husband. The names and ages of the children in this document are Rachel (10), Sara (8), Judica (6), and Rebeca (2). Only Rachel's and Rebeca's birth records—with the names of the parents given correctly—have been located in the Bordeaux Archives Municipales' Register of Portuguese Jewish Births: Rachel, born February 14, 1747, is Act 194; Rebeca. born June 27, 1755, is Act 438. Fastio's death record, March 14, 1804, is in SLCFR, 1803–1807, f. 5. The earliest documented reference to Fastio in Louisiana which we have been able to locate is in *LHQ*, XXIII (1945), 620–21, dated May 24, 1766, an account of the sums involved in ventures by Fastio and Isaac Monsanto to Campeche and Saint-Domingue. Unfortunately, the Pointe Coupee business and real estate transaction records for the period prior to 1771 are lost, so we have no way of ascertaining when Fastio actually moved there from New Orleans.

[30] Terrage, *Last Years of French Louisiana*, 222–23.

[31] LSML, Doc. 66A/29, May 9, 1766.

[32] References to dealings with Gradis are in *LHQ*, XXIV (1941), 829–31, and in LSML, Doc. 8671–P (73090–2) and Doc. 8671 (73088). These relate to the years 1763 and 1764.

[33] Some of these locations are noted in *LHQ*, XXVIII (1945), 579 ff, the inventory of Monsanto financial papers which was made in 1785. This is based on some lists in the Cabildo which are badly damaged and poorly repaired. It is difficult to make sense out of the lists, especially the financial data, but the names of locations are clear. Other, scattered references appear: Saint-Domingue: *LHQ*, XXIV (1941), 219 (1761–62); 1192–93 (1763); St. Eustatius: LSML, 65A/78, 65A/79, relating to the disposition of a crate of merchandise worth 600 livres sent on consignment in 1763—this transaction brought one Rodriguez, probably another Jew, to New Orleans and Mobile for a brief time, after which he returned to the island.

[34] The inventory in *LHQ*, XXVIII (1945), 579 ff; also XXV (1942), 571–72.

[35] *LHQ*, XXVIII (1945), 579 ff; IX (1926), 330. One wonders if Monsanto, Britto or another member of the Monsanto firm could have been the "very worthy little French Jew" who took a letter from Kaskaskia, in the Illinois country, for George Morgan of Philadelphia, and promised to "send it by the First Vessel to New York or Philadelphia," to Morgan's partners, after he reached New Orleans. The letter was dated July 11, 1768. As we shall see, Monsanto was in the Illinois country the next year; he may well have been there in 1768 as well. Clarence W. Alvord and Clarence Edward Carter, *Trade and Politics 1767–1769* (Springfield, 1921), 349. One of Monsanto's correspondents was Pierre Laclede (c. 1724–1778), founder of St. Louis, who was in New Orleans in 1755–63 and probably knew Monsanto there. Dr. John Francis McDermott of St. Louis reports that the inventory of Laclede's possessions included "une liasse contenant sa correspondance avec isaac Monsanto," but the papers have not been preserved. Both men were extremely important traders, and it was natural for them to have had business contacts and dealings.

[36] This voyage resulted in many accusations and counter-complaints. The third member of the partnership, Captain Raoult, owner of the *San Juan Bautista*, was charged by the Monsanto correspondent in Vera Cruz, Don Francisco Xavier de Acosta, with many irregularities, among them the following: refusing to pay his share (three-eighteenths) of the expenses involved in obtaining a license (through bribery) to dispose of the cargo; tampering with cases of goods which belonged to a passenger on the ship, Don Carlos Ricardo, the recent chargé d'affaires of the Spanish at Pensacola; and failing to keep an accurate record of the cargo. D'Abbadie's share of the expenses and profits (which were expected to be very small because of the cost of the bribe and the duty on the imports) was five-eighteenths. Monsanto's share was ten-eighteenths; he was obviously the major factor in the venture. Ricardo was eventually fined for spreading malicious accusations against the Captain, and the dispute between Raoult and Monsanto was submitted to arbitration, the result of which does not appear in the extant records. The case was the occasion, however, for the first Louisiana imprint of Jewish interest. Monsanto's legal brief against Raoult was printed by Denis Braud, the official printer of the colony, in a twenty-page pamphlet which bears the superscription: "Réponse/ Du Sieur Monsanto & Compagnie, Armateurs du/ Senault le St. Jean Baptiste, Demandeurs./ Au Mémoire du Sieur Raoult, Capitaine Commandant ci-devant/ ledit Navire, Deffendeur." The pamphlet is dated July 16, 1765, and is signed by Doucet, Monsanto's attorney. One of the two known copies is in the Library of the University of Texas; it is No. 4—the fourth earliest piece of Louisiana printing listed in Douglas O. McMurtrie, *Early Printing in New Orleans 1764–1810* (New Orleans, 1929), 20, 88. D'Abbadie apparently left the proceeds of the voyage on deposit with Monsanto. In 1783, the Governor's widow, Maria Magdalena Harrenger Dumesnil Rolland, was still trying to collect the money from the syndics who had charge of Monsanto's property (*LHQ*, XXI [1938], 330–32); the claim had been dragging on since 1771. The data about the voyage are in LSML, Doc. 65A, no date, letter from de Acosta, Vera Cruz; Doc. 65A/4, January 5, 1765, receipt by Francisco Madera Paragero for 3,000 pesos to be delivered to Monsanto, in connection with a cargo of wood loaded on the ship

for its return voyage; Doc. 65A/6, January 5, 1765, giving details of the bribe; Doc. 65A/5, letter of de Acosta, January 25, 1765, listing further complaints. The exoneration of Raoult is summarized in *Publications of the Louisiana Historical Society*, VIII (1914–15), 15. D'Abbadie referred to the venture briefly in his journal (Terrage, *Last Years of French Louisiana*, 333): "The sieur Monsanto, a merchant in this colony, having presented a request to me covering plans for an expedition to Vera Cruz to import from there some of the European merchandise now superabundant in that colony, I have all the more readily given him my consent for the reason that a unique opportunity arose here that supplied a pretext for this expedition to a Spanish possession. Don Carlos Antonio Ricardo having been sent away from [Pensacola] by the British government, without being given time to await the arrival of a ship to transport him home, has just arrived here. . . ."

[37] As examples, canvas, cordage, sails, wine, handkerchiefs, for a cargo to Saint-Domingue, in association with Isaac Fastio: *LHQ*, XXVIII (1945), 620; guns, *LHQ*, XXIII (1940), 599; lumber, LSML, Doc. 68 42, March 28, 1768; indigo, sugar and lime, *LHQ*, XXVIII (1945), 616; bullocks, *LHQ*, XXVIII (1945), 590.

[38] LSML, Doc. 68/102, March 28, 1768; Doc. 68/102A, May 21; Doc. 68/128, June 4. Other slave transactions are reported in *LHQ*, XXVI (1943), 256; LSML, Doc. 68/41, March 28, 1768.

[39] *LHQ*, VII (1924), 84 ff; Régine Hubert-Robert, *L'Histoire Merveilleuse de La Louisiane Française* (New York, 1941), x.

[40] *LHQ*, XXVIII (1945), 618–19. The building measured fifty-eight feet by one hundred and twenty, was built of brick, and was appraised at 3,400 pesos in 1785, but brought only 2,100 at auction because it had been neglected for years.

[41] LSML, Doc. 1957, September 10, 1766; Doc. 66/A107, November 7, 1766; Doc. 66A/133, November 8, 1766; Doc. 1982, November 8, 1766. Baptiste Manuel Monsanto is referred to in Doc. 66, September 9, 1766, not relating to the Lomère case. Robles was probably Jewish, though we have been unable to identify him with any precision. Eleanora, Jacob, Manuel and Benjamin may have been in New Orleans in 1766, but were not called to testify in this case probably because they were not present during Lomère's attack on Robles.

[42] *LHQ*, IX (1926), 329 f. The document itself in the Cabildo safe is undated, but obviously stems from the period after 1769. It reports that the inheritance amounted to 835 pesos, which was sent to New Orleans in merchandise which Isaac sold for their account for 1,095 pesos, which in turn was left on deposit with him. As we have indicated, the fact that the inheritance came to them in cargo probably proves that David did not die in New Orleans.

[43] *LHQ*, VII (1924), 732–33, records a mortgage given by Monsanto to Nicholas Adam in 1766.

[44] N. M. Miller Surrey, *The Commerce of Louisiana during the French Régime, 1699–1763* (New York, 1961), 107.

[45] LSML, Doc. 359, May 17, 1767, September 28, 1773; *WFP*, Vol. 602, pp. 389, 398–406, contains the tangled record of this case.

[46] John Fitzpatrick Letter Book, Manuscript Division, New York Public Library, April 13, June 10, June 26, July 12, July 17, August 4, September 2, 1769. Monsanto may thus have been the first Jew known to us by name to have visited, traded or worked in the "Illinois Country" in this early period, even if he was not the "little French Jew" of 1768 referred to in note 35 above. Eastern Jews like Joseph Simon and Levy Andrew Levy of Lancaster, and David Franks and the Gratz brothers of Philadelphia, played an active role in trading operations and land speculation beyond the Alleghenies beginning in the 1760's. After the occupation of present day Illinois and Missouri by the British, these Pennsylvania Jews participated in various schemes for the exploitation of the commercial potential of the area, but so far as we know, none of them actually traveled beyond Pittsburgh. Their interests were represented by partners who penetrated to the upper Louisiana territory. Edwin Wolf 2nd and Maxwell Whiteman, *The History of the Jews of Philadelphia from Colonial Times to the Age of Jackson* (Phila., 1957), 65–75, 177–80, is the best available summary of data about these merchants. The first permanent Jewish resident in the Illinois-Missouri area appears to have been Isaac Levy who had settled in Cahokia by February, 1780, at the latest. Levy was a merchant trader whose knowledge of medicine seems to have earned him some repute as a physician. There are many references to Levy's activities during the period 1780–88, in the published Cahokia records: Clarence W. Alvord, *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library, Vol. II, Virginia Series, Vol. I, Cahokia Records, 1788–1790* (Springfield, 1907). It is possible also that Jewish traders came down from Canada to do business in the Illinois territory; one manuscript which has survived in the New Orleans Cabildo safe (brought to my attention by Winston De Ville), Sp. Doc. 1842, Box 51, records the presence in Kaskaskia of one Simon Nathan some time during the period 1781–88. He may be identical with the man of the same name who was in Montreal in 1769 (*JRBD*, 133). John Hays, who settled in Cahokia in 1793, served as sheriff of St. Clair County for a long period of time (*JRBD*, 58). Ezekiel Block was in the Cape Girardeau District by 1803, and members of the Philipson family settled in St. Louis by 1807 (Donald I. Makovsky, *The Philipsons, The First Jewish Settlers in St. Louis, 1807–1858* [St. Louis, 1958]). The Jewish history of the Kaskaskia/ Cahokia/ Fort de Chartres/ St. Genevieve settlements requires further diligent investigation. No shred of evidence has been found to support the fantastic tale of Jews who were tortured and burned at the stake by the French in the Illinois country as published in the *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, October 1, 1899, and unworthily reprinted by Max J. Kohler, "Some Jewish Factors in the Settlement of the West," *PAJHS* No. 16 (1907), 33–35.

[47] Clarence W. Alvord and Clarence Edward Carter, *The Critical Period, 1763–1765* (Springfield, 1915), 423 ff. Alvord and Carter spell the name "Mansanto."

[48] Ms. French copy in the Gage Papers, Clements Library, University of Michigan, photostat in AJA, docketed on the reverse, "Copy of a letter from Lieut. Alexr. Maclellan 34th Regiment to Monsr. Monsanto Novr. 10 1766." Another sheet accompanying this document certifies that "I received this as a Copy of a Letter to Mr. Monsanto and as near as I can recollect, it corresponded exactly with that produced to me before by Mr. McLellan from which this was reported to me to have been Copied. Pensacola 29th March 1767." The signature is H. W. Bayles.

The docketed date is, of course, in error; the negotiations were in November of 1765. But the copy may have been made in 1766 in connection with an investigation of the expedition, or, more likely, during the court-martial of Major Robert Farmar on charges of misappropriation of funds and other fiscal offenses, of which more later.

[49] Contemporary translation (original French letter not present), Gage Papers, photostat in AJA.

[50] Peter J. Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile* (Boston, 1897), 189; Cecil Johnson, *British West Florida 1763–1783* (New Haven, 1943), 50 ff; LSML, Doc. P. 80914–24, extract of the session of the Superior Council of June 7, 1766; *WFP*, Vol. 625, pp. 235–57, and Vol. 632, pp. 102–108, which contain the text of Farmar's petition and the minutes of the Council of West Florida meetings on February 20, 26, 28, 1765.

[51] Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile*, 189. Governor Johnstone had already written to General Gage about this episode in a letter dated January 2, 1765, Mobile: "Monsieur D'Abbadie wrote to Major Farmar requesting the Loan of some Flower [sic] for his troops. The Major wrote back he could not spare any of His Majesty's Provisions, nevertheless the Stores were almost drained, and the Flower sent by one Pallachio, a Jew, to be sold at New Orleans. But D'Abbadie had the spirit rather to give sixteen Dollars, a Barrel, to Mr. Irving, than ten to Pallachio, tho' they offered it at that price." *WFP*, Vol. 574, p. 303. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to discover the court-martial records in order to ascertain what answer Farmar and de Palacios offered to this accusation.

[52] *WFP*, Vol. 601, pt. 1, p. 55; Items 124, 125 and 126, ms. Judah Hays Receipt Book, Virginia Historical Society. On June 1, 1764, Solomons had written Hays from Pensacola to give £30 to Samuel Israel, who was already in New York (item 120), and on the same day he ordered Hays to deliver £6 to his brother Haym (item 121). This marks Haym's first appearance in relation to British West Florida; this Haym Solomons is not to be confused with the Revolutionary War patriot of the same name, as was done by Harold Korn in his article "Receipt Book of Judah and Moses M. Hays, Commencing January 12, 1763, and Ending July 18, 1766," *PAJHS* No. 28 (1922), 213–29. During this same period, Alexander instructed Hays to turn over another £250 to Jonas Phillips "an Insolvent Debtor" (item 123).

[53] *WFP*, Vol. 625, p. 225; Vol. 632, p. 98; Clinton N. Howard, *The British Development of West Florida, 1763–1769* (Berkeley, 1947), 59, 66. Howard prints a chart showing the location of the lots. Another building lot, number 76, and garden lot number 71, were granted in 1767 to Samuel Judah, but this is the only reference to this person in the entire corpus of West Florida Papers, and it has not been possible definitely to identify him with any member of the various Jewish Judah families then in North America. Any one of several Jews bearing that name, of the correct age, might have been in Pensacola in 1767 (*WFP*, Vol. 602, pp. 308–309, 326; Howard, *The British Development of West Florida*, 72; *JRBD*, 81).

[54] *WFP*, Vol. 625, p. 29; Vol. 632, p. 134.

[55] *WFP*, Vol. 574, p. 428; Vol. 586, pp. 330–31, 625; Vol. 601, pt. 2, pp. 312–13; Vol. 632, pp. 136, 147. The grant of 500 acres, originally awarded on January 7,

1766, was confirmed on March 2, 1767; it included "an old Spanish plantation about three miles to the Eastward of Oyster Point" (*WFP*, Vol. 584, pt. 2, p. 429; Vol. 532, p. 193). *PAJHS* No. 27 (1920), 248; Fondo Floridas, Legajo 9, No. 27, f. 16–17, Archives of Cuba. According to Dr. Isaac Emmanuel, Isaac Mendes had been in Curaçao in 1760–61, when he disposed of a plantation, and when his daughter Ester died (the daughter's death is noted in *Precious Stones*, 518, no. 1154; other references to this man are in Dr. Emmanuel's manuscript history of the Jews of Curaçao). The same or another Isaac Mendes was involved in the Manuel Monsanto-Isaac Fastio venture of June, 1763, which marks their last appearance in the Curaçoan records (see note 29 above). It would not be a surprise if these references were to four different men bearing the same name, or if they were all to one man. Mendes is a common Sephardic name, and colonial Jews were remarkably mobile, seeking opportunities throughout the area. That one man should appear consecutively in Jamaica, Albany, Curaçao, New Orleans and Pensacola would not be unusual.

[56] *WFP*, Vol. 602, pp. 116–21, 218–22; Strachan and Co. Letter-book, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, 17b. Other more transient Jews probably came to British West Florida from time to time. One of these was Rodriguez, of the firm of Julien and Rodriguez, from one of the Caribbean islands, who was in Mobile in 1763 or 1765, after doing business with the Monsanto firm in New Orleans (LSML, Doc. 65–A–79). Members of the Gratz consortium did not go as far from Pennsylvania as the Gulf ports, but two of their agents, Cornelius Bradford and Cornelius Tucker, were in Mobile and New Orleans in 1766 (William V. Byars, *B. and M. Gratz, Merchants in Philadelphia, 1754–1798* [Jefferson City, Mo., 1916], 1766).

[57] *WFP*, Vol. 623, pp. 43–45.

[58] Ms. account and receipt, April 28, 1765, British PRO, Treasury I, Bundle 440, p. 110, copies in LC and AJA; *WFP*, Vol. 575, pp. 1–4; Vol. 583, pp. 33–43, reprinted in Dunbar Rowland, *Mississippi Provincial Archives, 1763–1766: English Dominion* (Nashville, 1911), I, p. 306.

[59] Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile*, 235–36; *WFP*, Vol. 602, pp. 55–56, November 28, 1765, filed in Pensacola, January 8, 1766; *WFP*, Vol. 615, pp. 226–70; *WFP*, Vol. 577, p. 78; *LHQ*, XXIII (1940), 55–68. For Montberault, who lived at "Lis Loy" when he was an official of the French government in Mobile, and served the British for a brief time as adviser on Indian affairs, see *The Memoire Justificatif of the Chevalier Montault de Monberaut . . .*, Translation and Introduction by Milo B. Howard, Jr., and Robert R. Rea (University, Ala., 1965).

[60] *LHQ*, X (1927), 148–51. The transcriber of the document misunderstood the names of the partners and thought that the name of the firm, Israel, Solomons, de Palacios, was the name of one person, hence "Israel Solomon de Palacios!"

[61] It has been impossible to identify him with any assurance, although he was probably the Samuel Israel who appears in the records of Shearith Israel Congregation of New York in 1770, and was active in its affairs in 1783–86: *PAJHS*, No. 21 (1913), 107, 142, 148–49, 159. A Samuel Israel also appears in Isaac Moses'

receipt book, in New York City, on September 1, 1786; copy in AJA. It was probably the same Samuel Israel of New York City who, in 1786, was identified as the brother of Joseph Israel Levy who was living in Calcutta, India, in 1772, whose mother Rosey Israel was still living "in Houndsdetch near algate London," and who had other brothers and sisters living in London. If so, this Samuel Israel appears to have returned to London during the late 1780's. Leo Hershkowitz, *Wills of Early New York Jews* (*1704–1799*) (New York, 1967), 161–64, 186–88.

[62] *WFP*, Vol. 580, pp. 171, 282; Vol. 595, pt. 3, pp. 784–815.

[63] *WFP*, Vol. 612, pp. 236–41; *WFP*, Vol. 615, pp. 477–79, 480–85; NCC, Book D, 539.

[64] Barnett A. Elzas, *The Jews of South Carolina* (Phila., 1905), 91, lists him as one of fifteen Jews among 300 Charlestonians who signed a petition addressed to General Lincoln. On August 4, 1785, he married the widow of Nathan Harriss of St. Eustatius, in Charleston; the press report identified him as a "factor and grocer . . . of the Portuguese nation:" Elzas, *Jewish Marriage Notices . . . of Charleston* (New York, 1917), x. His son by a previous marriage, Joseph de Palacios, Jr., was old enough to be listed in city records separately from his father: Elzas, *South Carolina*, 278. In 1786, the father participated as an important communal leader in the laying of the cornerstones of the wall around the new Jewish cemetery in Charleston: Elzas, *The Old Jewish Cemeteries* (Charleston, 1903), 103. Charles Reznikoff and Uriah Z. Engelman, *The Jews of Charleston* (Phila., 1950), 37, refers to the oath of allegiance.

[65] Elzas, *South Carolina*, 98. He is listed as a vendue master in the Charleston City Directory for 1801. The Mesne Conveyance Office of Charleston has the deed in Book M6, p. 190, of the sale by Solomons and a partner, on February 2, 1795, of a plantation in Christ Church Parish. Haym's will is in the Charleston County Probate Court, Will Book D, 164, copy in AJA. There is an Alexander Solomons who appears in the Charleston congregational records for 1802 (Elzas, *South Carolina*, 139), but it seems unlikely that he was our man, since he was not referred to in Haym's will of the previous year.

[66] Another Jew whose business visit to New Orleans was recorded was David Mendes France, probably a member of the well-known family which ultimately gave a Premier to the home country. Mendes France was in New Orleans in May, 1765, in a dual capacity, as captain of the vessel *Le Magnifique*, and as mortgagee of another ship, the *Saint Pierre*, which was also in port. He and the *Saint Pierre*'s captain, Pierre L'Eglis, appeared in court to establish the conditions of the loan—that it was for twenty-five percent of the value of the ship, and that losses or profits were to be shared proportionately by the two men. The division of profits and the repayment of the loan were to take place after the ship's return to Saint-Domingue. *LHQ*, XXIV (1941), 215–16.

[67] *LHQ*, XXIV (1941), 221–26.

[68] Doucet, Monsanto's attorney in 1765, was one of the rebels. He was sentenced to ten years in prison and confiscation of property but was freed within a year:

David K. Bjork, "Alexander O'Reilly and the Spanish Occupation of Louisiana, 1769–1770," *New Spain and the Anglo-American West* (*Historical Contributions Presented to Herbert Eugene Bolton*) (Lancaster, Pa., 1932), I, 172.

[69] John Fitzpatrick Letter Book, September 1, 7 (letters to Alexander McIntosh and Robert Barrows), 11, 20, 21, 1769 (letters to John Bradley and McIntosh). Fitzpatrick's reports help to clarify the daily tightening of the noose; the writer has been unable to discover any other sources which can cast light on the situation of the merchants who were affected by O'Reilly's orders. Indeed, neither Fitzpatrick's nor any other British merchant's name appears in any O'Reilly dispatches or reports which we have seen.

[70] This is the only time that the name Mets appears in reference to Monsanto and de Britto. The name is nowhere to be found in the records of the Monsanto commercial affairs which have been published in *LHQ* or which we have been able to examine in the safe at the Cabildo, or in any other records. Mets, or rather Metz, was the name of eighteenth century Ashkenazic Jews in France who obviously took their name from that of the city. The closest non-Jewish name which has been found in Louisiana records is Meitz (Susanne), which occurs in the SLCMR, 1731–33; *NOG*, September, 1966, p. 303. Mrs. H. L. Forsyth has been good enough to search the other marriage registers for a recurrence of the name, unsuccessfully. Another name which may be Metz, Mitz or Matz (Anne Barbe), is recorded in the marriage register of the "Little Red Church" at Destrehan, for 1739 (*NOG*, January, 1966, p. 52). It has occurred to the writer that the name could conceivably be a mistake for Mendes—perhaps the ubiquitous Isaac Mendes.

[71] Nothing specific is known about Britto even though he had been associated with the Monsanto family since early 1757, first in Curaçao, then, after 1763, in New Orleans. We have discovered no separate reference to him; every time his name is mentioned, he is connected with the Monsanto firm. Britto, or de Britto, was a fairly common Sephardic name in Great Britain, and in Curaçao and other Caribbean settlements, but it is a curious coincidence that one Moseh de Souza Britto was a member of Honen Dal Congregation in The Hague at the time of its merger with Beth Jacob (Pimentel, *Portugesche Israelieten*, 81). Perhaps Manuel de [Souza?] Britto joined the Monsanto family when they left The Hague. Equally peculiar is Manuel de Britto's total disappearance from view immediately following the expulsion. He did not go with the Monsanto family to Pensacola, or at least his name appears in none of the British West Florida Papers.

[72] Lawrence Kinnaird, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley 1765–1794* (Washington, 1949) (Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1945), pt. 1, xxi–xxiii, 96–99, quoting AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 80–1–7, October 17, 1769, No. 3, transcription in LC, p. 2. Kinnaird misspells the name "*N*onsanto." Among the other merchants who were expelled were the Durand brothers who had been involved with Monsanto in the order for eighty slaves in 1768.

[73] Kinnaird, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, pt. 1, p. 103.

[74] *WFP*, Vol. 587, pt. 1, pp. 13 f. Captain Philip Pittman, one of the instigators of the charges against Major Farmar, wrote in his 1770 memoir that ". . . other

orders were given out, by which all the English subjects, protestants, and Jews of every nation, were enjoined to depart from the province of Louisiana, and all commerce prohibited, except with old Spain and her islands. . . ." Frank Heywood Hodder, ed., *Pittman's Mississippi Settlements* (reprint of the 1770 edition) (Cleveland, 1906), 55.

[75] AGI, Santo-Domingo, legajo 80–1–7, labeled October 17, 1769, No. 3, typescript in LC. These words are translated with only slightly different variations in Kinnaird, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, pt. 1, p. 103, and Bjork, "Alexander O'Reilly," 173.

[76] AGI, Cuba, legajo 188, reel 2, LC, brought to our attention by Winston De Ville.

[77] According to Fitzpatrick, some of these went back to France (Letter Book, May 31, 1770).

[78] *LHQ*, IX (1926), 330; VII (1924), 732. Forstall had been associated with Monsanto in a business deal in 1768 and acted as his security: LSML, Doc. 68/41. It goes far beyond our purpose to attempt to evaluate the activities of all the merchants who were expelled, but this would be an important and revealing investigation.

[79] *LHQ*, IX (1926), 329–35; XXVIII (1945), 579–91, 615–29.

[80] Herbert Eugene Bolton, *Athanase de Mézières and the Louisiana-Texas Frontier, 1768–1780* (Cleveland, 1914), I, 151–52.

[81] In anticipation of just such conditions as these, Whitehall had instructed Gov. Browne on July 17, 1769, that he should "avoid all Appearances whatever of inviting or encouraging [the] Migration [of French settlers who objected to Spanish rule]. But, as all His Majesty's Colonies have ever been open to Strangers of every Country, who have been desirous of settling therein, you are not to refuse reasonable Protection to such persons, as may voluntarily and without Invitation come from New Orleans to West Florida." *WFP*, Vol. 586, pp. 151–52. Obviously the British were hopeful that they would be able to add new settlers to their thinly populated Province through the harshness of O'Reilly's edicts.

[82] *WFP*, Vol. 612, pp. 92–94. The deed was not recorded until August 19, 1770. This may, therefore, mean that the interest on the debt was back-dated, and that Isaac had not arrived in Pensacola quite as early as January. Monsanto still owed Waugh £90, 8½ pence of the debt in December, 1771; he had apparently sent a bill of exchange for that sum to London, but it was protested, and now he had to mortgage another slave, Fanchonet, to Waugh's agents, not only for the principal sum, but also for interest and damages.

[83] *WFP*, Vol. 612, p. 48. George Urquhart and John Falconer were the witnesses.

[84] AGI, Cuba, legajo 188–1, no. 48, quoted in Bolton, *Athanase de Mézières*, I, pp. 177–78.

[85] Manuel did possibly buy some tobacco in Natchitoches the next year: on July 28, 1771, "253 twists of tobacco of Natchitoches, belonging to Jacob Moncento [*sic*]" were in dispute and were sold at auction in Pointe Coupee (Book 1771–72,

Doc. no. 437, Pointe Coupee Parish records, New Roads, La., brought to our attention by Winston De Ville).

[86] Fitzpatrick Letter Book, November 7, 1769; May 31, 1770.

[87] Fitzpatrick Letter Book, August 30, 1770; February 7, 1771; July 7 (a specific reference to Jacob), October 22, 1773; February 11, 1778; January 26, July 28, 1781. The final reference to the Monsanto brothers in Manchac in 1781 reflects the loss of commercial significance for the settlement. The Spanish had captured it from the British in September, 1779 as one phase of their participation in the Revolutionary War, a very convenient excuse. Manchac's major significance was as a center of illegal trade between the British and their French and Spanish neighbors.

[88] *WFP*, Vol. 612, pp. 206–207, 218–21, 258–61; Vol. 613, pp. 63–65, 147–48; Gage Mss., 237–39. Monsanto said that he was enclosing a letter for General Gage with this message, but that letter cannot be found.

[89] *LHQ*, XXVIII (1945), 586. Some of this information is from Prof. Kenneth Trist Urquhart, a direct descendant of Angélica and George Urquhart, Dean and Associate Professor of History at St. Mary's Dominican College in New Orleans. Prof. Urquhart has been extremely generous in sharing all of his knowledge of Urquhart family traditions, and the results of his own research into his family's background. The presumption is that the wedding was performed by the Anglican chaplain at Pensacola.

[90] Details of the marriage contract in *LHQ*, XVII (1934), 393. "J. Monsanto" is listed as a witness. This was probably Joseph, the brother who lived in Saint-Domingue, though it may also have been Jacob. Charles André's date and place of birth are given in Davis, *The Story of Louisiana*, IV, 141.

[91] *LHQ*, IX (1926), 329 gives a brief summary. These quotations are from a translation of the original document, in the Cabildo safe, made available by Mrs. Connie Griffith of the Tulane University Library.

[92] Fitzpatrick Letter Book, December 26, 1773.

[93] *WFP*, Vol. 613, pp. 392–93; Garic, Book for 1774, pp. 234, 238, NONA.

[94] The 1774 data are in *WFP*; the June 10, 1775, letter is in the Oliver Pollock Papers, LC, all provided by Prof. Urquhart.

[95] Pointe Coupee Parish, Office of the Clerk of Court, New Roads, La., Colonial Records, Book for 1778, pp. 918 ff, summarized by Winston De Ville.

[96] Perdomo, Book VIII, 408, 481, September 6, 15, 1786, NONA. Clara was probably the daughter of the Selomoh Motta whose wife Ribca Hana died on December 30, 1765 (Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, 506); if so, she was a few years older than the New Orleans record indicates.

[97] Quiñones, Book V, 107 ff (the pages are misnumbered, but there are ten), February 15, 1787; Perdomo, Book IX, 118, February 21, 1787; Book XIV, 374, July 24, 1789, NONA.

[98] SLCMR, 2, p. 52, February 27, 1787.

[99] Roger Baudier, *The Catholic Church in Louisiana* (New Orleans, 1939), 210–12, 217–18.

[100] Samuel S. Forman, *Narrative of a Journey down the Ohio and Mississippi in 1789–90*, With a Memoir and Illustrative Notes by Lyman C. Draper (Cincinnati, 1888), 56. Forman makes it abundantly clear that the Monsantos enjoyed the highest possible social position in Natchez: they, and a few other "families in town and country, formed our principal associates," together with "Governor Gayoso, [who] was very affable and pleasant. . . ."

[101] *LHQ*, XXVII (1944), 86.

[102] SLCFR, 1793–1803, p. 16. This death record contains the correct information that Benjamin was born in The Hague; the tombstone, on the other hand, as transcribed in LSML, reads "Don. Benj. Monsanto, native of Spain, husband of Dona Clara Motau/ son of Don David Monsanto and Dona Ester Levis/ died Sept. 30, 1794 age 40." Don Francisco Gutiérrez de Arroyo, royal inspector in Natchez, wrote to Governor Gayoso: ". . . after nine days of difficulty on the river I arrived here day before yesterday in good health though unable to go out today because the short shoes have crippled my feet so much that I was unable to attend the funeral of Don. Benjamin Monsanto which took place this afternoon, and he died before I was able to see him since I arrived;" AGI, Cuba, legajo 47, brought to my attention by Dr. Jack Holmes.

[103] Pedesclaux, Book XXII, 860, September 29, 1794, NONA.

[104] NCC, E, 481–82, records the award of property which had belonged to Jacob Monsanto, to Scott as the husband of Clara, on March 30, 1804. Very little information is available about Scott. He was apparently new in the Natchez area when his brother Robert died, October 21, 1796, for Robert's will specifies a legacy for William so that he might become established in the town. A Rev. McLennan was a brother-in-law of Robert Scott; this probably indicates that the family were Protestants. NCC, Book C, 433–34. Scott's chief appearances in the Natchez legal records relate to his claims on behalf of his wife for lands which had been owned jointly by Benjamin and Jacob: NCC, Unrecorded Land Claims, 565–66. Scott had died before August 24, 1814, if he was the William Scott whose heirs owed taxes on 400 acres in Wilkinson County, Miss. (Natchez *Mississippi Republican*, January 18, 1815).

[105] SLCFR, 1793–1803, p. 108. The child, whose name is not revealed in this record, was buried in New Orleans on April 6, 1802.

[106] SLCFR, 1820–24, p. 61; LHML cemetery card for Clara's age, probably understated.

[107] SLCBR, 3, p. 69b; the child was born on March 28, 1797, and named for her mother, Marie-Eulalie Tessier; the father was Pierre Roques, "a native of [Montauban] in the Province of Languedoc." SLCFR, 1793–1803, p. 45.

[108] Francisco Broutin, Book VII, 83, NONA; SLCFR, 1784–93, p. 31.

[109] *LHQ*, XXVIII (1945), 617.

[110] St. Gabriel Church Baptismal Book, reference supplied through the kindness of Mrs. Elizabeth Becker Gianelloni.

[111] SLCFR, 1784–93, p. 20.

[112] Francisco Broutin, Book XI, 56, March 8, 1792; Ximenez, Book for 1795, p. 112, February 23, 1795, NONA.

[113] SLCFR, 1793–1803, p. 32.

[114] Leonard V. Huber and Guy F. Bernard, *To Glorious Immortality, The Rise and Fall of the Girod Street Cemetery* . . . (New Orleans, 1961), 36; *The Reminiscences of Bishop Chase* (New York, 1844), I, 73; reference to the prayer book is from Prof. Urquhart; B. Lafon, *Annuaire Louisianais* (New Orleans, 1808), 191.

[115] Will Book No. 4, pp. 15–17, NOPC.

[116] Huber and Bernard, *To Glorious Immortality*, 36; photograph on p. 20.

[117] The stone is in the possession of Dean Kenneth Trist Urquhart. The quotations from the eulogy are on pp. 3b, 4a and 4b of the mss., which Prof. Urquhart has loaned to the Mss. Division, Tulane University Library. One wonders if the General knew that Angélica's family was Jewish. He refers on p. 2a to Isaac's banishment as follows: "Mr. Isaac Monsanto was on a frivolous pretext banished from Louisiana and sought refuge in the then British Province of West Florida at Pensacola."

[118] SLCMR, 1, p. 114; the document does not contain any reference to a "public abjuration of their errors" as in the case of Benjamin's marriage record, and here the wedding joined together a Jewess and a Protestant! There was, of course, no way in which a Protestant could be married in New Orleans, other than in a Roman Catholic ceremony.

[119] St. Francis Church Register II, 221, Dept. of the Archives, Diocese of Baton Rouge, through the kindness of Mrs. Drouet W. Vidrine and Mrs. Elizabeth Becker Gianelloni; SLCMR, 2, p. 37, May 19, 1785. The marriage record gives the bride's name as Isavel, which is probably identical with the Elizabeth of the baptismal document. The baptismal certificate is the only colonial church record thus far discovered in which reference is made to a person as a Jew. Since Elizabeth's parents were not listed as being present at the baptismal service, as was customary, we may assume that they did not become converts. She died on February 27, 1796 (SLCFR, 1793–1803, p. 30); in this document her husband's name is given as "Jorge Roquembourg!"

[120] The earliest date is July 24, 1772; other dates are November 2, 1772; March 3, September 27, 1773; December 9, 1777. *WFP*, Vol. 610, pp. 125–27; Vol. 630, pp. 7b, 80, 140, 141b; Vol. 634, pt. 1, pp. 5, 68, 90, 148. Topham had probably come to West Florida shortly before the first application for a land grant.

[121] Fitzpatrick Letter Book, December 19, 1776; July 3, 1777; October 14, 1780.

[122] Pointe Coupee Parish, Office of the Clerk of Court, Colonial Records, Book 1778, p. 918.

[123] Judice Notarial Records, Donaldsonville, Ascension Parish Courthouse, Book A, 279–318, summarized by Prof. Urquhart.

[124] *NOG*, September, 1965, p. 362.

[125] Mazange, Book I, 408, June 9, 1780, NONA.

[126] Perdomo, Book IV, 412, September 22, 1784; Book V, 106, February 5, 1785, NONA.

[127] Francisco Broutin, Book VII, 83, December 8, 1790, NONA.

[128] *LHQ*, XVII (1934), 391–94. Benjamin Monsanto paid the expenses of the suit. The case was not finally decided until 1781. There are 55 pages of documentation relating to the suit, numbered 561-A, in the Cabildo safe.

[129] Mazange, Book IV, 784, August 8, 1781, NONA.

[130] Pedesclaux, Book XXIII, 457, May 28, 1795, NONA; SLCMR, 2, p. 101. Pierre Roques was a man of some substance and repute. In 1803 he signed the address of welcome to Laussat by citizens of New Orleans (reference to Archives Nationales, Colonies [Paris], C^{13} A^{52} f 200, from René J. LeGardeur, Jr.)

[131] *LHQ*, XX (1937), 364–65; *NOG*, June, 1962, p. 309; Davis, *The Story of Louisiana*, IV, 141; Dunbar Rowland, ed., *Official Letter Books of W. C. C. Claiborne, 1801–1816* (Jackson, Miss., 1917), VI, 252–53; 388–90 (Tessier's answer to Claiborne's for-the-record inquiry about the preparations for the defense of New Orleans prior to the British invasion). Davis, IV, 141, gives details of the civic activities of Eleanora's descendants in and around New Orleans.

[132] There are many references to Urquhart in the *WFP*. In regard to land grants and purchases, Vol. 591, under dates December 2, 1772, May 5, 1773; Vol. 603, No. 116; Vol. 607, pp. 10, 175 ff; Vol. 612, pp. 430–44; Vol. 613, pp. 315–17; Vol. 626, pp. 14b, 34–35; Vol. 630, pp. 9b, 78b, 87b; Vol. 632, pp. 159, 219, 235; Vol. 634, pt. 1, pp. 7, 43, 90, 98; see also Howard, *The British Development of West Florida*, 72, 90, 98; *NOG*, March, 1964, p. 178; June, 1965, pp. 268–69; September, 1965, p. 364. In connection with public service, *WFP*, Vol. 589, p. 115; Vol. 590, pp. 251–53; Vol. 591, p. 239; Vol. 634, pt. 1, p. 206; see also Mss. "Record of His Majesty's Sign Manuals or Book of Commissions," begun November 1767, copy in LC, 44. On business matters, *WFP*, Vol. 612, p. 594; Oliver Pollock Papers, LC, under dates February 25, April 3, May 5 and 17, 1775. The records of the Urquhart inventory are in the Judice Notarial Records, Ascension Parish Courthouse, Donaldsonville, which also contain many other references to George. Much of this material has been provided by Prof. Urquhart, with whom the writer has reviewed the Urquhart and Monsanto story. The quotation about his death is from a letter which George's mother wrote to Angélica, undated, in the Urquhart Papers, which also refers to the possibility of Angélica's going to Scotland.

[133] *LHQ*, XIV (1931), 132; see also XXII (1939), 891; Garic book for 1779, p. 603, December 16, 1779, NONA.

[134] Mazange, Book III, 377–80; Book IV, 778–79, September 22, 1781, NONA; SLCMR, 1, p. 114.

[135] Details of Dow's medical career are in John Duffy, *The Rudolph Matas History of Medicine in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, 1958), I, 143 ff, 163, 169, 181, 270 (the quotation from Gayarré), 306 (Claiborne's tribute), 312 and 491. The Claiborne offer is in *Official Letters*, II, 374, dated October 10, 1804; it is also noted in Clarence Edwin Carter, *The Territorial Papers of the United States*, Vol. IX, *The Territory of Orleans, 1803–1812* (Washington, 1940), 277, 346, where Dow is mentioned as "highly respected." At the same time the Urquhart brothers were considered for the post of Federal Marshall (308). Carter, 987, 1014, refers to Dow's service on the boards of the Charity Hospital and University, both in New Orleans. Duffy reports that Dow was a founder of the College of Orleans, and president of the first New Orleans medical society, 1822. Dow testified in regard to his activities, "I arrived in this country from the West Indies in September 1776. I settled in the practice in New Orleans in 1778, and was shortly after appointed by General Galvez, physician to the hospital. I continued in this station til the year 1785, when I left the country, and returned in 1786, since which time I have resided here as a practitioner. I have also during the said period, been consulted by the Spanish government, as to the causes and means of arresting certain diseases which have appeared in their hospitals. . . ." Deposition by Dow, August 23, 1810, printed in *Memoirs of My Own Times By General James Wilkinson* (Phila., 1816), II, Appendix CIX, unnumbered page.

[136] Wilkinson, *Memoirs*, II, 109; eulogy ms., 4b; René J. Le Gardeur, Jr., *The First New Orleans Theatre, 1792–1803* (New Orleans, 1963), 18; *NOG*, March 1964, p. 117.

[137] Angélica's will is in Will Book No. IV, 15–17; NOPC. The quoted letter from Dow to the boys is dated New Orleans, June 17, 1821, a copy of which is in the Urquhart Papers, Tulane University—written at a time when Angélica was ill, it discusses the division of property on which Dow and his wife had agreed, together with the estimate of their net worth, and submits these decisions to her sons. In 1789 Dow had invested in Natchez real estate, probably at Benjamin's suggestion; the property was sold shortly before Benjamin died: NCC, Book B, 539; Book C, 146–47. Some slave transactions during the earlier period of their married life are in the following notarial records: Francisco Broutin, Book VII, 101, December 20, 1791; Book XV, 225, 296, July 4, September 24, 1792; Book XXVI, 234, February 26, 1794; Book XXX, 63, March 14, 1794; Book XLVI, 197, September 4, 1797; Francisco and Narciso Broutin, 33, February 6, 1799; Pedesclaux, Book II, 179, February 14, 1788; Book IX, 240, March 23, 1790; Book XXXVI, 107, March 1, 1800, NONA. Other business matters are treated in Pedesclaux, Book III, 446, April 4, 1788; Book XIV, 365, June 16, 1792; Book XVII, 419, May 24, 1793; Book XXIX, 92, 136, February 15, March 22, 1797; Book XXX, 478, August 24, 1797; Francisco Broutin, Book XXX, 63, 262, March 14, October 2, 1794; Book XL, 318, December 31, 1796, NONA. In some of these transactions, Dow acted as attorney or executor for others, indicating the trust which was placed in him by his friends. Quiñones, Book I, 96, September 1, 1779, NONA, is an example of many cases in which he appeared as a physician at the request of the court. AGI, Cuba, in Havana, includes a document, dated December 9, 1786, in which Dow requests a grant of 40 arpents of land for Angélica, to replace an

Urquhart piece of land on which some Acadians had been settled. A copy of this document was obtained from Cuba by a friend whom I am unable to name because of the present political situation. The citation about Dow's trip to England in the first sentence of the paragraph is from this document.

[138] Fitzpatrick Letter Book, May 23, 1785. On May 31, Dow gave Angélica his power of attorney; Perdomo, Book VI, 374, NONA.

[139] The slaves were bought and sold on July 7 and 23, 1800 (Pedesclaux, Book XXXVII, 443, 463, NONA). The quotation from the Rush commonplace book is in George W. Corner, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Rush* (Princeton, 1948), 252–53. The July 8, 1802, letter is in the Urquhart family papers at Tulane. Madame Miró was the widow of Esteban Miró, Governor of Louisiana, 1782–1791. Baron Joseph Xavier Pontalba (1754–1834) had made a fortune in New Orleans real estate before retiring to Paris in 1797; the Pontalba family estate was Château Mont l'Evêque (Leonard V. Huber and Samuel Wilson, Jr., *Baroness Pontalba's Buildings* [New Orleans, 1964], 22–23). Dow's reference to the New Orleans climate is in Duffy, *History of Medicine in Louisiana*, I, 143, 270. Narciso Broutin, Book I, 157, June 22, 1799, NONA, contains a copy of Dow's power of attorney to his brother. Some fine tributes to the character of Angelica's son Thomas Urquhart appear in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, IX, 97, 869–70. In the latter, dated March 4, 1810, Governor Claiborne says that Urquhart "is a well informed Merchant, in High Credit, & enjoying an independent fortune;—He is President of the Louisiana Bank, & of the New-Orleans Insurance Company; he is also a Member of the House of Representatives of the Legislature.—Mr Urquhart supports a most amiable Character in private life, & discharges with great fidelity the public Trusts reposed in him. . . ." Angélica had good reason to be grateful for the accomplishments of both sons; some of the credit must be accounted to her and to Dr. Dow.

[140] Manuel's will is in Carlos Ximenez, Book IX, 112, February 23, 1795, NONA; Gracia's, Francisco Broutin, Book VII, 83, December 8, 1790, NONA; Benjamin's, Pedesclaux, Book XXII, 860, September 29, 1794, NONA. There is some confusion in the wills over the names, but it is clear from the antenuptial agreement in the Pardevani Not. Arch., November 30, 1788, Outre-Mer-Section, Archives Nationales, Paris, that Judith was married to Moïse Julien or Julian and that their son, Abraham, was about to marry Rachel Lopes Dias, "niece de Salomon Madoura, fille de feu sieur Abraham Lopes Dias et de demoiselle Lia Madoure, veuve en secondes noces de Josué Depinis." Gracia and Manuel both speak of Rachel in their wills as though she were Judith's daughter rather than daughter-in-law. Rachel's father, Abraham de Jacob Lopes Dias, who had been an active member of the Jewish community of Curaçao, serving as building inspector in 1764–65 and chairman of the synagogue school in 1751, died at sea in 1775. He had been married to Rachel's mother (his third wife), Lea de Moses de Isaac Levy Maduro, on September 18, 1768 (Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, 502 ff, in which the Lopes Dias family genealogy may be traced).

[141] Fitzpatrick Letter Book, May 31, August 30, 1770; February 7, 1771; July 7, October 6, 22, 1773; February 7, 1778; January 26, July 28, 1781. In *The Favrot*

Papers, 1769–1781 (New Orleans, 1941), III, 6, a deed for the sale of a slave by Manuel to Don Pedro Favrot, dated February 19, 1782, is given in full; Manuel is called "vecino de Puesto de Manchac," indicating that the Monsanto firm's headquarters were still in that captured post. This is, however, the last such reference.

[142] *WFP*, Vol. 634, pt. 1, p. 4, Council meeting held on July 24, 1772.

[143] For these developments, see Jack D. L. Holmes, "Some Economic Problems of Spanish Governors of Louisiana," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, XLII (1962), 521–43, and Holmes, *Gayoso, The Life of a Spanish Governor in the Mississippi Valley, 1789–1799* (Baton Rouge, 1965), 77–84. Some of the official Spanish communications, promising that American settlers coming to the Spanish dominions from Kentucky and northern Mississippi "will not be molested in religious matters, although no other public worship will be permitted to be publicly exercised than that of the Roman Catholic Church," dating from 1789, are in D. C. and Roberta Corbitt, "Papers from the Spanish Archives . . . 1783–1800," *East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications*, No. 20 (1948), 104; No. 21 (1949), 89–90.

[144] AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 2582 (LC photostats, 86–7–19, 289–304), reviewed for me by Dr. Jack D. L. Holmes.

[145] *WFP*, Vol. 634, pt. 1, pp. 236–37, Council meeting of March 4, 1775.

[146] *WFP*, Vol. 634, pt. 2, p. 383, Council meeting of September 5, 1776. The deed was signed by Governor Peter Chester on December 29, 1777 (*WFP*, Vol. 608, p. 362).

[147] Account for September 27 and October 3, 1776, submitted on February 10, 1777, Oliver Pollock Papers, LC; *Favrot Papers*, II, 104; *WFP*, Vol. 612, p. 375, dated October 11, 1773; George Urquhart inventory, Judice Notarial Records.

[148] Fastio finally recovered only 846 pesos, 4 reales from the much larger sums which Isaac Monsanto owed him from their joint ventures in 1766, documented in *LHQ*, XXVIII (1945), 620–21, 629; IX (1926), 333, 335. On September 5, 1780, Benjamin and Fastio were listed among Pierre Methode's creditors: *LHQ*, XIV (1931), 631–33. On February 23, 1781, they appealed to the Commandante of Pointe Coupee for help in collecting a debt from Pierre Le Doux (Pointe Coupee Parish Archives, New Roads, La., Office of the Clerk of Court, provided by Winston De Ville). The dissolution of partnership document is in the same records, under date of January 3, 1788, also provided by Mr. De Ville. Isaac Fastio died a pauper in 1804. His death record reported that he was "aged 78, a resident of this colony about 50 years, worth at one time a considerable amount, but lately reduced to privation . . . a native of Bordeaux . . ." (SLCFR, 1803–1807, 5, March 14, 1804). In 1794, Fastio was the third largest debtor to the Monsanto firm, owing $664.

[149] *LHQ*, XXIII (1940), 332–34.

[150] Rodriguez, Book V, 720, August 30, 1785; Perdomo Book IX, 40, January 24, 1787; Book X, 454, September 4, 1787; Book XVI, 492, September 24, 1790 (when the thirty-one slaves were paid for), NONA. In addition to the statistics cited above, thirteen slaves were bought and sold within the family.

[151] I have been unable personally to search all of the Pointe Coupee records, but Winston De Ville and Sidney Villeré, who have worked in them extensively, have shared their notes with me. Detailed information about Benjamin's plantation to which the Fastio-Benjamin Monsanto partnership termination refers is not available to me. On February 19, 1787, Benjamin purchased 2 arpents of land, including a house and other buildings, from Simon Croiset for $1,300; this reference is from Mr. Villeré. The record of the 1784 purchase and 1785 sale is in NONA: Rodriguez Book IIa, 306, April 26, 1784; Book IV, 225, March 11, 1786. The first Natchez purchase is in NCC, Book A., 242, February 19, 1785.

[152] *LHQ*, XXVII (1944), 861–915.

[153] The precise date of the move to Natchez is not known, but it was probably about the time of the termination of the partnership with Fastio. During 1787 and 1788 Jacob, too, was buying land in Natchez, possibly for use by Benjamin, because some of it adjoined Benjamin's plantation: May 13, 1787 (NCC, Book A, 371); June 18, 1787 (NCC, Book A, 382); March 15, 1788 (NCC, Book E, 476); December 16, 1788 (NCC, Book B, 192).

[154] NCC, Book E, 168, June 19, 1790; Book B, 504, June 1, 1791; Book C, 77–79, September 21, 1793. Jacob may possibly have moved to Natchez prior to Benjamin's arrival. He was busy selling slaves there in 1787–88, and in some of the deeds (for instance, NCC, Book B, 173, 174, 181, October 29, 31, November 12, 1788) refers to himself as "I, Jacob Monsanto, of this District, merchant. . . ." In 1786 Jacob was the court interpreter at the trial of another resident on the charge of treason (NCC, Book F, 92–95, August 4, 1786). In 1788 Jacob was appointed to the job of taking inventory and giving an appraisal for the estate of Christopher Thompson (NCC, Book D, 40, 44, November 13, December 6, 1788). Unfortunately Jacob's will cannot be discovered; therefore we cannot report on his holdings in the Natchez area. But his death record calls him a resident of the New Orleans parish of St. Louis Church. It is possible, however, that Jacob and not Benjamin was the first of the brothers to establish residence in Natchez.

[155] David probably met his future bride while visiting his Uncle Benjamin. The two men witnessed Williams' will and were present at the reading: NCC, Book C, 177–78, April 7, 1792. David and Mary were married on November 17, 1803, when she was sixteen years old. David had already known her for at least eleven and a half years.

[156] The description of the Natchez property and the inventory of its contents are in the estate papers, NCC, Book C, 315–31, beginning October 10, 1794; this file also contains the correspondence relating to the financial troubles of the firm.

[157] NCC, Book C, 408.

[158] NCC, Book F, 186–87. The decree is dated March 15, 1794, but no date appears on the creditors' petition.

[159] NCC, Book C, 323–26.

[160] NCC, Book C, 326–31.

[161] Pedesclaux, Book XXII, 860, September 29, 1794, NONA.

[162] NCC, Book D, 137, December 10, 1794; Book C, 408, June 17, 1792, July 22, 1796; Book B, 244, February 12, 1789, May 10, 1800; Unrecorded Land Claims, Nos. 1629, 1630; *Transcriptions of County Archives of Mississippi. Adams County. Vol. II: Minutes of the County Court, 1802–1804* (Jackson, 1942), cases numbered 5, 60, 140.

[163] Ximenez, Book IX, 112, February 23, 1795, NONA.

[164] Rosa's emancipation is in Francisco Broutin, Book XV, 181, May 29, 1792, NONA. The emancipation of Maimi is in Rodriguez, Book I, 729–30, August 4, 1783, NONA. Sophia's purchases of slaves and property are referred to in Ximenez, Book IX, 92, February 9, 1795; Narciso Broutin, Book I, 202, August 9, 1799; Pedesclaux, Book XXXVII, 637, October 27, 1800, NONA. *New Orleans in 1805. A Directory and a Census* (Heartman's Historical Series No. 48) (New Orleans, 1936), 49, lists Maimi as living at 64 Bienville and Sophie at 61 Bienville. Maymi William Monsanto's will and inventory are in NOPC, under date of April 8, 1817. Sophia, or Sophie, Monsanto outlived Angélica. The last record of her activity which has been traced is her purchase from Jacob Hart of five slaves in a transaction recorded in the Record Conveyance Office (Civil District Court) Book II, p. 36, on October 22, 1827.

[165] One of Angélica's sons spent the summer in Philadelphia in 1829 and he and his wife became friendly with Rebecca Gratz. We do not know which son this was, but cannot resist wondering whether Rebecca knew that Angélica Dow had been a Jewess. David Philipson (ed.), *Letters of Rebecca Gratz* (Phila., 1929), 101.

[166] The writer has been unable to discover who was originally responsible for the identification of these two men as Jews. The earliest, chronologically, thus far, is Rabbi Max Heller, *Jubilee Souvenir of Temple Sinai, 1872–1922* (New Orleans, 1922), 2, who has been followed by Leo Shpall, *The Jews in Louisiana* (New Orleans, 1936), 7; Lebeson, *Pilgrim People*, 114; and Samuel Proctor, "Jewish Life in New Orleans, 1718–1860," *LHQ*, XL (1957), 110–32. Perhaps Rabbi Heller, reading Gararré, *The History of Louisiana*, IV, 347–49, presumed that men bearing these names simply had to be of Jewish background.

[167] Data about Solis and Mendez in the production of sugar are in Henry Rightor, ed., *Standard History of New Orleans* (Chicago, 1900), 649–51; Alcée Fortier, *A History of Louisiana* (New York, 1904), II, 158; V. Allen Moody, "Slavery in Louisiana Sugar Plantations," *LHQ*, VII (1924), 198. Details of the Solis family's lineage are in *NOG*, June, 1962, p. 277; Almonester y Roxas, Book II, 155, July 29, 1771, NONA; SLCFR, 1793–1803, p. 54. H. L. Forsyth, who traces his family back to the Solis family, has gone over its genealogy with me in helpful detail.

[168] See Cecil Roth, *A History of the Marranos* (Phila., 1932), 271, for the general background of "new" Christians in America. *Limpieza* certificates were printed in Mexico as early as 1580 and as late as 1810. Proceedings in New Orleans in regard to *limpieza* certification are described in *LHQ*, XI (1928), 331–32; XVIII (1935), 200 ff; XIX (1936), 542 ff; *NOG*, January, 1965, p. 75; March, 1965, p. 127. See also the application of Lieut. Col. Nicholas Fabre Dauncy for a certificate for his

son Carlos so that the latter might join the "Spanish company of royal guard corps, which was organized for the benefit of the American nobility," in 1793, in *Dispatches of the Spanish Governors of Louisiana* (W.P.A. Survey) (Baton Rouge, 1939), IV, 149–63.

[169] *LHQ*, XXIV (1941), 842–43.

[170] *LHQ*, IX (1926), 333; XXVIII (1945), 615; Rightor, *Standard History of New Orleans*, 649–51. SLCCB, 70, records the confirmation of two of his children, and two slaves, in New Galvez, on February 12, 1797.

[171] *Letter Books of W.C.C. Claiborne*, I, 372–73; II, 350–51, dated July 5, 1806, which contains another description of the case; IV, 147, November 28, 1807, the appointment of Mendez as Justice of the Peace for St. Bernard Parish; VI, 185, October 6, 1812, Mendez' resignation from that office. Under the regime of Governor Bernardo de Galvez, 1777–1784, large-scale immigration to Louisiana was encouraged. Among those who responded to the propaganda campaign and the practical inducements were large numbers of Canary Islanders. In 1779 alone, 499 Islanders came to the colony. Davis, *Louisiana, A Narrative History*, 110, 120, 130–31; Elizabeth Becker Gianelloni, *Love, Honor and Betrayal: The Notarial Acts of Estevan de Quiñones 1778–1784* (Baton Rouge, 1964), vi; Kinnaird, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, pt. 2, xxiii. Paradoxically, many of these Canariotes carried typical Sephardic "New" Christian and Marrano names; the records abound with family names like De Leon, Mendes, Rodriguez, Lopez, and the like: *NOG*, June, 1964, pp. 215 ff. Perhaps some of these people had been made to feel inferior because of their ancestry, back in the islands.

[172] Francis Newton Thorpe, *The Federal and State Constitutions* (Washington, 1909), III, 1360, 1365, 1369, 1373–74.

[173] Archives Départementales de la Gironde, Bordeaux, 3L–182 (October 27, 1795–March 22, 1796); 3L–184, Section 1 (March 22–May 22, 1796); references supplied by René J. LeGardeur. See also Z. Szajkowski, "Jewish Emigration from Bordeaux during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Jewish Social Studies*, XVIII (1956), 121–22.

[174] Archives Départementales de la Gironde, Bordeaux, 3L–184, Section 3 (July 12–September 21, 1796), through the courtesy of Mr. LeGardeur; see also Szajkowski, "Jewish Emigration from Bordeaux," 121. The name Manuel Diaz occurs in New Orleans and Natchez from 1789, but no evidence connects him with our Lopes Dias family (NCC, Book B, 265 ff; *NOG*, September, 1962, p. 37); four children of Jose and Maria Dias were confirmed in Ascension Parish on May 25, 1796 (SLCCB, 34).

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

[1] *Delta,* quoted in Leon Huhner, *The Life of Judah Touro* (Phila., 1946), 108.

[2] Dun and Bradstreet manuscript record books, Louisiana, Vol. 9, p. 273, entries for June, 1847 et seq., Baker Library, Harvard University.

[3] Dun and Bradstreet, Vol. 9, p. 31, entry for Alexander Levy & Co.

[4] Letters of Gershom Kursheedt to Rabbi Isaac Leeser of Philadelphia, December 18, 1848, May 2, 1849, May 3, 1853, in Leeser Collection, Dropsie College Library.

[5] *New York Herald,* June 18, 1855, cited in *PAJHS,* No. 27 (1920), 420–21.

[6] Jacob R. Marcus, *Early American Jewry* (Phila., 1951), I, 154–55; Isaac Touro mss. petitions, March 13, 1780, December 12, 1782, and list, dated September 30, 1782, naming refugees from Newport in New York City, Carleton Papers, William and Mary College, copies in AJA; Jacob A. P. M. Andrade, *A Record of the Jews in Jamaica* (Kingston, 1941), 51. Huhner, *Judah Touro,* 20, and Morris A. Gutstein, *Aaron Lopez and Judah Touro* (New York, 1939), 71 f, both seem reluctant to admit that the elder Touro was a Tory.

[7] Kursheedt to Leeser, January 25, 1854, Leeser Collection.

[8] Huhner, *Judah Touro,* 151, n. 19, gives a host of sources for the romantic episode, none earlier than the time of Touro's death. An undated clipping in the Virginia Historical Society reports that Rebecca was the object of Touro's affections; Leeser in *OCC,* X (1854), 589, indicates that he heard the story (probably from Kursheedt) on one of his visits to New Orleans, and he too thought the young lady was Rebecca. The letter from Catherine Hays Myers to Touro, dated January 4, 1854, is in the Virginia Historical Society, copy in AJA. Rebecca was almost six years older than Judah; Catherine was a year younger.

[9] *LG,* February 19, 1805.

[10] *LG,* March 12, 1805.

[11] Letter and account, December 7, 1809, Storer Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society.

[12] Ms. letter, Rhode Island Historical Society.

[13] Ms. letter, New York Public Library, reproduced in Huhner, *Judah Touro,* 29.

[14] Huhner, *Judah Touro,* 33–58, and the appropriate notes, offers some detailed data on Touro's business activities, but exaggerates their importance. The Thwing firm of Boston was Touro's agent from 1846 until his death. None of Touro's letters to them were preserved, but their letter books contain large numbers of reports to him. At the time of his death, he had $105,000 on deposit with them, which was invested in bonds, bank stocks, mortgages, notes and property in Maine. Early Touro advertisements are in *LG,* September 16, 30, November 15, 1806; March 3, 1807; November 11, 1808. *LG* references to Touro cargoes during 1820 are in the

issues of January 10, 25, February 2, 11, March 4, April 21, May 2, 6, 11, 16, 30, June 3, 10, 11, August 28, September 1, October 5, November 10, 22, December 1, 6, 15. Touro's purchase of the interest in the *Highlander* is in John Lynd, Book XII, August 4, 1815, NONA. *Ship Registers and Enrollments of New Orleans, La.* (WPA Survey of Federal Archives), Vol. I: 1804–1820 (Baton Rouge, 1941), contains the data on Touro's participation in the ownership of various vessels. Among his partners were Laurent Millaudon, R. D. and James H. Shepherd, and John A. Merle. Touro and R. D. Shepherd were co-owners of ships built and named for them. Altogether, he was associated with the ownership of twelve vessels over the years, but no more than a few at any one time.

[15] New Orleans *Bee*, May 3, 1828; August 3, 1837.

[16] *New Orleans in 1805. A Directory and A Census* (Heartman's Historical Series No. 48) (New Orleans, 1936), 70.

[17] The inventory of the Touro estate is Act No. 3 in Thomas Layton, Book III, January 30, 1854, NONA, extending for forty-nine pages.

[18] *OCC*, XI (1854), 590. Parson Theodore Clapp also testified to Touro's extremely modest manner of living, in the eulogy which he preached after Touro's death (*Asmonean* [New York], February 17, 1854).

[19] *American State Papers. Documents in Relation to the Public Lands* (Washington, 1834), II, 269; Robert Lynd, Book XV, 972, December 10, 1818, NONA; Huhner, *Judah Touro*, 48–56; the contents of the relevant Thwing papers in the Massachusetts Historical Society.

[20] It is worth noting that in August, 1803, when a report was drawn up for Governor Claiborne's guidance, listing the names of the principal persons in New Orleans, Creoles, foreigners and American citizens, Touro's name was not included, although his friend Shepherd's was: Carter, *Territorial Papers*, IX, 10–11.

[21] Carter, *Territorial Papers*, IX, 290, 337.

[22] *Natchez Gazette*, February 4, 1807.

[23] *LG*, March 27, 1807.

[24] *Orleans Gazette*, April 20, 1807; *LG*, April 27, 1807.

[25] *LG*, February 5, 1812; *Moniteur*, February 8, 1812.

[26] *LG*, January 3, 7, 1812; January 5, 1813; *Moniteur*, January 7, 1812. The results of the elections of 1814 and 1815 were not published. By 1816, Touro was no longer listed as a director. In 1819 he was recommended, together with others, for the board of the State Bank of Louisiana, but was not among those who were elected: *LG*, February 6, 9, 1819.

[27] *Jackson and New Orleans. An Authentic Narrative of the Memorable Achievements of the American Army, Under Andrew Jackson, before New Orleans, in the Winter of 1814, '15* (New York, 1856), 267–72. Marion J. B. Pierson, *Louisiana Soldiers in the War of 1812* (Baton Rouge, 1963), 108, 117, lists Touro as a private in Dejan's First Regiment, and Shepherd as a private in Captain Ogden's Company of Dragoons. Documentation about the service of civilians in the battle is very scarce. Much of

what is known is derived from memoirs and reminiscences, rather than from official military records. There is no indication that Touro had previously been a member of the militia or that he had been trained for any military duties. To picture him as anything other than a civilian volunteer, doing whatever he could in the military emergency, is an unwarranted assumption.

[28] Touro's will is printed in full in Huhner, *Judah Touro*, 129–39, and in Morris U. Schappes, *A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States, 1654–1875* (New York, 1950), 333–41. The estimate of one-half million dollars is based on the assessed value of the estate in the manuscript inventory; Schappes (657) quotes a newspaper report which rates Shepherd's share at the higher figure.

[29] Some information about Shepherd has been supplied by Senator Saltonstall and the family genealogist, Louise Emerson Carlile of Chestnut Hill, Mass. During his period away from New Orleans, Shepherd maintained residences in Massachusetts and Virginia; his business affairs in New Orleans were apparently handled by James. Some material about the litigation over James's estate is in printed briefs by attorneys for Rezin's nieces and nephews against Rezin's daughter, dating from 1867, which I found in an old bookstore. I have been unable to locate a complete description of the issues and outcome of the case anywhere. The major importance of the case, for us, is James Shepherd's heavy indebtedness to Touro, and Touro's involvement as a witness on Rezin's behalf. In one of the briefs, which we have labeled "A", page 53, an attorney for the opposing side accuses Shepherd of sinister motives in "causing all his books and those of Judah Touro, one of the executors of J. H. S. [James H. Shepherd] of whom he had been the executor, to be burned." In another brief, labeled "C", page 32, Rezin Shepherd said in a letter of April, 1844, "I believe [I] would have given up all as lost, including my own ruin, had it not been for my inestimable friend Judah Touro, who came to my aid with all his force and power." The suggestion transmitted by Schappes, *Documentary History*, 657, and in his review of the Huhner book in *Jewish Life*, April, 1947, pp. 21–24, that Touro was reminded by a newspaper editorial which appeared a short time before his death, of Shepherd's devotion to him at the time of the Battle of New Orleans and that this was his motivation for his making Shepherd his residuary legatee, seems to be very far-fetched. The closeness between the two men over the long years demonstrates Touro's awareness of his indebtedness to his friend. New Orleans Directories list Shepherd as living in Touro's home in the 1840's and 1850's. The papers which refer to Shepherd's acting on Touro's behalf in the settlement of Abraham Touro's estate are in the Suffolk County Court records, Boston, transcriptions by Samuel Broches in AJA.

[30] Schappes, *Jewish Life*, April, 1947; *Jewish Messenger*, XXVI, October 1, 1869, p. 4. Parson Clapp said that Touro was invalided for twelve months after the battle, and that he always walked with a slight limp thereafter (*Asmonean*, February 17, 1854).

[31] *Autobiographical Sketches and Recollections during a Thirty-Five Year's Residence in New Orleans* (Boston, 1857), 102.

[32] Clapp, *Autobiographical Sketches*, 102, says explicitly that Touro "had just signed a document resigning his legal title to the entire estate of an only sister, recently

deceased. It was worth, if I remember aright, about eighty thousand dollars. He refused to take the smallest fraction of it, and requested his friends at the north to distribute it for charitable purposes. . . ." If the document ever existed, it is not now in the Suffolk County Court House in Boston with the other papers relating to Rebecca's estate. Rebecca's money had been her share of brother Abraham's residuary estate, which was divided equally between her and Judah. Judah's representatives were still selling Rebecca's property in 1840, after Rezin had returned to New Orleans.

[33] Huhner, *Judah Touro*, 68, writes as though the building had actually been erected and served an important purpose. Roger P. McCutcheon, "Libraries in New Orleans, 1771–1833," *LHQ*, XX (1937), 152–58, offers a more factual report. Other data on the library are in *LG*, January 23, March 27, May 10, 22, 1824. As late as 1832, books belonging to the library were still kept in the church, according to *NOCD*, 1832.

[34] *Bee*, October 13, November 15, 1830; June 25, 1831; November 6, 1832; May 7, June 24, 1838. The earliest public campaign for funds was in 1810, when subscriptions were solicited for the College of Louisiana. Touro was not among the donors. *Courier*, December 10, 1810, January 4, 1811.

[35] Huhner, *Judah Touro*, 78–79, 162, gives the sources for the contributions to the Bunker Hill Monument and the Redwood Library; in the latter case, Touro's letter to the Library (November 27, 1843, in the Archives of the Redwood Library) acknowledges that Shepherd had already talked to Touro about the need for repairs to the portico of the Library's headquarters and to the sidewalk . . . it therefore seems probable that Shepherd had suggested to the Library that Touro be honored by election as a member, as an inducement for him to make the contribution. The amount of money paid for the Paulding estate is reported in the Touro estate inventory, January 30, 1854.

[36] *Picayune*, January 4, 1852; *Delta*, January 6, 1852.

[37] Huhner, *Judah Touro*, 69.

[38] *New Orleans in 1805*, p. 70.

[39] *LG*, December 23, 1808.

[40] *LG*, September 8, 1812.

[41] *LG*, August 25, 1823.

[42] Schappes, *Jewish Life*, April, 1947, pp. 21–24, is quite correct in stating that there is no evidence that Touro was opposed to slavery, but he goes too far in blaming Touro for a pro-slavery sermon which Parson Clapp delivered, and, in general, for being himself used (after his death!) as support for the pro-slavery argument. It makes just as much sense to give Touro credit for the fact that the Touro Infirmary was open to slaves, following his death (*Spectrum* [New York], IX [1961], 113 ff, which reports that twenty-six of thirty-eight patients listed in the admission book of the Infirmary for August–September, 1856, were slaves).

[43] The information about Ellen Wilson is in the Touro estate inventory. John Touro is listed in *NOCD*, 1855, 1856; he was also one of a number of New Orleans residents

who made claims on the Federal government during the Civil War (*Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* [New Brunswick, 1953], VII, 492). That Judah and John Touro were not strangers, however, is indicated by a page in the Thwing papers, photostat in Broches Collection, AJA, which reveals that John Touro as "Ship Broker" took care of the agency for the ship *Judah Touro* when it was in New Orleans in December, 1856–January, 1857. It is difficult to believe that the names are coincidental, but John's name appears nowhere in Judah's will or estate papers. The report that Judah Touro freed Shepherd's slaves is in Alexander Walker's essay on Touro in Freeman Hunt, *Lives of American Merchants* (New York, 1858) II, 466.

[44] Robert C. Reinders, "The Free Negro in the New Orleans Economy, 1850–1860," *Louisiana History*, VI (1965), 279–80; reports in Dun and Bradstreet mss. records, through Professor James P. Baughman.

[45] Hunt, *Lives of American Merchants*, II, 448.

[46] It is unrealistic to suppose, as does Huhner (*Judah Touro*, 59), that any businessman like Touro could have avoided litigation. We have already cited a number of suits in which he was involved; another is listed in François-Xavier Martin, *Louisiana Term Reports*, I (New Orleans, 1824), 425–27. But it is true that he did his best to avoid them. In a letter of November 21, 1826, to Titus Welles of Boston (Washburn Collection, Mass. Historical Society), in reference to his brother's estate, Touro said, "I hate any *law Suit or Altercation* and wish to avoid them if possible. . . ."

[1] Davis, *Louisiana, A Narrative History,* 158.

[2] Our attention will be confined largely to the areas which were part of the economic market of New Orleans, although even those Jews who originally settled in Baton Rouge, which still belonged to Spain until 1810, ultimately moved to New Orleans. One interesting personage who lived a good deal farther away, near the settlement on the Arkansas River, was Louis Levy, who by 1803 had a farm of 750 arpents on the river about forty leagues above the village. On July 7, 1808, Maurice Fortnay testified, in connection with Levy's claim to the land, that "the premises were cultivated and Inhabited about 5 years ago, a dwelling house was then built, had a wife and one child" (*American State Papers,* II, 431; III, 317; ms. record of the same claim, from the Office of the Secretary of State of Missouri, Jefferson City). The claim was rejected in 1808 and 1811, but was reconsidered and granted on February 2, 1816, Levy still apparently being there at the time. Levy may have been in New Orleans at one time or another, but his closest trip on record was to Baton Rouge in August, 1808, when he bought an undershirt and two pairs of pantaloons at auction (*SWFP,* XIII, 154–56).

[3] Carter, *Territorial Papers,* IX, 289; 337 (another petition which Spitzer signed on November 22, 1804). Data on the father are in Jacob Rader Marcus, *Early American Jewry* (Phila., 1953), II, 151–52; Samuel Oppenheim, "The Jews and Masonry in the United States before 1810," *PAJHS,* XIX (1910), 42–43; JRBD, 166; Wolf and Whiteman, *Jews of Philadelphia,* 413. The Kursheedt family's genealogy is in *MSAJD,* 106.

[4] *LG,* June 21, 1805; April 11, May 20, September 9, 23, 26, 1806; May 8, 1807; *SC,* numbers 12, 25, 67, 68; *Le Télégraphe,* August 30, 1806; *New Orleans in 1805,* p. 45; *SWFP,* XI, 245–46; Henry Brown, Book for 1804–1806, June 2, 1806, NONA; *Courier,* February 8, 1830; *Bee,* June 8, 1832.

[5] At least two and possibly three other men in New Orleans bore the same name. One was Philadelphia-born Jacob Hart who served in Capt. Burt's Company of Florida Volunteers and who died May 26, 1836 (*Bee,* May 26, 1836). He may be identical with the Jacob Hart of New Jersey, who was listed as a deserter from the U. S. Army in 1816 (*LG,* September 16, 1816). A second or third Jacob Hart bore the middle name Moses; he was German-born, had been in Louisiana since 1806, and was a well-known police official (*Bee,* April 20, 22, 27, May 11, 1835). There is no evidence that any of these men were Jewish, or that any of them were engaged in commerce. To R.E.S. goes the credit for discovering our Jacob Hart. According to his obituary in *Crescent,* December 21, 1849, he had been "for the last 46 years a resident of this city"—but this would take us back to 1803, an error of a year. His tombstone card in LSML reports his date of birth as March 28, 1781; *MSAJD,* 71, gives it correctly as March 29, but reports his death in 1836 instead of1849. The mss. Record of Interments in the Nefutzoth Yehudah Cemetery, Touro Synagogue Archives, copies in AJA, lists Jacob Hart as a non-member burial.

[6] David de Sola Pool, *Portraits Etched in Stone* (New York, 1952), 76, 78, 80, 102, 104, 358, 411–13; *PAJHS*, No. 21 (1913), 163–64, 167, 169; No. 27 (1920), 51, 54–55, 57–58, 66, 69–70, 83, 86, 253.

[7] John Lynd, Book I, October 27, 1805, NONA.

[8] The first of a large number of Hart's advertisements appeared in *LG* on April 29, 1806. *Ship Registers and Enrollments*, I, 107–108, reports his ownership of the schooner.

[9] Hart's business life is reflected, in miniature, in his dealings with the Hendricks firm of New York City. On May 12, 1809, he received a consignment of 25 boxes of spermaceti candles from Hendricks, on board the ship *Luminary*. Not finding an immediate purchaser at a fair price, Hart had to store them for a year; Hendricks then suggested that they be sold at auction, where they brought $379.29. Hart's charges and commission amounted to a modest $27.32. He sent the remittance to the Hendricks firm in the form of a bill of exchange on his father in New York City. This kind of transaction has to be multiplied a thousand fold in order to visualize the activity of a businessman like Hart at that time. Hendricks Letter Book, entries for May 12, 1809; May 9, June 25, 1810; letter, Hart to Hendricks, July 11, 1809 (Hendricks Collection, New-York Historical Society).

[10] *LG*, July 8, November 22, 1808; *SWFP*, Vol. 18, pp. 294–95. On November 3, 1809, de Armas had mortgaged a tract of land in Baton Rouge to Hart as security for a loan of 1,590 pesos. There is no indication that the two transactions were related. *SWFP*, Vol. 15, pp. 224–25.

[11] "Liste par ordre alphabétique, Des Négocians, Marchands, &c, &c, résidans a la Nlle—Orléans," *Annuaire Louisiananais Pour L'Année 1809 Par B. Lafon* (New Orleans, 1808), 209.

[12] *LG*, March 27, May 8, June 2, 1807; February 12, August 9, 1808; *Courier*, June 3, 1808; ms. petition, citizens of New Orleans to Jefferson, January 25, 1808, New-York Historical Society, copy in AJA.

[13] *LG*, January 6, February 20, 1807.

[14] Stanley Faye, "Louis De Clouet's Memorial to the Spanish Government, December 7, 1814," *LHQ*, XXII (1939), 802 ff; Faye, "Privateersmen of the Gulf and their Prizes," *LHQ*, XXII (1939), 1024; *SC*, No. 411; *Official Letter Books of W. C. C. Claiborne*, V, 7–13; *LG*, July 14, 1809; April 14, 1810; September 3, 1810. Dunbar Rowland, the editor of the Claiborne letters, misread Hart's signature on the letter of November 16, 1809, and transcribed it as "Jacob y Cart." The original correspondence, brought to my attention by René J. LeGardeur, Jr., is in the National Archives, Department of State, Territorial Papers, Orleans, Year 1809, ff. 304, 310, 387, 389, 391–92. Our transcription of the Hart letter differs in some minor details from that printed by Rowland, beyond his misreading of Hart's signature.

[15] Stanley Clisby Arthur, *Jean Laffite, Gentleman Rover* (New Orleans, 1952), 222–23; Jane Lucas de Grummond, *The Baratarians and the Battle of New Orleans* (Baton Rouge, 1961), 4–5.

[16] *The Journal of Jean Laffite* (New York, 1958), 9–11, 29, 33. There is also, on an unnumbered page, the reproduction of a handwritten note from a page in the supposed family Bible, which says that "I owe all my ingenuity to the great intuition of my Jewish-Spanish grandmother, who was a witness at the time of the Inquisition." The journal does not refer to Laffite's first marriage to "Christina Levine, of Jewish descent, a native of St. Croix . . . [who] died on shipboard in the Gulf of Mexico . . . in 1804" (Arthur, *Jean Laffite*, 224). Although there were Jews in the West Indies, Jamaica for instance, who bore the name Levien, not all Leviens or Levines were Jews; the first husband of Alexander Hamilton's mother, John Michael Levine, seems not to have been Jewish (*DAB*, VIII, 171; Harold Larson, "Alexander Hamilton: The Fact and Fiction of His Early Years," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, IX [1956], 139–51, esp. 142). References to members of the Jamaica Levien family are in Jamaica *Royal Gazette*, June 16, 1781, and *Kingston Journal*, March 10, 1787 supplement.

[17] *Journal of Laffite*, 147.

[18] Pool, *Portraits*, 384–92; Marcus, *Early American Jewry*, II, 132 ff.

[19] *MSAJD*, 71; John Lynd, Book XVI (1819), 500, NONA: *LG*, November 22, 1819.

[20] *LG*, January 30, April 4, 1823.

[21] *LG*, July 3, 1822. Nathan Hart is listed in *Ship Registers and Enrollments*, I, 105, as owner of the *Marsouin* in 1819.

[22] The newspaper advertisements of 1820–21 indicate that the import-export business had continued at least that long: *LG*, October 5, 31, November 25, 1820; September 21, October 30, 1821. His scale of living is demonstrated by the special tax which he paid in 1818–19 on a horse and carriage (Tax List, Miscellaneous New Orleans Manuscripts, New-York Historical Society).

[23] *LG*, April 8, 1831; July 24, 1832; *Ship Registers and Enrollments*, III, 13.

[24] *Ship Registers and Enrollments*, II, 60–61, 116; III, 13; Edward Barnett, Book I (1838), acts 148, 201, 252; Book X (1840), act 41; and many others in succeeding years, NONA. During June of 1827, for instance, Hart bought and sold four slaves: Record Conveyance Office (Civil District Court) Book I, pp. 128, 216–17, 219–20, 321–22; in October of the same year, as we have seen, he sold five slaves to Sophie Monsanto.

[25] Carlisle Pollock, Book VI (1820), 520, NONA.

[26] *LG*, May 17, November 1, 1826; *Courier*, January 13, 1830; *Bee*, July 31, 1830; November 20, 1839.

[27] Information is unavailable as to the exact year of the Marks family's arrival in New Orleans. Their second grandchild, Katherine, was born there in 1845 (*MSAJD*, 133).

[28] The date of Barnett's birth is established by his tombstone in St. Louis Cemetery No. 1; his death record, NOOR, No. 483, September 27, 1865, says that he was a native of France. Rabbi Max Heller, who knew Maurice Barnett, Jr., reports in his *Jubilee Souvenir of Temple Sinai*, 129, that the elder Barnett was a Napoleonic

soldier. Heller knew that Barnett was Jewish; family records have been destroyed, but Prof. Samuel Burwell Barnett Carleton of the University of Texas, Austin, reports the family tradition that the elder Barnett was a Dutch Jew, who had served in Napoleon's army. The marriage record is in the Marriage Register, 1793–1821, p. 57, St. Joseph's Cathedral, Baton Rouge, in the Dept. of History and Archives, Diocese of Baton Rouge. Maurice's father's name as given in that record, Flamphor, is startling; it may have been a French equivalent of the Hebrew "Meir" (giver of light); if so, perhaps Maurice was a French adaptation, too, and our Maurice may be identical with the "Myer Barnett, Senior," otherwise unknown, who is listed in the *Constitution and Bye-Laws of the Israelite Congregation, of Shanarai-Chasset* (New Orleans, 1828). The identification of Maurice as the Dutch-born son of Lazarus Barnett is suggested by the SLCBR, 9, p. 19, record of the baptism on July 25, 1818, of Marie Eliza Barnette, daughter of Edouard, "a native of Philadelphia," with "Dame Marie Trahan, wife of Mr. Maurice Barnette . . . aunt of the baptized" as godmother. Another baptismal record, that of Maurice's son Edward, SLCBR, 8, p. 51b, May 25, 1816, refers to Maurice as a native of Philadelphia, and gives his parents' names as "Luis Bernet and Susana Mayer." "Luis" is closer to "Lazarus" than "Flamphor," but the mother's name is the same in all family records in Louisiana churches. Lazarus Barnett's Philadelphia story is given in Wolf and Whiteman, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 171; *Independent Gazetteer* (Phila.), June 4, September 13, November 15, 1783; *Pennsylvania Packett*, December 1, 1784; February 22, 1785; Mikveh Israel correspondence files, October 26, 1783, copy in AJA. Lazarus' bankruptcy in London is reported in *The London Chronicle*, February 2, 1785, p. 114; *Morning Chronicle* (London), February 2, 1785; *The London Gazette*, February 1, 1785, p. 118; April 16, 1785, p. 118. References to Barnett in *SWFP* are in Vol. 11, pp. 15, 91, 221; Vol. 12, p. 299. Marie Trahan's year of birth is given on her tombstone in St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 as 1789; she died January 17, 1850. But her death record, NOOR, No. 153, January 19, 1850, and SLCFR 1848–1853, p. 213 (no. 605), say that she was sixty-two years old. Many members of the Trahan family had come to Louisiana as exiles from Acadia, but there is no evidence that her father Juan (Jean) was one of them. Marie's mother's family name, Le Jeune, was a common French Catholic name in Louisiana, but, as we shall see, it was also the name of a few Jewish families.

[29] *SWFP*, Vol. 14, pp. 289–91.

[30] *SWFP*, Vol. 17, p. 73: Ganucheau & Co. of New Orleans sued Barnett in 1810 for payment of a debt going back to 1808. Other debts are referred to in *SWFP*, Vol. 16, p. 304 (1809); Vol. 17, p. 100 (1810).

[31] *SWFP*, Vol. 11, p. 182–A, ff.

[32] *SWFP*, Vol. 12, p. 78 (1807); Vol. 13, pp. 76, 171 (1808); Vol. 18, p. 123 (1810).

[33] *SWFP*, Vol. 14, pp. 285–93.

[34] *SWFP*, Vol. 13, p. 251 ff. The Negroes were, apparently, not slaves, since they were armed.

[35] *SWFP*, Vol. 16, p. 182 (1809); Vol. 19, pp. 110, 112, 131, 373, 432, 465–68 (1811).

[36] Maurice, Jr.'s recollections are in *Picayune*, December 6, 1898 (an obituary quoting from an interview which he gave the previous year), from which are taken other reminiscences in the following paragraphs. Helene Barnett Audler, Maurice Barnett, Sr.'s daughter, is said in her succession record to have been born in New Orleans in 1810 (case 33,096, NOPC); her stone in St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 reports her birthdate as July 3, 1810, but gives no place of birth; her death date was July 18, 1869. An Isaac Moses appears in a solitary record for June 27, 1808, as a witness to a Baton Rouge business transaction of no great significance (*SWFP*, Vol. 14, p. 284); there were many Jews at the time who bore that name, none of whom can be definitely located in Louisiana; it was probably not the distinguished New York City merchant who would hardly have been traveling on the frontier at the age of sixty-seven.

[37] In 1814 he was suing the estates of a number of former customers in Baton Rouge for the payment of old bills: Probate Records 206 and 207, Baton Rouge Court House. He continued to own land in the Baton Rouge area, which was occupied and cultivated from 1811 on; in 1843 he was given final patent on a quarter section of land: Book O, f. 69, Baton Rouge Court House. Practically the only records of the Barnett family's presence in New Orleans during this period which we have discovered are the baptismal registry entries for Maurice's and Edward's children. Maurice's son Edward's baptismal certificate, dated May 25, 1816 (he was born on February 20), SLCBR, 8, p. 51b, refers to his parents as residents of the city. Maurice and Marie were involved in the baptismal ceremonies for his brother Edward's children, Heleonore, SLCBR, 8, p. 26, December 19, 1815; Marie Eliza, SLCBR, 9, p. 19, July 25, 1818; Theodore, SLCBR, 9, p. 139b, August 16, 1820; Edemond, SLCBR, 11, p. 294, February 9, 1827 (this is the only record which gives the grandfather Barnett's name as "Lazare.") *NOCD*, 1822, lists Edward Barnett as a trader at 55 Bourbon street. Perhaps Maurice worked with his brother.

[38] *Bee*, June 1, 1838. *Picayune*, June 15, 1904, has an obituary of William Boswell Barnett, and calls him the "last of a long line of notaries." SLCBR, 8, p. 51b (Edward, born February 20, 1816); 9, p. 19 (Alphonse, born August 22, 1823). Edward and Alphonse were buried the same day, November 12, 1850, according to St. Louis Cathedral Sexton Record Book, entries 919 and 920.

[39] *Bee*, December 15, 1830; March 10, 1831.

[40] Characteristic slave advertisements in *Bee*, October 20, November 12, December 11, 17, 1835; March 5, 26, 1836.

[41] The Dun and Bradstreet record book, La., Vol. 9, p. 119, does not speak well of Maurice, Sr. Entries from April 9, 1852, through April 25, 1854, refer to the father's dishonesty and roguery, and accuse various members of the family of having transferred funds to each other, at various times, before going bankrupt for amounts as high as $150,000. As Maurice, Jr., and Lewis or Louis take over the business, with the father still continuing as "crier," however, there is a change in tone: "He never stood well & during his administration complaints were genl. Since the yng men hv. had the mangt. things hv. gone on better. Parties here who wd. hv. ref. to do with the old man are not afraid to entrust them with limited amts . . .

But the char. of thr. fath, (& they being Jews) weakens confide." Before long the references to roguery, suspicion and dishonesty cease; by June 24, 1858, the sons are reported to be "prudent men . . . doing a safe snug bus." Just six years previously, the investigator said that "all the famy are rogues." One cannot escape the feeling that the early reports were severely biased. All of the Barnett men could not have been corrupt, one pocketing the profits in such amounts as $40,000 before another declared himself a bankrupt, and then suddenly reformed to such an extent that they were believed to be "Hard workg. indus. men, dg a mod bus, have a gd Cr & stand well." It seems apparent that the father had made some enemies during his active commercial life. The Hope Mutual Insurance Company would hardly have taken Louis on as Secretary in 1859, if his reputation had been as black as earlier reports had described it. One note of interest is that all of the family are described by the Dun and Bradstreet investigator as Jews, even though the sons had been reared as Catholics.

[42] *Picayune,* September 26, 1865; December 6, 1898.

[43] St. John the Baptist Church, Edgard, Marriage Register I, 139. Marie Emeronthe and Pierre Brou's wedding is in the same volume, 86, dated June 2, 1799. Samuel Edmond's birth is in that church's Baptismal Register, III, 114 (June 21, 1807). In the old St. Charles Parish records of Antoine D. St. Amand, Commandant of the area in 1800–1803, now in the Department of Archives, Louisiana State University, the following documents have been preserved: a family meeting of the Brou-Becnel clan, held on May 12, 1802, at which it was decided that Ambroise Brou, Emeronthe's brother-in-law, would serve as guardian of Pierre and Emeronthe's sons, Florestan (about two and a half years old) and Valsin (about ten months old); a receipt for a loan of money which Emeronthe signed as young Pierre's widow. In regard to the approximate time of Samuel Hermann's emigration from Germany, a German periodical, making reference to a trip which Hermann made to Europe in 1835, said that he had gone to America thirty-one years previously—which might locate him in Louisiana as early as 1804 (Rudolf Glanz, "Source Materials on the History of Jewish Immigration to the United States, 1800–1880," *YIVO Annual* VI [1951], 149). The LSML cemetery card for Samuel's tombstone in St. Louis Cemetery No. 2 gives his age as seventy-five years at the time of his death on June 3, 1853; his death record in NOOR, and *Picayune,* June 4, 1853, give his age as seventy-six. He was born, then, in 1777 or 1778, and was twenty-eight or twenty-nine at the time of his marriage.

[44] The Becnel and Brou genealogies have been studied by many persons. Among the correspondents who have been most helpful to me in tracing this background are J. M. Webre of Rosedale, La., Msgr. Daniel J. Becnel, Pastor of the St. Aloysius Church of Baton Rouge, Mrs. G. A. Becnel of Lake Charles, Mrs. E. A. Broders of Baton Rouge, and members of the de Tarnowsky family. The Hermann slave transactions are in the "General Repertoire" conveyance records in the St. John the Baptist Parish Courthouse in Edgard, November 21, 1809 and March 26, 1811; later Hermann activities in the area are documented for January 24, 1818, and July 31, 1824, but he was then living in New Orleans. Louis Florian's birth and baptism are in the St. John the Baptist Church Baptismal Register III, 126; perhaps Samuel had just received news of the death of his father, and felt prompted

by Jewish tradition to preserve his father's name in this new son. Samuel Hermann's name appears in the printed census list, *Federal Census of 1810, Territory of Orleans, Excluding the Parish of Orleans* (Baton Rouge, 1961), but this publication does not give the complete data included in the manuscript originals.

[45] John Lynd, Book X, 94, 187; Book XI, 164, NONA. On May 27, 1814, Hermann resold the slaves to Weinbrenner; this may have been only a money-lending transaction so that Weinbrenner could repay his debt to Rochelle and Shiff, save his plantation, and then pay off Hermann with the proceeds of the year's crops. Like other merchant-bankers, Hermann's participation in the slave system throughout the years was extensive. In 1825, for instance, he sold sixteen slaves to various farmers in St. Charles Parish: Reg. 5, pp. 32–51, St. Charles Parish Courthouse, Hahnville, La.

[46] LSML cemetery cards, from St. Louis Cemetery No. 1; SLCBR, 8, p. 104; Carlisle Pollock, Book I, 626 f (1818); *LG*, August 5, 1823.

[47] In reference to the Shiff interests, letter, Shiff to Senator Josiah S. Johnston, signed by Hermann & Co., May 10, 1830, in the Johnston Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and *Argus*, April 14, 1828, where Shiff announced to the public that his business activities would be conducted during his absence by the Hermann firm. *Argus*, November 20, 1828, first refers to the firm as Samuel Hermann and Son. Carl Kohn, in his Letter Book, in the possession of Maunsel White Hickey, New Orleans, speaks of Lucien as a partner in the Hagan firm, on July 7, 1833, and of his income on September 23, 1833. The enlargement of the firm of Samuel Hermann, Sr., is in *Bee*, November 18, 1833; the inception of Thomas Barrett & Co. is reported in *Bee*, August 1, 1834; *Bee*, June 11 and November 17, 1834, report the importation of specie; the closing of the firm of Byrne, Hermann & Co. and the formation of Hermann, Briggs & Co. are reported in *Bee*, July 2, 1836.

[48] Carl Kohn Letter Book.

[49] The Hermann home is described in Samuel Wilson, Jr., *A Guide to Architecture of New Orleans* (New Orleans, 1960), 31; Stanley Clisby Arthur, *Old New Orleans* (New Orleans, 1959), 131. Mr. Wilson, the leading historian of New Orleans architecture, has kindly given me blueprints of the home, which include his own renovations, and a copy of another article on the building, "Grima House on St. Louis One of Best Early Examples," *States*, May 16, 1953. Samuel Hermann's contracts for the construction of this home are in William Christy, Book VII, February 16, March 16, 1831, NONA. Virginie's great-grandson, Mr. James Reiss, was the first to show the home to me. It is sad that the building is known as the Grima House, in honor of the family which purchased it from the Hermann family, and that the plaque in front of the home erroneously refers to Samuel Hermann as a physician. Carl Kohn writes of his troubles with Virginie in his Letter Book, June 12, 1833. Virginie's wedding is in SLCMR, 6, p. 65; Samuel, Jr.'s on February 16, 1835, in the same location, 72; Florian's in SLCMR, 5, act 43.

[50] *Bee*, November 15, 1830; November 6, 1832; February 15, 1833; July 15, September 19, 1834; May 30, 1836; January 27, 1837; June 24, 1838; March 4, 1839; March 5, 1840; *Courier*, October 13, 1830.

[51] *Bee*, February 29, April 28, 1832; April 30, September 8, 1834; February 4, 16, April 4, 29, June 27, 1835; January 6, February 3, 8, 19, April 26, May 4, 1836; January 6, 1837; March 4, April 1, 1839.

[52] *Das Fuellhorn* (1835), 378, quoted in Glanz, "Source Materials," 149.

[53] Stephen A. Caldwell, *A Banking History of Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, 1935), 59–66; Albert A. Fossier, *New Orleans, The Glamour Period, 1800–1840* (New Orleans, 1957), 68–74; Ralph W. Hidy, *The House of Baring in American Trade and Finance, 1763–1861* (Cambridge, 1949), 186; *Bee*, November 16, 1836; April 21, 1837; March 13, 1838; June 28, December 13, 1839; June 1, 1840.

[54] Emeronthe's death is in *Picayune*, March 12, 1851; Samuel's, June 4, 1853. Both are in SLCFR 1848–1853, pp. 360 (no. 842), 622 (1623). The two are buried in St. Louis Cemetery No. 2. Lucien's commission as a notary ran from 1839 to 1850: *NOCD*, 1856; *Bee*, October 19, December 3, 1839. Dr. Landreaux's death on September 13, 1853, at the age of forty-four, is from his LSML card for St. Louis Cemetery No. 1. References to him occur in *LHQ*, XXVI (1943), 59, 77. Lucien was an active Mason for many years; he was a leader in the effort to compromise the struggle between the lodges which favored the use of the English language and those which favored French (James B. Scot, *Outline of the Rise and Progress of Free Masonry in Louisiana* [New Orleans, 1923], 77). A letter from the Grand Secretary of La., D. Peter Laguens, Jr., August 18, 1967, reports that Lucien was Grand Senior Warden, 1843–1844, and Deputy Grand Master, 1846–1848, before achieving the highest office. The approximate date of his removal from New Orleans is derived from the fact that Lucien demitted from his lodge, Perfect Union, No. 1, on March 19, 1854 (communication from the Grand Lodge of Louisiana, F. & A. M., New Orleans, March 19, 1965). Lucien and young Samuel appear first in the San Francisco directories in 1854 as merchants, in 1856 as notaries. Lucien disappears from view after 1856; Samuel continues to be listed in the directories through 1878, but the date of his death cannot be found. Samuel Hermann, Jr.'s daughter Alice married Henry Palmer—their daughter May (Marie) Eugenie Palmer married Chauncey Depew in 1907; Samuel's daughter Louise married Hall McAllister (brother of the famous socialite Ward McAllister)—their daughter Edith married Francis G. Newlands in 1888. (Extensive genealogical data on the Hermann family, of little interest here, are in the writer's files.) The inventory of Emeronthe's effects was discovered after this was already in type. It is not in the records of the probate court, but in John Claiborne, Book III, acts 234 (June 19, 1851), and 328–31 (November 13, 1851), NONA. She lived with Virginie and her husband at the time (and so, presumably, did Samuel). The worth of Emeronthe's possessions amounted to only $1,953.65, including five slaves. No inventory of Samuel's possessions appears in Claiborne's books or those of any other notary consulted. If his wife had only $168 in bedding and furniture, $178 in jewelry and $137.65 in cash, he may have had even less.

[55] Lucien Wolf, *Essays in Jewish History* (London, 1934), 55–59 ("The Romance of a Bohemian Village," reprinted from the *Jewish Chronicle* [London], April 19, 1895). Details supplied by Wolf, recalled from conversations with his father, are corrected by data in the State Jewish Museum and State Central Archive of

Prague, reported to the writer on June 24 and October 31, 1963. Wolf says that Samuel's mother was a widow when he ran away; but the Prague records indicate that Samuel's father, Nathan Kohn, died on January 18, 1831. Wolf says that there were three sons and one daughter; Prague reports that there were seven sons, but has no records of daughters (perhaps they were not considered important enough to register). The names of the sons in the Prague records are Löwy; Simon (born 1781); Samuel (born 1783); Seligman (born 1786); Joachim (born 1800); Hermann (born 1806); and Joseph (born 1808). Wolf implies that the Kohn family had lived in Hareth for a long time, but the Prague records state that in 1778 Nathan lived in Petersburg/Petrohad—about forty miles from Hareth/Hŏrany—when he married Kiwy/Eva Löbl (October 27, 1778). Nathan's parents' names were Simon and Bela—hence his Jewish name was Nathan ben (son of) Simon, or Nathan Schimml; some time later the family took the name Kohn, probably because they were Cohanim, preserving the tradition that they were descended from ancestors who had been priests in the ancient temple in Jerusalem. In view of the Nazi destruction of so much of the documentation of Jewish life in Central Europe, it is almost miraculous that even these few shreds of facts should have been preserved in Czechoslovakia.

[56] *LG*, July 4, 1806. The name Kohn was an unusual spelling for Cohen or Cohn in this period in America. One therefore wonders how there could possibly be two men of that name in early American Louisiana. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, IX, 593, notes that, in 1805, one "Jno Kohn" withdrew from the Company of Orleans Fusileers. Could "Jno" be a misreading of an entry for "Saml" in a manuscript?

[57] The Rapides Parish sales are recorded in Lynd, Book XIII (1816), 198–99 (April 16, 1816, referring to a transaction on November 23, 1808) and 562 (November 11, 1816, relating to land purchased on April 18, 1809), NONA. *Courier*, May 10, 1813, lists Kohn as owing taxes of $5.80 on property in Rapides Parish—perhaps these two parcels—and refers to him as a non-resident. The 1810 mortgage is in Fitch and Ross, Book for 1809-10, p. 113, December 17, 1810, NONA; the mortgage was renewed on April 15, 1811, and was finally paid in full on June 2, 1818 (Carlisle Pollock, Book V, 192, NONA). The building contract is in Quiñones, Book XII, 9, August 17, 1810, NONA. Kohn's endorsement of the notes is in *LG*, January 21, 1812.

[58] *LG*, December 16, 1823; September 17, 1824; *NOG*, June, 1962, p. 299; *Courier*, July 17, December 8, 1829; February 10, 1830; *Bee*, March 14, 1828; May 6, 1831; November 6, 1832; June 10, 1835; May 18, August 17, 20, October 7, 1836; August 11, 1839; February 24, 1840; L. T. Caire, Book XIX, act 297, March 22, 1832; Book XXII, act 785, August 1, 1832; L. Hermann, Book I, acts 189, 203, September 22, November 3, 1840, NONA.

[59] If Joachim was the Kohn who was a partner in the commission firm of Kohn and Coit, he was already in New Orleans in 1819 (*LG*, July 23, August 23, December 6, 1819); this may, however, have been one Matthew Kohn, of whom we know nothing else, who was in town in 1820–21 (*LG*, May 17, 1820; January 14, 1821; Carlisle Pollock, Book VI, 488–89, NONA). The earliest reference to Joachim by name is December 6, 1820, when he is listed as a passenger on the schooner

Daedalus from Bremen, arriving in the port of New Orleans that day (Milton P. Rieder, Jr., and Norma Gaudet Rieder, *New Orleans Ship Lists, I: 1820–1821* [Metairie, La., 1966], 49, which lists Joachim as eighteen years old, a merchant, from Germany). The same source, p. 26, records Samuel Kohn's arrival in New Orleans from Havana, on May 2, 1820, possibly returning via Cuba from a trip to Europe during which he decided to bring Joachim to the United States. *NOCD*, 1823, lists Samuel and Joachim together as merchants at 116 St. Ann street. In 1824 Joachim entered into a partnership with John L. Bernard (*Courier*, October 23, 1824, where he is called Joachim Kohn, Jr., probably to distinguish him from the elder Kohn who must have been well-known in the business community). The Kohn-Bordier partnership first appears in *LG*, November 24, 1826.

[60] *Bee*, April 24, 1833; April 2, 1834; February 3, April 8, 1835 (when the complaint was voiced that Joachim and three other directors bought up all of the available stock of the Marine Fire Insurance Company, although other prospective purchasers were at the designated place earlier than they); April 11, July 1, 1835; January 1, February 3, May 4, 1836; January 6, 1837; January 3, 1838; January 8, 1840; Fossier, *New Orleans*, 41; *NOCD*, 1838, pp. 346, 351; *Historical Epitome of the State of Louisiana* (New Orleans, 1840), 346.

[61] *Bee*, June 25, 1834; *Advertiser*, June 26, 1834; SLCMR, 5, p. 367. Uncle Samuel did not return to New Orleans for the wedding, but Joachim's former partner, J. L. Bernard, served as a witness. Little is known about Marie, since she died in such a brief time. One newspaper reports that she was a member of a committee which planned a fair as a benefit for the orphan girls who were in the care of the Sisters of Charity (*Bee*, June 29, 1839).

[62] Baptismal certificates for Samuel and Joseph are in SLCBR, 15, pp. 488–89. Some notes on the Kohn family were given to me by the late George A. Kohn of New Orleans. There is an article on Joseph Gustave Kohn's life and collections in *Louisiana Conservation Review*, August 1931, pp. 26–27. The Dun and Bradstreet record books, La., Vol. 10, p. 555, report the success of the Heine brothers and indicates that most of their capital was invested in real estate and stocks.

[63] Marie Alice is referred to in *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada* (Barcelona), Vol. 36, pp. 13–15; *Jewish Exponent* (Phila.), March 30, 1917. *The Book of the Israelites of Louisiana* (New Orleans, n.d.), 52, refers to contributions made by Michel to the Children's Home. Wolf, *Essays*, 58, mixed up the Heine brothers, and thought it was Amélie and Armand's daughter who married Prince Albert; he also presumed that the wedding of Marie Alice's parents took place in a New Orleans synagogue. I have heard the story verbally that Marie Miltenberger or her parents insisted that Michel adopt Catholicism, but the marriage record in SLCMR, 10, p. 593, indicates that Michel was still a Jew, and there is no subsequent reference to him as a convert in the Cathedral's Baptismal Registers. *NOG*, September, 1967, p. 332, gives some details of the Miltenberger genealogy. Marie was born in 1832, the daughter of Alphonse Miltenberger and Céleste Dorfeuille.

[64] Samuel Kohn estate papers in the NOPC, Succession No. 163,144. Record Conveyance Office (Civil District Court) Book II, pp. 300–301, January 11, 1828, located after this was set in type, identifies Delphine as a free Negress.

[65] *Archives Israélites* (Paris), CVI (1895), 124–25; Wolf, *Essays*, 55, 58; *JE*, III, 226–28; XII, 326.

[66] *Price-Current*, January 10, 24, 1835; *Bee*, January 1, December 16, 1835; January 26, 1837; January 17, March 6, 1839; January 15, 1840; Lucien Hermann, Book V, act 251, *et seq.*, November 2, 1842, NONA: *NOG*, March, 1962, p. 169; *Delta*, June 28, 1850; Carl Kohn will and succession papers, NOPC, No. 46,980; *Picayune*, August 28, 1895; Carl Kohn Letter Book, May 15, October 27, 1833. The de La Ronde line has been well investigated; the first Pierre Denis, born in Tours October 8, 1631, died in Quebec May 6, 1708. But we are not certain of the names of Carl's parents; if he was the son of Samuel's brother Levi, who married Rachel Feldstein on January 26, 1802, according to the family records in the Prague archives, his Hebrew name was Abraham. If the religious record of his marriage to Clara could be located, it might reveal his parents' names, but Protestant archives in the United States are rarely preserved with the same care and concern as Catholic records.

[67] Carl Kohn Letter Book, November 16, 1833; Wolf, *Essays*, 57.

[68] John Lynd, Book III, 111–13, NONA; *LG*, May 6, 1808; September 11, 12, 1810.

[69] Rochelle's will is dated July 1, 1824; his succession papers in NOPC include notarized statements from the Registrar of German Jews of Hamburg, Heyman Sander May, certifying the marriage of Ruben's parents, the date of Ruben's birth, the dates of his brothers' and sisters' births, and the death of their father on May 31, 1824, at the age of seventy-six. The brothers were Jacob Levin Rothschild, born March 13, 1776; Moses (Maritz), born April 16, 1782; and Berend (Bernhard), born August 4, 1784. The sisters were Golda, the wife of Lazarus Esaias Cohen, born December 14, 1777, and Rachel, born February 3, 1798.

[70] John Lynd, Book III, 111–13, NONA.

[71] *JE*, XI, 96 ff; Alexander Dietz, *Stammbuch der Frankfurter Juden Geschichtliche Mitteilungen über die Frankfurter jüdischen Familien von 1349–1849* (Frankfurt, 1907), 257–59, 381; Cyrus Adler, *Jacob H. Schiff, His Life and Letters* (New York, 1928), 2–3. The genealogical charts in *JE* and Dietz should be used with caution; they have been corrected extensively through the diligent research of Dr. Fritz Ettlinger, whose data in the Stadtarchiv of Frankfurt I have been permitted to use. Our Hart Moses was also the uncle of Moritz Schiff (1823–1891), the distinguished physician and physiologist.

[72] During 1818–19, *LG* reported the names of the merchants to whom ship cargoes were consigned. Rochelle and Shiff received twice as many as Judah Touro. From 1820 on, large shipments of cotton were delivered to them from the river steamboats. They were part owners of two of these vessels, the *Mississippi* and the *Independence* (*Ship Registers and Enrollments*, I, 93; II, 80). In 1818 they purchased the ship *Hamburg Packet* from R. D. Shepherd for $2,250 (Carlisle Pollock, Book I, April 13, 1818, NONA). The inventory of Rochelle's estate lists him as the owner of 150 shares in the Louisiana State Bank, and of a smaller number of shares of stock in other enterprises. Their election to the bank board is in *LG*, February 6, 1821; February 12, 1822; February 17, 1824; February 9, 1825; February 7, 1826.

Courier, April 11, 1826, reports that Shiff purchased seven shares in the Louisiana Insurance Company; Rochelle had already subscribed to nine—these were purchased by his estate, represented by Montgomery. A fire in their three large tobacco warehouses is described in *LG*, November 12, 1823. In view of the fact that Rochelle's brothers were merchants in Hamburg, it is probable that they were Rochelle and Shiff's purchasing agents for such large shipments of dry goods as are reported in *LG*, December 5, 1823; they may also have placed orders with Rochelle and Shiff for tobacco, for which the New Orleans partners advertised "liberal advances on Tobacco to be shipped to Hamburg" (*LG*, April 15, 1824).

[73] The public notice of the termination of the partnership is in *LG*, July 16, 1824; Rochelle's announcement that Shiff has his power of attorney is in the same issue; the report of his death is in *LG*, October 1, 1824.

[74] The Martineau-Johnston suit is reported in Martin, *Louisiana Term Reports*, n.s., I, 497–510, and in the Johnston Collection, letters of October 8, 1823; June 13, 1825; September 25, November 22, 1827; April 4, August 5, September 8, 1828; May 10, December 12, 1830. Maritz' suits are in *SC*, 263, 295. The property in the Faubourg St. Mary was all that Rochelle had retained from a huge tract of land which he and Shiff, together with W. and J. Montgomery, sold at auction on January 29, 1823; it had consisted of twenty-six lots of various sizes on some of which homes and warehouses had been erected. This sale was challenged by the redoubtable John Gravier, because the land was part of his famous claim to possession of the New Orleans Batture (*LG*, January 11, 27, 1823).

[75] The wedding is recorded in SLCMR, 3, p. 134, and *NOG*, June, 1967, p. 211; Basilique's parents' wedding on April 12, 1787, is in SLCMR, 3, p. 52, and *NOG*, June, 1962, p. 281. Chesse was 2nd Lieutenant of the Third Regiment of Louisiana Militia in 1808 (Carter, *Territorial Papers*, IX, 826). The earliest-dated Shiff card in LSML is a St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 card for Mary Louise Shiff, who died on October 25, 1811, at the age of 22 months; if the card is not in error, then Shiff had an earlier wife, or he and Basilique lived together as man and wife after a civil ceremony or none at all before their Catholic wedding. SLCFR, 1803–15, p. 277, records the burial of another child, Clara, on October 2, 1814. Two other children who did not survive childhood were Louise Marguerite, born December 25, 1815 (SLCBR, 8, p. 76), and Richard, who was buried at the age of 18 months on July 5, 1822 (SLCFR, 1820–24, p. 60). The children who survived their father, as listed in his succession papers, were Eugène, Théodore, Gustave and Henry (none of their dates of birth is known); Marie (who became the wife of A. H. Despaigne of Santiago, Cuba); Cora (who married George Gaultier of Paris); Arthur (born in 1823); and Edward (born in 1817, baptized December 21, 1824, the same day as Marie, who was born February 25, 1819)—data from SLCBR, 10, p. 148, acts 690, 691. Hart's travels are documented in letters in the Johnston Collection, and in *Argus*, April 14, 1828; *Bee*, March 7, 1836. The plantation is mentioned in Pierre A. Degelos, *Statement of Sugar Made in Louisiana in 1828 and 1829* (New Orleans, 1829); *Argus*, July 24, 1828. Edward's activities in his father's name are in Lucien Hermann, Book IV, act 63, March 14, 1842, Book VIII, acts 194–226, and Book X, acts 61–77, 136, 163, 172–74, 227 (1844–45), NONA, where so much of Samuel Kohn's and Hart Shiff's property was sold.

[76] Shiff's death is reported in the *New York Herald*, February 28, 1851; his New York City residence was at No. 5 Depau Row, Bleeker Street. The Hart Shiff inventory is in NOPC, succession No. 4841; it must be read together with the papers relating to Edward's estate (numbers 17346, 26067, 28600, in NOPC), in order to gain an understanding of the family's complex affairs, investments and relationships.

[77] Browning writes of the Shiff case in *The Diary of Orville Browning* (Springfield, Ill., 1925) I, 689–91, under date of October 27, 1864.

[78] Henry Shiff's service record in the National Archives, Washington, is incomplete. He enlisted in July, 1861, and gave his place of birth as France. His pay vouchers cover the period from October, 1861, to March, 1862. Emilie Shiff's experience is detailed in the Provost Marshal Records of New Orleans, Special Orders No. 24, June 5, 1863, in the National Archives, and in *Times*, February 8, 14, 21, 25, 1865.

[79] *Courier*, March 7, July 13, 15, August 8, 1808; *LG*, January 21, 1812; *SWFP*, XIX, 366.

[80] LSML, Girod Street Cemetery card; *Courier*, November 13, 1822, recording the brother's death on November 9.

[81] *LG*, January 16, 1823; *Bee*, March 8, 1838; May 18, 1839.

[82] His death record, NOOR, No. 248 for the year 1852, gives his name as Salomon Salomon De Jonge, although this hardly seems possible; the first and middle names never appear in full in advertisements or other records. The succession record, NOPC, is numbered 5507. M. M. Cohen, whom we will meet later, was the attorney for Nichols. Two different years are given for his birth in the succession papers, 1774 and 1780, but the death record and tombstone both give his age as seventy-two, which would date his birth in 1780. There is no evidence that De Jonge was related to the Abraham H. de Jung or De Jonge who was in Philadelphia in 1824, was in New Orleans in 1827, when he joined Congregation Shanarai-Chasset, and then went bankrupt in 1834 and 1837 (Wolf and Whiteman, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 356; *Bee*, June 21, November 7, 1834; February 16, April 2, 1835; July 6, 1836; April 28, 1837), or to a later Abraham De Jung or De Young who was one of the founders of Gates of Prayer Congregation in New Orleans (*Centennial Volume, Congregation Gates of Prayer* [New Orleans, 1950], 2).

[83] *SWFP*, Vol. XVII, 142–79, 230–31. Data on the bankruptcy also appear in John Lynd, Book VII, July 23, 1810, NONA; *LG*, May 26, June 29, 1810; June 1, 1811; *Courier*, June 3, 1811.

[84] The Nathan genealogy is in *MSAJD*, 163; an incomplete Hart line is given in *MSAJD*, 74A. Asher is located in Charleston in Elzas, *South Carolina*, 138. An obituary of Alexander (*Bee*, February 17, 1839) reports that he was in his sixty-second year, and was a native of Portsmouth; but a family note-book, in AJA, gives the town of his birth as Portsea, which *MSAJD* follows. The note-book gives no name for either wife, and no date or place of birth for Isaac. The *Bee* obituary signed by "M" calls Hart "Rev." and reports that he was for "many years a resident of the city of New York," but makes no reference to his congregational affiliation. The obituary pays high tribute to his piety and charitableness. Hart's

service is noted in Israel Goldstein, *A Century of Judaism in New York: B'nai Jeshurun, 1825–1925* (New York, 1930), 84, and Hyman B. Grinstein, *The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York, 1654–1860* (Phila., 1945), 485. Rabbi William Berkowitz has transcribed for me the Hebrew and English texts of the marriage record in the congregation's archives. Betsy Kokernot's arrival in New Orleans from Amsterdam on January 14, 1820, is listed in *Letter from the Secretary of State, with a Transcript of the List of Passengers who Arrived in the United States from the 1st October, 1819, to the 30th September, 1820* (Washington, 1821), 37, and Rieder, *New Orleans Ship Lists, I*, 5. The announcement of the firm of Alexander and Isaac Hart, together with the new Mrs. Hart's appeal to her old customers to support her under her new name, is in *Bee*, December 22, 1836.

[85] The wedding record is in St. Joseph's Church Marriage Register, 1793–1821, in the Dept. of Archives of the Baton Rouge Diocese. Asher's mother's name is given as Elizabeta. Dalton had remarried after Ana or Hana Burke's death; his wife in 1807 was Caty Yair. The records of the Dalton estate are in *SWFP*, Vol. XII, 290–311. SLCCB, 30, notes Marguerite's confirmation on May 8, 1796.

[86] *SWFP*, Vol. XIX, 485–86; Marguerite's succession record, NOPC. Her death record, NOOR, reports that she was born in Charleston.

[87] *SWFP*, Vol. XIX, 187, 262, 366 (Antonio Gras' sale of property to Marguerite, witnessed by S. S. De Jonge), 424, 431, 508, 524, 525, 533, 539. Marguerite's choice of Gras as her guardian is in Vol. XII, 297 f, February 17, 1807. If the transcription of the name "Antonio Ros" in *NOG*, January, 1967, p. 85, is an error for Antonio Gras, Marguerite's choice is explained by the fact that Antonio's son Jayme married Marguerite's sister Ana Dalton on November 3, 1792.

[88] *LG*, January 21, 1812. One other note is of interest, "executed by Joseph Lange in my favour, endorsed by Fergus Duplantier, for $105." This Joseph Lange had sold a lot on St. Louis street in New Orleans to Nathan for $500 on August 16, 1811 (*SWFP*, Vol. XIX, 431). Joseph may have been a member of a family of refugees from Saint-Domingue who arrived from Cuba during the summer of 1809. The Lange family may have been converts to Catholicism in Saint-Domingue or in Cuba; they did follow Catholic patterns in New Orleans when they did not need to. But perhaps they had lived in a Catholic environment for so long a time that they simply assumed the guise of nominal Catholics. The father, Joseph Lange Vidal, "a native of Bordeaux in France, sixty-six years of age, married to Isabel Rodriguez, residents of Saint-Domingue," was buried, without charge because of his financial condition, from St. Louis Church on July 15, 1809. His daughter, Marie Rose, was married to James Smith on January 1, 1816; Marie Aline to Jean Baptiste Latour on September 10, 1817; Marthe Claire to William Thompson on May 13, 1820; and Marie Rose, after Smith's death, to François Delaup on February 7, 1826 (SLCFR, 1803–15, p. 59; SLCMR, 3, pp. 166, 199, 240; 4, p. 78). The French records concerning the restitution of the property of refugees from Saint-Domingue (*Etat Détaillé des Liquidations* [Paris, 1828–34], VI, 526–27), list this Lange family under their Hebrew names, but with the correct identification of the names of the New Orleans husbands: Esther for Marie Rose Delaup; Rebecca for Marthe Claire Thompson; Judaïque-Rachel for Marie Aline Latour; Mardochée

for the father Joseph. Two sons are listed in the French record, Abraham and Joseph. It is this son, Joseph, who may have had the business transactions with A. M. Nathan. The value of the family's coffee and cotton plantation in the Parish of Jérémie in Saint-Domingue, was 168,700 francs. René J. Le Gardeur, Jr., who is the authority on the refugees from Saint-Domingue who came to the United States, has very generously shared this information with me. The identification of the Joseph Lange who is mentioned in the A. M. Nathan records with this family from Saint-Domingue is strengthened by the absence of any other Joseph Lange in Louisiana records of this period, although the Lange name is not an unusual one.

[89] Nathan and Williams are described as partners in John Lynd, Book XI, 106 f, March 16, 1814, NONA; *LG*, September 29, 1814; April 17, November 11, 1817. Nathan advertises a house and lots for sale (*LG*, December 30, 1817); solicits customers (*LG*, March 18, 1820); offers Louisiana Bank stock for sale (*LG*, February 12, 1822) after his association with Hermann; offers a reward for the return of his slave Sally (*LG*, February 26, March 29, 1822); sells lottery tickets for a property (*LG*, August 2, 1822); receives cases of merchandise (*LG*, March 24, May 15, 1823); deals in cotton (*LG*, March 11, 1825); subscribes to shares of stock in the Orleans Draining Co. (*Bee*, June 29, 1835); clears a ship (*Bee*, November 30, 1835); advertises bills of exchange on Paris and London (*Bee*, June 29, 1836); advertises for a runaway slave (*Bee*, March 19, 1839). His bankruptcy is attested by the listing of a note for $1,805 (labeled "insolvent debtor") in the Shiff succession papers. His activity in Baton Rouge as late as 1822 is documented in the *Baton Rouge Gazette*, October 1, 8, 15, 1822.

[90] *MSAJD*, 68, 163, contains the Nathan-Harris genealogical data. The Hyam Harris succession papers are in the NOPC. Jacob and Henry Harris are not mentioned in the estate papers; they may have remained in Charleston. Hyam's death is reported in *Courier*, June 2, 1828; the sale of his effects is in *Bee*, July 20, 1828, and *Argus*, July 29, 1828. The Harris-Goodman marriage certificate is in the possession of the Southern Jewish Historical Society, the gift of their granddaughter, Adele Clark of Richmond, brought to my attention by Saul Viener of Richmond. Moses Harris—Asher Nathan dealings are referred to in *Mobile Commercial Register*, February 4, 1837; August 4, 1841; October 26, 1842.

[91] Dun and Bradstreet record books, La., Vol. 11, p. 6; *NOCD*, 1855, p. 275; *Second Annual Report. New Orleans, Jackson and Great Northern Rail Road Company* (New Orleans, 1854), 11–14; Marguerite's succession papers, NOPC; Asher's will, No. 21124, but not the inventory of his estate, NOPC. Adolph Mazureau, Book for 1859, act 23, NONA, records the adoption on March 28, 1859. Achille Lion, Jules's son, is in L. Hermann, Book IX, act 232, October 15, 1844, NONA. Conveyance Books 75, June 30, 1857, and 82, November 12, 1860, New Orleans Civil District Court, record sales of slaves by Asher, but these transactions were personal rather than business. There were Jews named Lion in the New Orleans area in the late 1850's. Both H. Lion of New Orleans and L. Lion of Donaldsonville made contributions to the Association for the Relief of Jewish Widows and Orphans (Association board minutes, 79, 136, AJA). *NOCD*, 1855, lists Jules Lion (f.m.c.) at 304 St. Claude; A. Lion of Lion and Pinsard, French goods, at 66 Royal; A. L. Lion, clerk, at 22 St. Louis; and Herman Lion, of Lion Brothers, at 30 Camp street.

[92] St. Joseph's Church Marriage Register, 1793–1821, p. 179, Dept. of Archives, Diocese of Baton Rouge; Rosina's will, dated January 24, 1876, in her succession papers, No. 3850, NOPC; *The Israelites of Louisiana*, 27–28 (the source of the quotation); Wolf and Whiteman, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 353, 491; Carter, *Territorial Papers*, IX, 970–72 (one Abraham Phillips is also listed as a signer of this document, but he cannot be identified as a relative of our Alexander). The actual date of Phillips' move to New Orleans may be recorded in *Courier*, March 2, 1812, where his name appears on a list of those for whom letters are being held at the New Orleans Post Office. Very possibly he was just then on his way from Baton Rouge to New Orleans.

[93] Phillips' business activities can be traced in *LG*, May 30, June 27, November 6, 11, 20, 26, December 7, 1818; September 23, 1822; January 11, 1823; *Bee*, January 7, 1839; *The Israelites of Louisiana*, 27–28, Carlisle Pollock, Book XI, 210–12, February 28, 1823, NONA. His Masonic interests are noted in *LG*, August 16, 1826, and Scot, *Free Masonry in Louisiana*, 37–38, 45 (he was Grand Treasurer in 1832). His political activities are described in *Argus*, March 22, July 4, 1828; *Bee*, June 26, 1832; April 21, July 2, September 19, 1836; and *Administrations of the Mayors of New Orleans* (W.P.A. publication) (New Orleans, 1940), 34, 42. Documents referring to his two homes are in Carlisle Pollock, Book XIV, 226 f, June 9, 1824, NONA; F. de Armas, Book III, act 191, March 22, 1825, NONA.

[94] John Lynd, Book XI, 434 f, October 29, 1814, NONA; *LG*, January 3, 1818; *Bee*, May 2, 1835; Barnett, Book VII, acts 746 ff, April 19, 1839 (in which Isaac sold fifteen lots of land for $5,910, purchased a few years previously from Samuel Hermann), and act 824, July 31, 1839 (Rosina's marriage agreement, certifying to her dowry of $1,000 in cash, and a slave worth $1,000), NONA. The tombstone attesting to Rosina's piety is illustrated in Huber and Bernard, *To Glorious Immortality*, 41. An obituary noting Isaac's death on February 27, 1851, was published in the *New Orleans Christian Advocate*, a Methodist paper (reprinted in *Genealogical Register* [Baton Rouge], VI [1959], 28).

[95] Asher's succession papers in NOPC, and a notarized document in Barnett, Book VI, act 294, March 13, 1839, NONA, confirm the brothers' relationship. The estate papers refer to the brothers' parents as Victor Abraam Phillips and Alla Matemem; Alexander's wedding certificate gives them as Pedro Phillips and Elizabeth Matheman. Such variations occur frequently in family documents of the time. Johanna, Asher's wife, was the daughter of Michel Debott and Elizabeth Vander Abadies, according to her husband's succession record; whether she was Jewish cannot be ascertained. An obituary of Asher in *Picayune*, March 5, 1839, gives virtually no facts about him. Johanna's arrival in New Orleans is documented in *Letter from The Secretary of State*, 83, and Rieder, *New Orleans Ship Lists*, I, 2.

[96] The names of the children are given in *The Israelites of Louisiana*, 27–28, and in Rosina's succession papers. Young Rosina's marriage to Haber is in the Nefutzoth Yehudah Marriage Book, January 31, 1846, AJA. Unfortunately, Alexander's own will, death record and succession papers have not been located.

[97] This is a summary, with revisions, of the writer's monograph, "Benjamin Levy: New Orleans Printer and Publisher," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, LIV (1960), 241–64.

[98] George L. McKay, *A Register of Artists, Engravers, Booksellers, Bookbinders, Printers and Publishers in New York City, 1633–1820* (New York, 1942), 43, 56; *Spectator* (New York), September 5, 1810. Olmstead (1779–1823) had also been a bookbinder, was later a bookseller and publisher. Genealogical data and details about Simeon compiled from *PAJHS*, No. 4 (1896), 213; No. 27 (1920), 51–52, 85, 95, 192, 347; No. 33 (1934), 203; Pool, *Portraits*, 400–401; *MSAJD*, 116.

[99] Carlisle Pollock, Book for 1824, act 13, copy of letters of Isaac Riley, dated December 19, 20, 1814, NONA; *NOCD*, 1838 (which lists Mary as residing at 13 Jackson street); Levy's will, No. 16,298, NOPC, filed January 17, 1860, seven days after his death.

[100] Benjamin Levy's wedding is in SLCMR, 3, p. 205; the baptisms are in SLCBR, 9, pp. 80, 132. Some data about Emilie's family are to be found in Jay Higginbotham, *Family Biographies* (Mobile, 1967), 22–23. Isabel's wedding (SLCMR, 7, p. 327) is reported in *Commercial Bulletin*, May 22, 1840. The marriage caused international comment, on the mistaken ground that Isabel had been reared as a Jewess. Dr. M. Wiener, writing in the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* (Berlin), VI (1842), 294, about his trip to the United States, said, "During my stay in New Orleans I witnessed an example of tolerance on the part of the Catholic clergy which would appear incredible to any European. The daughter of the Jewish bookseller Benjamin Levy in that city married an attorney of the Protestant faith. After the bridal couple had been married in a civil wedding, the husband and wife . . . went to the Catholic church, to have their marriage consecrated there by a Catholic priest. Think of it! a Jewish bride, a Protestant bridegroom, and a Catholic priest administering the sacrament of marriage to them!" Ainsworth had been born in Providence, R. I., in 1809, was a graduate of Brown University, was a notary at the time of his marriage and, in 1846, was a Commissioner for Texas (*Picayune*, October 6, 1846; Providence *Directory*, 1828). He was in Montgomery, Ala., in 1832, apparently before coming to New Orleans (*Mobile Commercial Register*, July 13, 1832).

[101] Roger Philip McCutcheon, "Books and Booksellers in New Orleans, 1730–1830," *LHQ*, XX (1937) 610–13; *LG*, May 6, 1811; July 21, 1812; August 30, October 6, 1814; October 26, 1815; *SC*, No. 752; Orleans Parish Court Minute Book, June 1814–September 1815, Civil District Court, New Orleans; *Spectator* (New York), September 12, 1823; *Price-Current*, October 11, 1823.

[102] See *Argus*, May 19, 1826, for a typical array of books; *Price-Current*, November 15, 1829, for a variety of stationery items, and October 24, 1829, for the list of types of printing which he offered to do. Levy's 1842–43 bankruptcy files, in the National Archives, divide his stock into "School, Medical and Miscellaneous Books," and "Law Books." Theater tickets are offered in *LG*, April 24, 1822, and lottery tickets in June 25, 1818 *et seq.*

[103] Levy's first advertisement of the Darby volume is in *LG*, February 18, 1817. Olmstead may have printed the *Counting-House Calendars* which Levy advertised for sale in *LG*, December 18, 1818; December 28, 1819; February 24, 1821. *LG*, November 22, 1821, announced the opening of his print shop; November 30, 1821, advertised one of the Martin volumes. The bibliography of Levy's imprints

is in Korn, "Benjamin Levy," and in Korn, "Additional Benjamin and Alexander Levy Imprints, *PBSA*, LXII (1968), 245–52. Prieur is listed as Mayor in the *NOCD*, 1832, 1834 and 1838; Arthur, *Old New Orleans*, 53; *Biographies of Mayors of New Orleans* (W.P.A. mimeographed volume) (New Orleans, 1939), 26–29. Kate Wallach, "The Publication of Legal Treatises in America from 1800 to 1830," *Law Library Journal*, XLV (1952), 136–48, refers to Levy's legal publishing.

[104] New printings of Livingston's *Penal Code* were published both in Paris and New York City in 1873; the American republication was undertaken by the National Prison Association of the United States, and the introduction was written by Salmon P. Chase, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. One of the most notable discussions of Livingston's work is Elon H. Moore, "The Livingston Code," *Journal of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology*, XIX (1928), 344–66.

[105] *Price-Current*, March 21, 1835; *Documents Relative to the Banks of New Orleans* (New Orleans, 1837), 61, 67, 176; Levy bankruptcy files, unnumbered papers.

[106] All of this detail is from the Levy bankruptcy files. *Price-Current*, March 23, 30, December 21, 1839, report Levy's withdrawal from activity in the paper's publication, although, probably because his name was so important to its success, and possibly out of respect, Alexander and Cook continued to print on the mast-head the words "Printed at the Office of Benjamin Levy," until the issue of December 26, 1842.

[107] Alexander Levy & Co. imprints, as well as those of F. Cook and A. Levy, are listed in Korn, "Benjamin Levy." The prostitutes' license is reproduced in Herbert Asbury, *The French Quarter. An Informal History of the New Orleans Underworld* (New York, 1949), 261. Dun and Bradstreet, La., Vol. 9, p. 128, reports Alexander's business reputation ("gd. for Jews") and failure.

[108] Details of the death-dates are from *Commercial Bulletin*, May 6, 1851; *Delta*, July 23, 1852; *Crescent*, August 16, 1860; certified copies of death certificates from NOOR. Information about Mary Levy is from her great-grandniece, Irma Peixotto Sellars of Beverly Hills, California.

[109] Levy bankruptcy file; will no. 16298, and inventory of his estate, dated July 18, 1860, NOPC. Alexander declared at the inventory that five shares of stock in the Louisiana State Bank in Benjamin's name belonged to the grandchildren "of whom he was the tutor." If he was still alive, Richard was freed by the Civil War. Benjamin was buried in the Protestant Girod Street Cemetery. Alexander did not long outlive his father; he died on February 7, 1866, at the age of forty-eight, at the home of his niece, Aline Mary Ainsworth, then Mrs. Frederick Jordy (*Picayune*, February 8, 1866).

[110] *Bee*, September 24, 1839; *LG*, May 1, 1812.

[111] The roster, in the Department of Archives, Louisiana State University, is reproduced in de Grummond, *The Baratarians*, 163–70.

[112] Stanley Clisby Arthur, *The Story of the Battle of New Orleans* (New Orleans 1915), 249 f; *Picayune*, September 9, 1865.

[113] *Genealogical Register*, VI (1959), 28.

[114] Pierson, *Louisiana Soldiers*, 34, 59, 94, 102, 108.

[115] We have not attempted to investigate the participation in the battle of Jews from other areas. One such report which has come to our attention concerns Isaac Henry of Savannah and Washington, D. C., who is supposed to have fought in the forces under Jackson (ms. letter of John Samuel, Philadelphia, January 29, 1898, to Judge Mayer Sulzberger, in AJHS Library).

[116] Fossier, *New Orleans*, 200; *Bee*, April 2, 15, May 7, 28, June 20, July 2, August 4, 6, September 29, October 30, November 17, 1829; January 5, February 25, March 11, April 21, May 11, 24, October 2, 1830; April 8, 1833; August 29, 1836.

[117] *Bee*, August 29, 1836; John Lynd, Book XV, 1002–1003, December 27, 1818; Carlisle Pollock, Book II, 163, 175, from October 25, 1818, NONA; *NOCD*, 1822.

[118] SLCBR, 15, 77, May 9, 1836; SLCFR, 1833–36, p. 362. Simon's father's name is given as Mortier, but the mother's name is not reported in either record, strengthening the view that Cohen may even have been unconscious when the rites of baptism and extreme unction were administered. It is significant that the baptismal record also notes his death date, as though it had been recognized all along that the two events were related. The funeral record says that Cohen was about fifty; the obituary says fifty-five.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

[1] Alan Conway, "New Orleans as a Port of Immigration, 1820–1860," *Louisiana Studies* I (1962), No. 3, pp. 1–4; the statistics are from a letter report, August 12, 1966, from the Chief of the Bureau of the Census, U. S. Dept. of Commerce.

[2] Ira Rosenswaike, "The Jewish Population of the United States as Estimated From the Census of 1820," *AJHQ*, LIII (1963), 141, 177. Rosenswaike's "Heerman" is, of course, our Samuel Hermann, not to be confused with other men named Heerman. Rosenswaike overlooked Samuel Jacobs, on Bourbon street, one male under 45, one female under 26, 20 slaves. Nowhere in the returns, as Rosenswaike realizes, is there a mention of the name of Manis Jacobs. Nor are the following listed anywhere in the returns: Rochelle, Barnett, Samuel Kohn, Asher Phillips, Isaac Phillips, De Jonge. If the census information on which other Jewish population estimates are based, omit as many Jews as the New Orleans returns, our present estimates need to be drastically revised upward.

[3] Letter to one of his sisters, May 6, 1815, Mordecai Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina. Sam wrote of the host of ships and craft along the river, the narrow streets "filled with dust or mud," and the curious fact that the ladies did not go shopping: "The Shop Keepers send their goods out for sale." Sam did not try to meet any local Jews. He was interested in the fashionable set, and felt that his ignorance of French prevented his having a good time.

[4] *LG*, January 15, 1823.

[5] Wolf and Whiteman, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 319–20; John S. Kendall, *The Golden Age of the New Orleans Theater* (Baton Rouge, 1952), 9–13; *LG*, March 2, 8, 13, 23, 27, 30, 1819; January 19, March 3, 9, 11, 16, 1820; April 14, 16, 18, 25, 28, 1823. Other performances of Noah's plays are in *LG*, January 8, February 10, 1824; February 18, May 15, 1826; and Kendall, *passim*. *She Would be a Soldier* was performed twenty-seven times between 1823 and 1842, and Noah's melodrama *The Wandering Boys* was on the boards twenty-five times from 1823 through 1838 (Nellie Smithers, "A History of the English Theatre at New Orleans, 1806–1842," *LHQ*, XXVII [1945], 85–276, 361–572).

[6] *LG*, September 7, October 21, 1825; February 10, 1826; *Argus*, December 19, 1828. Other apparent transients in New Orleans were the following immigrants, of whose subsequent presence in New Orleans there is no indication: arrived on the Brig *Johanna Catherine* from Amsterdam, January 14, 1820: Aaron Levy Dehann, 36, with wife and three children; Isaac Levy Dehann, 30, with wife and two children; Samuel Levy Dehann (no age given)—all three listing themselves as merchants from Germany; and arrived on Brig *Jupiter* from Bremen, July 10, 1820, Michael Levy, 27, a watchmaker from Bavaria (Rieder, *New Orleans Ship Lists*, *I*, 6, 17).

[7] Will Book III, 94–95, NOPC. He died on July 6, 1818. Henry G. Schmidt, his partner, was designated as his executor. We do not know if Schmidt, who was a good friend of the Kohn family, and, later, a partner of Daniel Warburg, was Jewish.

[8] Will Book III, 93, NOPC.

[9] *LG*, December 23, 1820 (when his luggage is listed in the steamboat's cargo list); January 2 (the first advertisement in his name, but dated December 29, 1820), January 6, May 12, 1821; October 23, 1822 (his name appears in a list of estates with out-of-town heirs, giving the date of death). Heller, *Temple Sinai*, 2; Shpall, *Jews of Louisiana*, 8; and Proctor, "Jewish Life," 118, all assume that Salomon had come to New Orleans at a much earlier time. See Wolf and Whiteman, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 468, 495, for his prior activities in that city. Ezekiel had been cashier of the Lexington branch of the Bank of the United States beginning in 1816 (Lewis N. Dembitz, "Jewish Beginnings in Kentucky," *PAJHS*, No. 1 [1893], 99; AJHS has some 1819 correspondence between him and Langdon Cheves, president of the Bank).

[10] *LG*, November 25, 1820; LSML cemetery card. Rev. Bernard Susser of Plymouth, England, the acknowledged student of the Jewish history of the area, has searched the British records in an effort to discover a precise identification of our Baruh, but, he says, "There was probably an army of [Jonas] cousins called Baruch!" Baruh's oldest brother may have been the Joseph Jonas who arrived in New Orleans from Havana on May 29, 1823 (Rieder, *New Orleans Ship Lists, II* [New Orleans, 1968], 80).

[11] *LG*, September 17, 1822.

[12] *LG*, November 24, 1819; January 17, March 14, July 21, August 1, 1820.

[13] *LG*, December 13, 18, 1819; January 10, March 2, 20, May 6, 1820; *Courier*, November 3, 1826; *Argus*, March 15, September 30, November 21, 1828; Conveyance Book I, 72, May 14, 1827; XII, 227, 554, September 2, 1832, March 28, 1833, Civil District Court, New Orleans. The wedding is in *Bee*, May 7, 1832. Fossier, *New Orleans*, 188, for Joans' forgery and disappearance. A "Levi Jacobs" was in Charleston in 1818 (Elzas, *South Carolina*, 135); this may have been our man just before he came to New Orleans.

[14] *MSAJD*, 95; *LG*, August 15, 1823; *Bee*, April 6, July 6, June 25, July 30, 1829; September 30, 1830; June 27, 1832; January 17, 1835; April 10, June 13, 1839; January 8, 1840.

[15] Sam had difficulty in having his name printed properly. His first advertisement about his wife, Rosia or Rosette Abas or Abasse, gives his name correctly, but the retraction in *LG*, September 24, 1824 is over the name Jacob Solomon; even the census taker got his name wrong in the manuscript returns for 1820 and gave him the name Jacob Samuel. The legal notices concerning his separation give the correct name (*LG*, December 22, 27, 1824; January 4, 1825). Sam's financial difficulties are in *Bee*, September 15, November 21, 1834; May 26, 1835; January 22, 1839.

[16] SLCBR, 10, p. 7b.

[17] SLCMR, 4, p. 39; SLCBR, 10, p. 77, December 4, 1823.

[18] References to the two Souza men are in *Courier*, September 30, 1826; *Argus*, March 21, 1828; *Bee*, April 3, 21, May 19, 1828; May 7, 1832; April 22, May 8, June 4, 8, 14, 1834. The terms "Junior" and "Senior" were not reserved for father and son; they were applied also to brothers and even cousins who lived at the same address or were in business together. We have already noted that Joachim Kohn was referred to as "Junior." A copy of the civil marriage certificate of the wedding, at which Souza was a witness, of Edouard Ursin Pasdeloup and Léa Chimène, May 31, 1846, is in AJA; Andre Doriocourt, Book IX, act 249, NONA, contains a rental agreement, dated Nov. 10, 1853, in which Souza took part. The data about Souza's subsequent career are in the Dun and Bradstreet record books. Baiz obtained a passport to go to New Orleans on August 9, 1827, and returned on May 20, 1829 (Szajkowski, "Jewish Emigration from Bordeaux," 119, 122). He is certainly not identical with the Abraham Baiz noted in *MSAJD*, 161, as being in St. Thomas in 1816, but could have been related to that family.

[19] Audler is in Elzas, *South Carolina*, 133, which also gives Myer's earliest appearance in Charleston as 1817. Dr. Audler had been in the Charleston area by 1814; his remedy is advertised in *Spectator* (New York), May 11, 1819. Sol was in New Orleans early enough to be elected secretary of the congregation in 1827. Helene Barnett Audler (July 3, 1810–July 18, 1869) is buried with her father and mother in St. Louis Cemetery No. 1; there is no record of Sol's death or burial. His financial troubles are in *Bee*, June 9, 1830, Myer's in March 8, 1832. The record of the Levy-Audler quarrel is in *Bee*, May 31, June 1, 2, 1836. For Lewis A. Levy see Korn, *Eventful Years and Experiences* (Cincinnati, 1954), 3, 23.

[20] The Gomez genealogy is in *MSAJD*, 63. The New Orleans newspapers contain no record of the duel, but this was at the end of a cholera epidemic, and one more death was not that newsworthy. Pool, *Portraits*, 432–33, presents material on Matthias' family and his father's concern with his education. *Bee*, November 16, 1833, notes the disposition of his property. Wolf and Whiteman, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 320, report that the stagecrafter Mathias Lopez "was killed in a duel in New Orleans in 1833," but I have discovered no confirmation of this; perhaps the authors confused Lopez with Gomez. Carl Kohn's identification of Gomez as an "American" is worthy of note—not particularly because he did not know or care that Gomez was a Jew, but because he was contrasting him with the French Creole socialites, with whom he himself was identified, and of whom Bosqui was perhaps one.

[21] A clipping, probably from a Baltimore newspaper, dated New Orleans, November 29, 1836, in AJA. Dyer later became a distinguished citizen of Texas.

[22] Memorandum dictated by E. M. Bodenheimer, on the stationery of J. Fair Hardin of Shreveport, in AJA.

[23] David told his story in great detail in his reminiscences of "Early Days in Texas," published in *Gonzales Weekly Inquirer*, June 22, 1878, and following issues, reprinted in the Seventieth Anniversary issue of the paper, July 19, 1923, obtained for me by Irving S. Forgotson of Gonzales. David mentions only his father for the early

New Orleans years. The immigration records of 1820, to which we have already referred, report Betsy as coming to New Orleans from Germany, not from Holland. It may be that Betsy and Louis had already come to America, and that she then returned to Europe on a buying trip for their store. The only reference we have been able to discover to Levi Kokernot is the sale of a slave on December 18, 1823, in Carlisle Pollock, Book XII, 360, NONA.

[24] Louis' first appearance in the records is on May 26, 1821, when he appeared before the mayor to complain that one J. B. Falter had threatened to kill him; Solomon Ferth, another dry goods merchant recently come to town, appeared as a witness of the altercation (Miscellaneous New Orleans Mss, New-York Historical Society). Betsy's buildings along the rail road are referred to in L. T. Caire, Book XIX, act 263, March 15, 1832, NONA; *Bee*, January 12, 1832; April 23, 1833; April 19, 1834; January 1, 1835. Betsy's financial troubles, in which David was involved, are in *Bee*, April 18, May 30, July 21, 1832. Betsy's advertisements dealing with runaway slaves and slaves with money, *Bee*, May 6, August 5, 1833; July 12, October 13, 1834; January 30, October 24, 1835. *Bee*, July 21, 1831, reports that "an order subscribed by Widow Kokernott & Son, date not recollected, promising to pay the cabin passage of Mrs. Beugel, and her two children, from Amsterdam to this place," has been lost; Betsy's maiden name is given as Van Der Beugel or Vander Beugel in a number of documents. David Van Ostern's death certificate, signed by his brother Joseph, March 22, 1859, says he was a native of New Orleans, and that he was thirty years old at his death on March 15. The first mention of the father, Levi, was in 1828 when his stock of flannels, blankets, shoes, ready made clothing, and cottons was sold at sheriff's auction (*Argus*, June 2, 1828). Louis' partnership with Ben is in *Bee*, December 21, 1836. Ben was active in the affairs of the Washington Fire Co., No. 4, and was a member of the association of fire company representatives (*Bee*, October 3, 1837; February 17, March 1, 1838). The divorce is in *Bee*, July 3, 1839. The two children of Nancy and Louis were buried in the oldest Jewish cemetery, as were the mother (death-date unrecorded) and Louis (died at sixty-four on February 22, 1864); the children were George W. and Miriam (cemetery cards at LSML). The family's business and fiscal difficulties are reported in *Bee*, June 21, August 8, 1839; February 3, March 9, 1840; E. Barnett, Book V, act 195, 1839; Book XII, act 408, 1840, NONA. The Van Osterns are in *Transcription of Baptismal, Marriage and Death Records of Christ Church Episcopal Cathedral* (New Orleans, n.d.), 95.

[25] Daniels testified, in the probate hearing for S. S. De Jonge's succession, NOPC, that he himself had come to New Orleans in 1822. His own succession papers, No. 18791, NOPC, reveal that he was born in Prussia, and was eighty-six years old when he died. His death certificate identifies him as a widower. In the census of 1830, a young man, twenty-thirty years old, is listed in his household, but we know nothing more of this person—it may have been a son or other relative, or a clerk; Daniels owned eight slaves in 1830. Further reference to Daniels is made in *LG*, January 7, 1826; *Bee*, June 16, September 30, 1828; June 25, 1829; November 15, 1830 (where he contributes $10 to the fund for the victims of the French July Revolution); September 19, 1834; May 4, 1835; February 3, October 18, 1836; May 8, 1838 (an offer to purchase $25,000 in Mississippi banknotes at one percent

discount); May 18, June 8, 1840 (bankruptcy order). Goodman's death certificate, signed by his son George on November 13, 1858, NOPC, reports his father's age and nativity. Daniel Goodman's active organizational career is in *Courier*, December 26, 1826; *NOCD*, 1834, 254–55; *Bee*, April 25, September 28, 1837. Mrs. Adele Clark of Richmond has given the Southern Jewish Historical Society the handsomely printed memorial resolution which was adopted by his Masonic Lodge on November 22, 1858.

[26] Soher-Andrews data are in *MSAJD*, 195; the dates of birth and death of Soher are not known. Herbert T. Ezekiel and Gaston Lichtenstein, *The History of the Jews of Richmond from 1769 to 1917* (Richmond, 1917), 87, reports that Soher was in Richmond in 1817. The Soher-De Jonge partnership was dissolved in early 1823 (*LG*, January 16, 1823). Some of Soher and Daniels' purchases were very large—10,000 pounds of peltries, for instance (*LG*, April 4, 1826). The steamboat ownership information is in *Ship Registers and Enrollments*, II, 28, 122, 140. They lost one of their steamboats at a sheriff's sale in 1830 (*Bee*, April 28, 1830). *Mercantile Advertiser*, August 3, 1830, reports Abraham Harris' withdrawal from the firm. A slave was sold for Soher in 1836, after he had left town (E. Barnett, Book I, index, NONA). The saga of Miriam's brothers' dramatic rise to and fall from economic power deserves an independent study. Some data about them are found in Lewis E. Atherton, *The Southern Country Store, 1800–1860* (Baton Rouge, 1949), 25–26, 84, 120, 124, 160–61. Their advertisements in New Orleans begin in the *Bee*, May 28, 1835. They sent out a special edition of the *Price-Current Letter Sheet* to their own customers; one example, dated October 7, 1843, is in the Mississippi Dept. of Archives and History, Jackson. Solomon Andrews settled in Mobile in 1835, but was caught in the panic of 1837, and closed down the operation (*Mobile Commercial Register*, May 2, 1837), but *Bee*, June 28, 1839, reports that Zalegman would continue to represent the firm in New Orleans, with Joseph in New York City, while Eliezer Lewis would move from Huntsville to Mobile. Eliezer Lewis and Salomon both died on April 22, 1848, in a suicide pact, the former in Mobile and the latter in New Orleans. The number of Haym Salomon's children and grandchildren who came South is little short of astonishing, but it demonstrates the economic attraction of a booming frontier during this period.

[27] *MSAJD*, 33, notes the Davies-Cromelien relationship. *LG*, November 11, 1823, lists M. Cromelien, J. M. and D. Davies as traveling together. R. Cromelien was married on September 15, 1824, to Amelia Judah, in New York City (*LG*, October 22, 1824), and Mr. and Mrs. R. Davies and a Mr. Cromelien returned to New Orleans from New York on December 2, 1824 (*LG*). Cromelien, Davies, had to sell two slaves and some merchandise to settle a suit with the Bank of Louisiana in 1826 (*LG*, June 13, 1826), but they did not then go out of business, nor were they bankrupted.

[28] See the writer's "Note on the Jewish Ancestry of Louis Moreau Gottschalk, American Pianist and Composer," *American Jewish Archives*, XV (1963), 117–19. After that article was written, my friend and congregant, Jeanne Behrend, while preparing a new edition of the younger Gottschalk's *Notes of a Pianist* (New York, 1963), received more precise evidence from the genealogist R. J. D'Arcy Hart of

London: the Gottschalk family appears in the records of the Great Synagogue of London, but not all of the children are listed in the birth records because entries for the period December 25, 1794–September 12, 1801, are missing. There is no question about the identification of the family: Edward's marriage certificate (SLCMR, 4, p. 120, act 548, May 26, 1828) gives his parents' names as Mr. Lazare Gottschalk and Mrs. Harris; the Great Synagogue birth book lists a child Flora, born January 19, 1792, whose parents were Jane (Shinah) Harris and Lezer, the son of Gottschalk Levi from Nancy. Two other children listed are Judah, born in August, 1796, and Moses (Morris), born August 13, 1802—listed in the circumcision book. In 1796, the family lived on Charlotte Street in Blackfriars, and in 1802 on Prescot Street in Goodmans Fields. This additional information should put to rest any doubts about Edward's birth into the London Jewish community. Edward's advertisement of the theft of his imitation jewelry wares is in *LG*, June 12, 1823. Since he is not listed in the *NOCD*, 1822, it is a safe guess that he arrived in New Orleans in the fall of 1822 or the winter of 1822–23. Edward's death certificate, No. 350, dated November 4, 1853, NOOR, says that he was fifty-eight years old at the time of his death on October 23, 1853; but he testified at the probate hearing of his brother Joseph Victor that he was forty-four at the time (1837), which would carry his birth back to 1793. Gottschalk signed one of Shiff's letters in the Johnston Collection, June 13, 1825.

[29] Jeanne Behrend's sober introduction to the younger Gottschalk's autobiographical memoir is the best source for his life and musical achievements. The imaginative biographical reconstruction by Vernon Loggins, *Where the Word Ends* (Baton Rouge, 1958), needs to be used with caution.

[30] The announcement of the admission of James into the firm is in *Courier*, April 1, 1829. James first appears in *LG*, December 27, 1825, as receiving a shipment of cordials and wine bitters from Philadelphia. The death of the third brother, listed only by his initial "G.," is in *LG*, August 25, 1824. This was not the brother George who appears in newspaper advertisements during the 1830's. James's business dealings in land and dry goods, in his own name, are documented in *Bee*, July 8, 1835; November 1, 1836; June 25, 1839. In 1835 he was involved in a public dispute over the ownership of land in Pass Christian, Miss., with the famous attorney Edward Livingston.

[31] The bankruptcy and sales of property are in *Courier*, June 5, 1830; *Bee*, March 2, 20, 25, 1833; August 1, 20, September 12, November 5, 1834; January 1, May 2, 1835; May 19, 1837. The birthdates are given in Loggins, *Where the Word Ends*; they had a total of eight children.

[32] Loggins, *Where the Word Ends*, 139 ff, describes the father's financial position in the 1850's. *Bee*, November 11, 1834; September 8, 1835; August 29, 1836, gives examples of Edward's business activities before the 1837 panic. A careful examination of the Notarial Archives would undoubtedly provide much data on Edward Gottschalk's financial vicissitudes.

[33] Doctor Gottschalk's death certificate, signed by Edward, on July 12, 1837, NOPC, reports that Joseph had come to New Orleans from Pyritz in Pomerania. It seems likely, therefore, that Joseph had attended medical school in Germany.

Marianne's first husband, David Lucas, had died in 1820. Brothers Edward, James and George Gottschalk attended the family meeting required by law to discuss custody of Joseph's children. The doctor's announcement of his arrival is in *Bee*, November 19, 1836; the news of his death is in *Bee*, July 11, 1837. In a lengthy report of yellow fever deaths in *Bee*, September 9, 1837, Joseph is listed as having been buried in the Protestant cemetery. Joseph died intestate; his succession papers are in NOPC.

[34] *LG*, February 1, 1823.

[35] Hanns G. Reissner, " 'Ganstown, U.S.A.'—A German Jewish Dream," *American Jewish Archives*, XIV (1962), 22, 26.

[36] *Argus*, May 10, 1828; *Bee*, May 10, 1833; Carl Kohn Letter Book, June 12, 1833.

[37] The father first advertised his skills in *Argus*, January 22, 1828; he had practiced as a dentist in Charleston as early as 1802 (*MSAJD*, 54). The earliest appearance of the brothers is in *Advertiser*, June 11, 1825. William is listed in *LG*, July 1, 1826, as a captain in the Militia; Henry is described as an aide-de-camp of the 1st Militia Brigade in *NOCD*, 1838, p. 253. Jacob's political activities are reported in *Bee*, April 4, October 19, 1835; March 30, April 4, 26, 1836; April 3, 1839. William's bankruptcy is in *Bee*, March 2, 1838; the conversion of Jacob's hotel is in *Bee*, November 5, 1839. Jacob built the hotel in 1834 for $13,300 (William Christy, Book XVII, 86, January 27, 1834, NONA). Evelina Gleaves Cohen, *Family Facts and Fairy Tales* (Wynnewood, Pa., 1953), 92–94, offers some interesting details of the family's background.

[38] *Courier*, March 17, 1829; March 31, 1830; *Bee*, March 20, 1828; May 29, September 19, 1829; January 1, February 3, October 2, 1830; May 18, November 1, 1832; February 12, November 18, December 11, 1833; February 18, June 30, 1834; September 23, 1835; March 20, 1837; Fossier, *New Orleans*, 200; Manis Jacobs estate inventory, October 2–3, 1829, NOPC. In the 1830 census Lasalle was listed as being between forty and fifty years old; he owned four female slaves; a free Negro family lived in the same building.

[39] Lavergne, Book III, acts 411–12, March 25, 26, 1820, NONA: *Courier*, September 13, 1830; *Bee*, May 12, 1835; March 24, 1837; March 13, 1838; April 20, 1839. Szajkowski, "Jewish Emigration from Bordeaux," 122–23, lists a number of Sacerdote departures from Bordeaux: "Izaac Sacerdotte, to join his father in New Orleans," September 18, 1827—this was probably Simon's son; "Esther Erera, her husband and Isaac Sacredotte" to Ile de France, 1820—but see the entry which reports that "Salomon Sacerdote and the widow Ester Erera Sacerdote" went to Madrid—perhaps this was Salomon and his mother, and the prior entry is really an error for "her husband, Isaac Sacerdote." The differences in spelling are, of course, meaningless. Another Szajkowski entry is for the passport of Louis Delvaille, to New Orleans on March 12, 1827—probably another brother of Sipora's. A merchant named M. Delvaille came to New Orleans from France by way of St. Thomas on February 25, 1820; he too may have been a relative (Rieder, *New Orleans Ship Lists*, *I*, 17). It has not been possible to establish a relationship between these Sacerdote brothers and another man with the same last name,

Joseph Cohen Sacerdote, who was in Charleston in 1819 (Elzas, *South Carolina*, 139), in Mobile in 1830, running a store on Spring Hill Road (*Mobile Commercial Register*, July 1, 1830), and then turned up in Montgomery, in charge of the Alabama Exchange, offering liquor and refreshments, including "COFFEE, hot and strong, every morning" (*Alabama Journal*, September 10, 1831; January 28, 1832). Joseph Sacerdote was probably the first Jewish resident of Montgomery. In 1835 he was auctioning off property which he owned in East Wetumpka, Ala. (*Mobile Commercial Register*, November 14, 1835).

[40] Salomon's age at his death, fifty-three, is obtained from the data on his passport for a trip to Europe, 1828, in the writer's collection of Jewish Americana. Salomon was in New Orleans early enough to pay taxes on a horse and buggy in 1818–19 (mss. tax list, Miscellaneous New Orleans Collection, New-York Historical Society). Frascati advertisements are in *LG*, March 26, July 20, 26, 27, 31, 1821. NOCD, 1822, lists Salomon at Frascati, with a dwelling at 104 Royal. The bankruptcy is in *LG*, January 16, 31, 1822; June 13, 1826. It is possible that the bankruptcy applied to a business at 67 Chartres, also listed in *NOCD*, 1822, and not to Frascati, with which he still seems to have been associated in 1823 (*LG*, July 8, 1823). His legal problems connected with the gambling license are in Martin, *Louisiana Term Reports*, n.s., IV, 26–28. He was already on St. Philip street in 1826 (*LG*, May 6, 1826). Jonau's connection with the Ball Room and with Salomon is in *Bee*, August 27, November 10, 1834; April 1, 1835. Sacerdote died intestate; the inventory of his estate is in NOPC. Fossier, *New Orleans*, 359, 363, 460, 469, gives some realistic background about the Ball Room, "the scene of many scandalous and disgraceful brawls, fights and even murders," to counteract some of G. W. Cable's attractive, but fictional accounts.

[41] *Stamm- und Nachfahrentafeln der Familie Warburg Hamburg-Altona* (Hamburg, 1937), charts 2, 21, 22. A distant cousin of Daniel's, Frederick Warburg, came to Florida in 1821, briefly, to work for Moses Levy (Senator David Levy Yulee's father), but he did not remain in the United States very long (*PAJHS*, No. 25 [1917], 2 ff, 132–34); Frederick was already in Liverpool on January 2, 1822 (letter to his brother Martin, Historical Society of Pennsylvania).

[42] *LG*, June 19, 1821, is Warburg's first newspaper appearance. *Bee*, October 30, 1827, reports his return to New Orleans from a trip to New York. *Bee*, July 2, 21, August 23, September 6, October 18, November 21, 28, December 5, 21, 1831; February 2, 13, 1832, mark various stages in the organization of the Levee Steam Cotton Press, in which Warburg took a leading role. *Bee*, December 4, 1834, refers to buildings of which Warburg and the Architects Company were co-owners. Among many documents referring to real estate purchases and sales, and the construction of buildings, are L. T. Caire, Book IV, 239, August 13, 1828 (sale of a lot for $4,500); 326, October 10, 1828 (sale of a lot for $2,000); Wm. Christy, Book VI, 36–37, April 17, 1829 (purchase of land for $11,500); Caire, Book XII, act 678, August 5, 1830 (construction of three large buildings on Camp street); act 704, August 21, 1830 (construction of a building on Common street), NONA. The Caire notarial books record many other real estate operations during the 1830's. *Bee*, February 11, 1840, reports the auction of Warburg's interest in a plantation in St. Bernard Parish.

[43] *Bee*, April 4, 1835 (his candidacy for office); August 14, 1835 (quoting the St. Francisville paper); July 9, 14, August 7, 1836 (the "Lion and Serpent" communications). The two pamphlets are unrecorded in any bibliographies; the Library of Congress seems to have the only extant copies, the first of which is autographed by Warburg—they were accessioned in 1860.

[44] The Warburg family in Hamburg knew of the existence of Eugène and Daniel; they are listed in the family's genealogical charts in the *Stamm- und Nachfahrentafeln der Familie Warburg*. Eugène's birth year is given as 1826, young Daniel's as 1836, the latter's date of death as September 16, 1911, but the names of the other children and their mother are not included in the family tree. The elder Daniel's year of death is listed as 1860. We have been unable to discover any information about his death in the New Orleans press or in the notarial records. The elder Daniel was apparently so poor in 1853 that slaves held in his wife's name had to be sold for the benefit of the children. Eugène appeared at these transactions, and received $252.36 as his share of the proceeds. It may be that Eugène insisted that his mother's property be sold and divided before his departure for Europe. On the other hand, there is a St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 card in LSML for a Marie Rose Warburg, alias Blondeau, native of Santiago, Cuba, daughter of Venus Warburg, alias Blondeau, colored, died November 1, 1837, at the age of thirty-three. The date cannot be verified, but it seems to be too early, in view of the sale of Marie Rose's slaves in 1853 (A. Doriocourt, Book 9, acts 2–4, January 5, 1853, NONA). The elder Daniel's emancipation of Eugène is in Caire, Book V, 499 ff, March 27, 1830, NONA; the mother's purchase of a slave is in W. Y. Lewis, Book XXII, 327, February 10, 1837, NONA. The elder Daniel still owned a piece of real estate in the Washington suburb in 1856 which he sold for $600 (Conveyance Book LXX, 314–15, September 12, 1856, Civil District Court, New Orleans). Some data on Daniel and Eugène are in R.-L. Desdunes, *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire* (Montreal, 1911), 95–98; James A. Porter, *Modern Negro Art* (New York, 1943), 46–47; Cedric Dover, *American Negro Art* (New York, 1960), 26. The Frick Art Reference Library has been helpful in assembling information about the sons. Desdunes reports that Eugène did some statuary for the St. Louis Cathedral, and that some of Daniel's cemetery monuments were impressive, but no precise evidence has identified any of these works.

[45] *MSAJD*, 68, for the Harby genealogy; Sam was born March 23, 1813, in Charleston. *NOCD*, 1838, lists his office at the *Bee*. Harby's earliest literary contribution which we have been able to discover was in the July 18, 1835, issue of the *Louisiana Recorder*, an early New Orleans literary periodical (*Bee*, July 20, 1835). His first marriage is in *Picayune*, March 25, 1842; Frances' death is in the LSML cemetery card file, November 9, 1850. The marriage to Sarah is in *NOG*, I (1962), 163—November 22, 1851. His death is in *Delta*, June 13, 1862. His succession papers, in NOPC, value his interest in the *Bee* at $15,000. His other possessions were worth almost $21,000.

[46] We know nothing about George's prior activities. He may have taught school in Charleston under his brother, or in Louisville, where he met Mary Lucas. On the other hand, he may already have begun dabbling in stagecraft: when Mary

died of cholera on October 12, 1834, while on a visit there, George was notified through a letter from Samuel Drake, the pioneer actor-impresario of the Kentucky area (*DAB*, V, 432), whom Harby could not have met in Charleston. James Rees, the theatrical writer, of whom more later, was at the family meeting in New Orleans, after Mary's death, when Sam (the first mention of his presence in the city) was chosen to serve as guardian for Margaret Porter, Mary's half-sister, NOPC. The information on George's Academy is in *Bee*, September 26, 1834, and *Picayune*, April 2, 1839; other notes on his educational activities are in *Bee*, January 11, 22, 1834; February 14, 1835; September 23, 1836. The fire is described in *Bee*, January 13, 1840. The second annual report of Harby's public school is in the *NOCD*, 1842, pp. 164–65. Some information about the development of New Orleans' public school system is in Robert C. Reinders, *End of an Era, New Orleans, 1850–1860* (New Orleans, 1964), 131 ff. The *NOCD*, 1855 and 1856, list George as a teacher.

[47] Information about Mary is in her succession papers, NOPC. Her estate was worth only $901, including a fifty-year-old slave. *Bee*, December 18, 1835, carried the report of the second marriage, which is also recorded in SLCMR, 6, p. 152.

[48] Neither *Tutoona* nor any other play by George Harby was ever published; there is, however, a photostatic copy of the manuscript of *Tutoona, or The Indian Girl*, as it is titled, probably in Harby's hand, in the AJA. With the manuscript are some clipped reviews, including that from an unidentified newspaper, from which our quotation is taken; these clippings do not include the critical one in the *Advertiser*, April 23, 1835. Rees's comments are in his *Dramatic Mirror and Literary Companion* (Phila.), II (1842), 51, and are reprinted in some of his other books and essays on the American theater. The presentations of *Tutoona* are listed in Smithers, "A History of the English Theatre at New Orleans." *Bee*, April 9, 1835, reports the benefit; *Bee*, May 10, 1835, describes the cornerstone ceremony.

[49] James Rees, *The Dramatic Authors of America* (Phila., 1845), 30, 88–89; *Dramatic Mirror*, I, August 14, 1841; *Picayune*, March 18, 20, 22, 23, 1838; Smithers, "A History of the English Theatre at New Orleans," 227; William G. Carson, *The Theater on the Frontier, The Early Years of the St. Louis Stage* (Chicago, 1932), 268, 271 (the report that in 1839 Harby went to St. Louis with the Sol Smith company for the performance of *Nick*, and even took part in the play as an actor). George's death is reported in *Bee*, June 28, 1862; his wife survived him by thirty years, dying at the age of seventy-two in 1892 (*Item*, February 19, 1892).

[50] Jacob Florance to Lavinia Florance Minis, February 10, 1861, Minis Papers, AJA.

[51] SLCMR, 5, act 286. The precise date of the wedding has hitherto not been published; no one, apparently, sought the information from the authorities of the Cathedral. It is difficult to explain Hermann's presence at the wedding for any reason other than that he was Benjamin's former employer and subsequent friend. A Jewish patron of great wealth who had also intermarried with a Roman Catholic might be a meaningful personage at this impecunious young Jew's wedding to a socially prominent young Catholic woman. It is, on the other hand, possible, but less likely, that Hermann was present on the invitation of the St. Martin family;

Natalie's father, Auguste, had been secretary of the New Orleans Insurance Company since 1824 (*LG*, August 13, 14, 1824)—and the Hermann family owned enough stock in the company for Samuel, Jr., to be elected to its board in 1834.

[52] R. D. Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin, Confederate Statesman* (New York, 1943).

[53] The Hyams genealogy is in *MSAJD*, 87. *JE*, VI, 512, reports his admission to the bar. *MSAJD* gives December 30, 1832, as the date of Eliza's wedding, but a compilation of family data by Elzas, ms. copy in AJA, reports the date given here. Elzas lists a number of weddings which the father conducted for relatives and friends. Marks, not to be confused with one James B. Marks (probably non-Jewish) who was in New Orleans during the same period, began his activities as a notary about 1836 (*Bee*, March 9, 1836); his estate is no. 4620 in NOPC.

[54] *Bee*, January 17, 1834; August 17, 1835; *NOCD*, 1838; William W. Howe, "Reminiscences of the Bar of 1865," *Louisiana Bar Association Proceedings* (New Orleans, 1899), 94–95; *Picayune*, June 25, 26, 1875; *Times*, June 26, 1875; data in AJA from Judith Hyams Douglas, Baton Rouge.

[55] Elzas, *South Carolina*, 134, 142, 168, 189, 205, 207; *Bee*, December 12, 1836; March 16, November 29, December 8, 1837; May 11, 1838; February 5, March 20, July 4, November 8, 1839; May 8, 1840; J. S. Whitaker, *Sketches of Life and Character in Louisiana, The Portraits Selected Principally from the Bench and Bar* (New Orleans, 1847), 34–37; Robert Gibbes Barnwell, *The New-Orleans Book* (New Orleans, 1851), 340–44—an essay by Cohen on "Gratitude;" *To the Members of the Permanent Committee on the New Orleans, Algiers, Attakapas and Opelousas Railroad* (New Orleans, 1851), signed by Cohen as Chairman; *Proceedings of the Convention and Central Executive Committee of the South-Western Industrial Fair* (New Orleans, 1852), 3–4, 23–24, 31; *Picayune*, February 24, 1887; *Proceedings at the Annual Meeting, of the New-Orleans Commercial Library Society, with an Address by M. M. Cohen, Esq.* (New Orleans, 1837); O. Z. Tyler, Jr.'s introduction to the 1964 reprint of Cohen's *Notices* in the Quadricentennial Edition of the Florida Facsimile and Reprint Series, published by the University of Florida Press.

[1] *The Israelites of Louisiana*, 24, reports the tradition of services in 1750.

[2] *Asmonean* (New York), August 2, 1850.

[3] Appeal of Bene Israel Congregation, Cincinnati, to "The Elders of the Jewish Congregation at Charleston," July 3, 1825, photostat in AJA, printed in *PAJHS*, No. 10 (1902), 98–99.

[4] J. S. Solis-Cohen, Jr., "Jacob S. Solis: Traveling Advocate of Judaism," *AJHQ*, LII (1963), 310–19; *MSAJD*, 196–97; Wolf and Whiteman, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 356, 452, 456, 495; *PAJHS* No. 27 (1920), 84, 120, 321, 327–28.

[5] The resolutions are printed in *Courier*, February 10, 1830, and are included in the letter which Solomons sent to Charity Solis (AJHS Library). On March 13, 1828, Solis had purchased some real estate for $200 and promptly mortgaged it to Manis Jacobs, according to a memorandum of 1867, when Solis' children were attempting to clear up their father's estate (papers in the possession of J. S. Solis-Cohen, Jr., of Philadelphia); *Bee*, March 31, 1828, reports his receipt of some merchandise from New York City. A letter from Manis Jacobs to Solis, June 4, 1828 (AJHS Library)—printed in full later in this narrative—and a resolution of the Cincinnati congregation, August 7, 1829 (also AJHS Library), report on Solis' movements during 1828 and 1829. Solis' copy of Moses Lopez, *Lunar Calendar* (Newport, 1806) (copy in AJA), lists the birthdate of "Phebe Elizabeth" and implies that he was there at the time.

[6] We have discovered no reference to Plotz earlier than this. His obituary in *Picayune*, June 15, 1881, reports that he was a native of Amsterdam, eighty-seven years old at the time of his death; the Mrs. J. Plotz who died at the age of twenty-nine on May 12, 1833, may have been his wife (*Argus*, May 15, 1833). He was in business with one or another of the men named Barnett in 1829–30 (*SC*, No. 2718; *Bee*, August 28, 1832). He and his wife were between twenty and thirty years old in the 1830 census, with a male child under five and a female slave. The N. M. Plotz who signed the 1847 constitution of the congregation (Touro Synagogue Archives) may have been this son.

[7] Abraham Green is listed in the *NOCD*, 1822, as operating a clothing store at 79 Tchoupitoulas, above Poydras. In 1826 he sued a debtor, and some rigging from a brig was sold to satisfy the judgment in his favor (*LG*, July 21, 1826). In the 1830 census he is listed as thirty-forty years old, his wife between twenty-thirty, two sons five-ten and ten-fifteen and two daughters of similar age. One of the earliest known congregational records lists the birth of his son Salus, March 15, 1833, circumcised on April 30 by someone whose Hebrew name was Joseph ben Wolf (ms. digest of the congregation's history by Rabbi Emil Leipziger in AJA). An "A. Green" was a member of the Dispersed of Judah Congregation from

June 4, 1847, its date of incorporation, until his death some time before 1860 (*Constitution and By-Laws of the Hebrew Congregation of the "Dispersed of Judah"* [New Orleans, 1860]).

[8] Not a resident of New Orleans, but of Louisville, according to a letter of Manis Jacobs to Jacob S. Solis, June 4, 1828 (AJHS Library).

[9] This may have been the Bernard Lejeune who was active in the Bene Israel Congregation of Cincinnati and died there about 1833 (*MSAJD*, 157). Another Lejeune family came to New Orleans from Rotterdam, but David M. Levy of Philadelphia, who provided this information, does not know the date of their migration. The Bernard Lejeune of New Orleans was sued by creditors in 1832; property he had owned since 1828 was sold at auction (*Bee*, April 23, 1832; May 15, 1833).

[10] This may have been the Levy S. Levy, born in Charleston in 1806, who died in Vicksburg on July 30, 1833 (*MSAJD*, 1). The succession papers of his wife Mary, 1834, are in NOPC; she had a fifteen-month-old child named Sarah. J. L. Florance acted as curator of Mary's estate. The file indicates that the couple had been married in New Orleans. Another L. S. Levy is in the 1830 census: fifty-sixty years old, four male children between five and thirty, three female children between infancy and fifteen, with two female slaves and one free woman of color. Either or neither of these men may be the one who was a member of the congregation.

[11] *MSAJD*, 122, describes this man as coming to the United States from France with Lafayette in 1777, married to Rachel Salomon in Charleston, first child Alexander, born December 10, 1810. He must be identical with the New Orleans David Lewis whose wife's name was also Rachel Salomon, and who died on May 18, 1839 in New Orleans, succession records in the NOPC. *MSAJD* says that he was born in Strasburg about 1761; the succession records report him as a "native of Wurzburg, on the River Maine, Bavaria," and "about sixty-six years old" in 1839. His home was at 180 Tchoupitoulas street. He had done business with Daniel Goodman, Hart and Labatt, and Solomon Ferth; Isaac Phillips acted as curator of the estate. There is no mention of any children in these probate records.

[12] This may have been another brother of Jacob, Benjamin and Nathan Hart, born 1783; but this was an exceedingly common name at the time.

[13] Perhaps this was the M. J. Myers listed in the *NOCD*, 1822, with a dry goods store at 25 St. Louis street.

[14] When Manis Jacobs wrote to Solis on August 26, 1829, he reported that Prince had recently died.

[15] This man is unknown other than in the 1830 census, where he is listed as twenty-thirty years old, no one else in the household.

[16] Ferth was in New Orleans by 1821, when he testified as a witness to a complaint by Louis Kokernot. *NOCD*, 1822, listed him as a tailor at 77 Tchoupitoulas street. His age is forty-fifty in the 1830 census, with a wife forty-fifty, and a son under five.

[17] *JRBD*, 34; *MSAJD*, 47. Born in New York City in 1794, married Frances Polock August 30, 1821, died in New Orleans September 1, 1829. He had been in

Charleston in 1818 (Elzas, *South Carolina*, 134). On October 2, 1828, in New Orleans, he was sued by a creditor, and a small quantity of hats, shawls and other dry goods was sold to satisfy the debt (*Bee*, October 2, 1828). See Pool, *Portraits*, 276–77, for his father.

[18] This is probably Morton Phillips Levy, brother of Commodore Uriah P. Levy, husband of Rebecca Phillips, father of six children, one of whom, Mitchell, was born in New Orleans July 1, 1836 (*MSAJD*, 114). Newspaper references to his business affairs as follows: in 1832 he received a shipment of apples, butter, rope and other merchandise from Charleston; in 1834 and 1839 he entered suits against debtors (*Bee*, October 18, 1832; March 27, 1834; August 17, 1839). He was a member of the Dispersed of Judah Congregation from December 12, 1847, to his death before 1860 (*Constitution . . . "Dispersed of Judah"*).

[19] This may be the Solomon Emanuel Hunt in *MSAJD*, 86, who was born in Amsterdam in 1792, and died on May 7, 1846; he was married on May 15, 1827, to Rachel Peixotto. Another Solomon Hunt is a more likely candidate—his wife, Esther Millam Hunt, was in New Orleans by 1827, and appears in the notarial records in the 1830's (*Bee*, November 24, 1827; Edward Barnett, Book I [1836], acts 129–30; Book V [1839], acts 42 and 195, NONA); she was a widow by 1836 at the latest. This Mrs. Solomon Hunt was somehow related to the Kokernot family, and, like them, came from Amsterdam. She was buried in the Dispersed of Judah cemetery after her death in Biloxi on July 15, 1848 (Ms. Interment Book, AJA).

[20] Manis Jacobs' letter of August 26, 1829, to Solis reported that Leopold Jones, formerly of New York City, had died recently.

[21] An Andre Kerkhan is listed in the 1830 census, thirty-forty years old, with a young man twenty-thirty, a young woman fifteen-twenty, and a female slave. *Letter from the Secretary of State*, 37, lists one A. Solomon Kirkham, waxmaker, twenty years old, migrating from Germany to New Orleans in 1820; but Rieder, *New Orleans Ship Lists, I*, 5, reads the same name as A. Solomon Kirkhaus. Alexandrine and Catherine Kirkham are in the list of oldest burials in the Shanarai-Chasset cemetery in the congregational archives, with no dates assigned to any of the names included.

[22] This is probably the man who went bankrupt in 1840 (*Bee*, March 9, 1840), the brother of Israel Solomons, listed below, and the father of Aaron Solomons, the secretary pro-tem who signed the condolence letter to Mrs. Solis. Aaron was born in Charleston in 1791, died in New Orleans March 15, 1851. Another brother of Joseph and Israel, Chapman, died in New Orleans on June 28, 1849 (*MSAJD*, 200).

[23] Block probably never lived in New Orleans, but was an early settler in Washington, Arkansas. He was a member of a large family of Bohemian Jews who were in the United States by about 1810. *MSAJD*, 19, lists some fragmentary, tentative data about the family. Many members of the Block family married members of the Cincinnati-Quincy-New Orleans Jonas family.

[24] Died in New Orleans July 23, 1828; more about him later.

[25] This may be the Daniel De Pass who was born in Bordeaux, married Ann Watson Smith in Richmond, one of whose children was born in New Orleans in 1845 (*MSAJD*, 42). *Bee*, June 26, 1834; April 16, 1838, refer to business matters of the New Orleans De Pass.

[26] We presume that this was Levi Jacobs, and that the L. Jacobs, Jr., listed below, was his son. L. Jacobs is listed with a son thirty-forty years old, in the 1830 census.

[27] *MSAJD*, 136, reports a Morange family in the United States at this time. B. Morange & Son were in the dry goods business in New Orleans in 1827 (*Bee*, October 30, December 20, 1827); B. Morange's Medicated Oil remedy for the cure of various diseases is in *Courier*, May 18, 1826. Benjamin Morange had been a founder of Bnai Jeshurun in New York City in 1825 (Pool, *Old Faith*, 437).

[28] Workum apparently did not live in New Orleans, but in Kentucky. He may have had business dealings with merchants in New Orleans, or may have been persuaded by Solis to make a contribution. Jacobs sent Solis a copy of the *Constitution* (letter, June 4, 1828).

[29] This is probably Lewis Solomons, listed as a watchmaker in 1822 *NOCD*, and who sued David Kokernot, owed taxes, and went bankrupt, during the period 1832–34 (*Bee*, April 16, 1832; November 5, 1833; May 16, September 22, 1834).

[30] This may be the man listed in *MSAJD*, 42, 223, as born in Savannah on July 12, 1786, married to Hannah Hart in Charleston in 1813. But De Pass was a common Jewish name in America and the West Indies during this period. In 1839 a Joseph De Pass was in the auction business in New Orleans (*Bee*, October 17, 1839).

[31] From what we know of the brothers, this was probably Simon, rather than Salomon.

[32] Samuel De Pass advertised ships for Mexico in 1835–39 (*Bee*, April 17, 1835; April 2, 1839). Both he and Joseph De Pass were incorporators of Dispersed of Judah Congregation in 1847.

[33] In *NOCD*, 1822, M. Joseph is listed as a trader at 54 Orleans. He was apparently not in New Orleans in 1828 when Jacobs sent copies of the *Constitution* to Solis for delivery to him and others in Kentucky and elsewhere. He may be the Moses Joseph who married Abigail Audler in Charleston, May 24, 1818 (Elzas, *Marriage Notices*, 11); Audler is such an unusual name that it is presumed that she was a sister of Sol and the other Audler men. This would link M. Joseph to New Orleans in several ways.

[34] It would be encouraging to believe that this was one of the family of refugees from Saint-Domingue, but we have no certain evidence of this.

[35] This is another fairly common name. He was probably not the physician Isaac Montgomery Lyons who was with the Texian Army and died at A. C. Labatt's home in New Orleans on January 14, 1837, at the age of twenty-six (Will Book V, 426–28, NOPC), but he could conceivably have been the father (1774–1843): *MSAJD*, 130.

[36] This may be the Israel Solomons, a native of Amsterdam, who was in Georgetown, S. C., by 1800, and the brother of Joseph and Chapman (*MSAJD*, 200).

[37] This man had already left New Orleans for New York City by the time that Jacobs wrote to Solis in June, 1828. In *Argus*, January 19, 1828, he advertised lace goods, ladies' clothing, jewelry and perfume, for sale at his shop at 111 Royal street "all of which will be sold by wholesale or retail, at very reduced prices, as the subscriber contemplates leaving the city in a short time for New York."

[38] These were civic officials, merchants, bankers, attorneys and notaries who must have had close business relationships with Jews who were active in the formation of the congregation.

[39] Jacobs' succession papers, in NOPC, dated September 28, 1839, say that he was about fifty-seven years old at the time of his death. *Bee*, September 24, 27, 1839, report variously that he had been in New Orleans for twenty-eight and thirty years. *LG*, May 1, September 5, 1812, reports the theft, and the dissolution of the partnership. Jacobs' suit against Cholros on January 22, 1814, is in the Miscellaneous New Orleans Collection, New-York Historical Society. The slave purchases are in Nicholas Broutin, Book for 1817, pp. 194–95; Carlisle Pollock, VIII, 376, April 14, 1822; IX, 677, June 24, 1822, NONA.

[40] Bernard Hart died in Havana, Cuba, while on a business trip; his succession papers in NOPC report that he was twenty-nine years old, a native of Beaufort, South Carolina, the son of Simon Moses Hart and Rachel Levy. He and Irma had one son, Arthur. Manis' own succession papers refer to Irma as his daughter, not Angélique's. Data about Angélique is from René J. Le Gardeur, Jr., *The First New Orleans Theatre, 1792–1803* (New Orleans, 1963), 23–26, and correspondence with Mr. Le Gardeur. The time of the wedding of Manis and Angélique is estimated from the fact that in the January 2, 1826, marriage agreement between her son and Marie Chevalier of Saint-Domingue, the mother still bore the last name Verneuille, while on July 12, 1826, Angélique and Manis signed an agreement whereby he was to take charge of her financial affairs (Chr. de Armas, Book XIII, acts 4 and 200, NONA); this probably indicates that they waited to get married until her son had settled down. Angélique's cemetery card at LSML says that she was sixty-nine at her death on August 4, 1851, a native of Paris. Angélique's compensation for her Uncle Fontaine's losses in Saint-Domingue amounted to 19,350 francs (*Etat Détaillé des Liquidations*, IV, 60; VI, 28).

[41] *NOG*, September, 1962, p. 3; *LG*, November 1, 1823; *Bee*, April 27, June 26, July 14, 19, 1832; February 19, 1834; April 30, 1835; March 19, 30, 1838; July 16, August 10, December 16, 1839; succession records of Manis Jacobs and Bernard Hart, NOPC.

[42] *Bee*, September 27, 1839; his family certainly thought of him as the "Rabbi"—his son-in-law, Bernard Hart, said in the death certification, in the succession papers, that Manis had been "late a merchant and Rabbi of the Israelite congregation . . . of this city."

[43] *Allgemeine Zeitung*, VI (1842), 295.

[44] Heller, *Temple Sinai*, 4; it has been impossible to locate these descendants.

[45] Schappes, *Documentary History*, 179–81, prints the wording of the charter as it appeared, with many errors, in the legislative journal.

[46] The *Ketubah* is in the possession of the Southern Jewish Historical Society, a gift of Mrs. Adele Clark, Daniel and Amelia's granddaughter. Heller, *Temple Sinai*, 2, errs when he says that Adolphus Sterne's wedding to Rosine Ruff on June 2, 1828, was a Jewish ceremony.

[47] The sale of property by Jacobs to the congregation is in Conveyance Book III, 522, Civil District Court, and Carlisle Pollock, Book for 1828, 347–48, NONA. The act of incorporation is in *Argus*, April 10, 1828; the exchange of letters (in French) is in *Bee*, April 26, 1828; the notice to sign and pay up is in *Courier*, April 15, 1828; the first of dozens of advertisements notifying the congregants of the deadline is in *Bee*, June 12, 1828—the last appearance is August 12, 1828.

[48] Jacobs left a space here for the insertion of the number of *Constitution* pamphlets which he was sending, but he forgot to fill it in after listing all the people who were to receive copies.

[49] The officers of the congregation were so proud of the *Constitution* and of the useful calendar which it included that they advertised copies for public sale at one dollar each (*Bee*, July 1, 1828). But it had obviously been published early enough for Jacobs to send copies to Solis with this letter.

[50] Lurie may have been the Jacob Lurie whose Torah scroll was loaned to New Orleans by Shearith Israel Congregation in 1833 (Pool, *Old Faith*, 434). There was a Jacob Luria in New Orleans in 1835–36, however, who went bankrupt, spoke at an anti-abolitionist meeting, and opened a law office at 3 Bourbon street (*Bee*, April 23, August 12, December 18, 1835; April 30, 1836).

[51] There is an indication here of the date of Solis' departure from New Orleans. Jacobs does not tell Solis the name of the deceased, Hyam Harris, who died on June first (*MSAJD*, 68); the implication is that Solis left after the death, but before the burial of Harris actually took place, or else Solis would have given his answer to the question about interment—on which subject there are many divergent opinions. Harris' is reported to be the first death in the congregation after the purchase of the cemetery (Isaac Markens, *The Hebrews in America* [New York, 1888], 89, which however gives the wrong date). The request for letters from Natchez and subsequent stops would lead one to believe that this letter was sent to Solis in Natchez.

[52] This would suggest that Solis was soliciting contributions for the New Orleans congregation from Jews in these towns. Certainly the reverse was true—on August 7, 1829, the Cincinnati people passed a resolution which expressed appreciation to Solis for "his liberal donation and his useful exertions in getting subscriptions from our Israelite brethren in New Orleans in aiding us to erect a place of worship" (letter from Bene Israel to Solis, in AJHS Library).

[53] This letter is in the AJHS Library; it was previously published in Shpall, *Jews of Louisiana*, 19–20. Our reading differs from Shpall's in a number of places. "Mr. Marks" must have been A. J. Marks and, as we shall see, it was just like him to complain about the length of the service.

[54] Stern's bankruptcy is in *LG*, June 23, 1824; June 24, 1826. Isaac was Stern's son by Jeanette, according to the succession papers, NOPC. Adolphus was Stern's

son by a first wife, whose name is not known. How Isaac was related to the Van Ostern family is not indicated, nor is there any suggestion of how Jeanette Hunt Stern may have been related to Solomon Hunt. But in view of the dealings Mrs. Kokernot had with Mrs. Hunt, it is possible that all of these people constituted one vast clan through natural and marriage relationships. Emanuel had not been successful. He owed Edward Gottschalk $900; his furniture and stock of dry goods had to be auctioned off so that the debt could be settled. Gottschalk was curator of the estate. Stern had paid $100 per month rent. Two slaves who belonged to the Sterns were also sold at auction; one was eighty years old! (*Argus*, July 29, August 13, 15, 26, 1828).

[55] Adolphus Sterne deserves a full-scale study, but his significance for New Orleans is a minor one. His diary for 1840–44, 1851, is in the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* XXX (1926) –XXXVIII (1934). The introductory sketch (XXX, 139) reports that he was born in Cologne, April 15, 1801, the son of a Jew and a Lutheran. This is difficult to believe. His diary indicates that he had a knowledge of Jewish ritual and some rudimentary ability to write Hebrew or Yiddish—on October 6, 1840 (XXXI, 65) he wrote "to night is *erev Yom Kippur* [in Hebrew]"; on July 15, 1841 (XXXII, 165, 179) he reported that a neighbor with whom he was very friendly, Michael De Young ("a German Jew of the *old reverend class*") had sent him "A Book . . . containing the Service of *Yom Kippur* in the portuguese *minik* [minhag—rite]"; on October 1, 1843 (XXXVI, 221) he wrote "to day is *Yom Kippur* Mr. Flateau [a Jewish partner of De Young] is doing Penance, nonsense, to keep up a Religion only one day in the year." Sterne relished the fact that T. M. Flateau (who would ever know him to be a Jew with that name?) was going to be co-publisher of the *San Augustin Literary Intelligencer*—"a Methodist Paper—(oh! dear)—& to be under the management of a *Son of Abraham*" (XXXVII, 43—entry for December 22, 1843). All of this speaks too clearly of Adolphus' rearing as a Jew, which would have been unlikely in Europe, if his mother had really been a Christian; it is hard to believe that an intermarriage would have been conducted anywhere in Germany without the father's conversion, and Emanuel had obviously remained a Jew. Perhaps some descendant confused Adolphus' mother with his wife, Eva Catherine Rosine Ruff, whom he married in Natchitoches on June 2, 1828. Catherine had come to Louisiana from Germany with her father, mother, sister and two brothers on February 22, 1820, when they landed at New Orleans from the brig *Eugene* (Rieder, *New Orleans Ship Lists*, I, 13); she was then ten years old. Other relevant material in Adolphus' diary includes: the report that Isaac, orphaned in 1828, was keeping a store and "a Billiard Table and Bar Room—(no good place for him)" in Natchitoches in 1842 (XXXV, 321); information that Adolphus also had a sister named Nancy, unmentioned in the succession papers, who kept in touch with Isaac; she was married to a man named Stevens or Steevens (XXXI, 82–83); a note that Michael De Young's mother-in-law was a Mrs. Morange—it is natural to wonder if she was a member of the Morange family of New Orleans (XXXV, 153); a reference to a stepbrother of Adolphus, in New Orleans, named Bernard Cohen (XXXVII, 49, 59, 137). Rabbi Newton J. Friedman of Beaumont, Texas, who has worked with the Sterne materials, is convinced that Adolphus was not reared as a Christian, or converted to Christianity, despite

the many references to Catholic and Protestant ideas and faith in his diary; I am inclined to believe that, while Adolphus was in no way an observant Jew, if he was anything at all, he was one of those secularized Jews who make Masonry their religion. It is impossible to explain how Adolphus could have had a stepbrother named Bernard Cohen unless the first Mrs. Emanuel Stern was divorced and married a Mr. Cohen, or the second Mrs. Emanuel Stern had had a first husband named Cohen—but there is no confirmation of either of these possibilities in the Stern succession papers.

[56] "Doct A Costa" was Dr. Isaac Da Costa who did not practice medicine in New Orleans, but had a little store at 32 Canal street. He died in 1830. The inventory listed his stock as worth only $653.96, according to the succession papers, NOPC, June 7, 1830. Da Costa's widow, Jane, moved to Mobile in 1832 and opened a "fancy" store there, with Dr. Da Costa's sister Sarah's husband, Ralph Canter, as her partner: *Mobile Register*, May 6, 1832; *MSAJD*, 22, 222.

[57] Letter in AJHS Library.

[58] Pool, *Old Faith*, 434. No answer from Hendricks has been found. The deed of sale of the lot of ground by the city of New Orleans to the congregation is in Felix de Armas, Book for 1829, No. 903, August 25, 1829, NONA, brought to my attention by Samuel Wilson, Jr.

[1] Letter, November 1, 1807, quoted in *Parke-Bernet Auction Sale Catalogue*, October 17, 1961, lot 109. *Courier*, May 3, 1811, includes "Gratz and Co." in a list of recipients of letters to be called for at the New Orleans post office. Either Joseph or Ben Gratz might then have been in New Orleans on business. In later years Ben had extensive business relations with New Orleans firms, shipping the bagging that he manufactured in Lexington, Kentucky, down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. See *Letters of Rebecca Gratz*, 93, 96–97, for reference to a visit to New Orleans by Ben Gratz' wife.

[2] Carl Kohn Letter Book, September 23, 1833. "Salaud" is the equivalent of "dirty dog."

[3] Carl Kohn Letter Book, November 16, 1833.

[4] Reissner, " 'Ganstown,' " 26.

[5] *PAJHS* No. 21 (1913), 169; No. 27 (1921), 91, 315; Wolf and Whiteman, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 362, 496 (there is an error in the statement that A. M. Nathan was buried in Mikveh Israel cemetery in 1841); Goldstein, *A Century of Judaism*, 383; Simon Cohen, *Shaaray Tefila* (New York, 1945), 6, 14, 62–64; Rochelle's burial in Philadelphia as a non-member of Mikveh Israel brought an unexpected $250 to the congregational treasury (report by Maxwell Whiteman based on an examination of the Mikveh Israel records); the description of Hermann's contribution, May 26, 1836, from Dr. Andernacht of the State Archive of Frankfurt am Main.

[6] For an earlier treatment of Touro's relationship to Judaism, see Korn, "A Reappraisal of Judah Touro," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, XLV (1955), 568–81. Pool, *Old Faith*, 49, reports that both Touro and Jacob Hart were asked for donations to Shearith Israel, but neither responded. David Philipson, "The Cincinnati Community in 1825," *PAJHS*, No. 10 (1902), 99, records the request to Touro from Bene Israel. Much later, in 1848, the Savannah congregation asked for Touro's help in paying a *hazan's* salary, but he refused the request (Mickveh Israel Congregation minute book, August 21, 1848, AJA, quoted by Floyd Herman in a term paper, "Jewish Life in Savannah, 1790–1880," AJA).

[7] *OCC*, XI (March, 1854), 591.

[8] *Christ Church History* (New Orleans, 1947), 11, where the date is given as 1819; but it was more likely to have been 1816, when sixty-one pews were sold for a total of $13,000. Hodding Carter and Betty Werlein Carter, *So Great a Good* (Sewanee, 1955), 7–8, 20, 411, give details of Shepherd's interest in and service to the church, but do not print the list of purchasers of pews.

[9] Clapp, *Autobiographical Sketches*, 94, 101–103.

[10] *OCC*, XI (March, 1854), 590; *Niles' Weekly Register* (Baltimore), December 27, 1823.

[11] Carter, *So Great a Good*, 72, 76; *Christ Church History*, 11.

[12] Leonard V. Huber and Samuel Wilson, Jr., *The Basilica on Jackson Square* (New Orleans, 1965), 31–34; Touro inventory.

[13] Clapp, *Autobiographical Sketches*, 101–102; Reinders, *End of an Era*, 119–20.

[14] Clapp, *Autobiographical Sketches*, 97 (italics his).

[15] *OCC*, XI, 590.

[16] Parson Clapp said in his laudatory sermon after Touro's death that "He knew well that many of the recipients of his bounty hated the Hebrews, and would, if possible, sweep them into annihilation. He consulted not their ill-desert, meanness, prejudice and sin, but only how they might be best raised from debasement and destitution." "Hated the Hebrews," and "sweep them into annihilation," are strong words indeed. Were these Clapp's conclusions or Touro's? (*Asmonean* [New York], February 17, 1854).

[17] Peter Guilday, *The Life and Times of John Carroll* (New York, 1922), 711.

[18] *Bee*, September 5, 1834; Parker also said, "The Protestants can hardly be said to be in a much better state." See also Rabbi Isaac Leeser's comment in *OCC*, VIII (1850), 116: "The Christian population itself was but little given to religious observances, and formerly a degree of freedom in living was indulged in but little promotive of the growth of piety."

[19] Joseph Lyons, quoted in Jacob Rader Marcus, *Memoirs of American Jews, 1775–1865* (Phila., 1956), I, 260–61.

[20] *LG*, June 26, 1824. Samuel Hermann and A. M. Nathan had their office on Chartres street; Rochelle and Shiff were on St. Louis. Clay was a tobacco inspector who ran for alderman of the first ward and lost. The sale of his home, property, four slaves and some stock was held in January, 1825 (*LG*, April 6, 24, May 3, 21, June 3, December 7, 1824).

[21] *LG*, May 26, 1826. News of Noah's colony in *LG*, February 25, 1820, and *Courier*, March 29, 1820. Several attempts to mimic the accent of German Jews appeared in *LG*, November 30, 1822; September 8, 1823.

[22] *Bee*, December 3, 21, 1835. Edward Gottschalk was secretary of this society, which met at 113 Chartres street; it was open from 4 to 10 p.m. every day and all day Sunday. Cohen added to his income by serving as a "Transcriber, Translator and Book-keeper."

[23] Kendall, *The Golden Age of the New Orleans Theater*, 323.

[24] Quoted in Marcus, *Memoirs of American Jews*, III, 104. After the Civil War, Hyams' law partner, Benjamin Franklin Jonas, became, successively, city attorney of New Orleans, a member of the state legislature, Senator from Louisiana (1879–

1885), and collector of the port of New Orleans (*Picayune*, December 22, 1911). For a brief biography of Moïse, who was in Woodville, Mississippi, in 1836, and in New Orleans by 1840, and who served as a member of the Louisiana legislature for about fifteen years, see Harold Moïse, *The Moïse Family of South Carolina* (Columbia, S. C., 1961), 48–50.

[25] *Charter and Rules of the Boston Club, of New Orleans* (New Orleans, 1879), 18–20; *Picayune*, August 28, 1895; Stuart O. Landry, *History of the Boston Club* (New Orleans, 1938), 220–49; Augusto P. Miceli, *The Pickwick Club of New Orleans* (New Orleans, 1964), 24, 87, 95, 207–208, 220. The social exclusion of Jews in contemporary New Orleans was the subject of a journalistic essay by Calvin Trillin in *The New Yorker*, March 9, 1968, 138–44. Landry, 165 f, identifies Louis J. Salomon as the first Mardi Gras Rex, in 1872. He was the son of Jacob Hart's nephew, Ezekiel Salomon, and a great-grandson of Haym Salomon of the Revolutionary War. He was buried in the Shearith Israel Cemetery of New York City, May 6, 1925 (New York City Health Dept., Certificate No. 2388, dated April 26, 1941), courtesy of his grandniece, Muriel Schaeffer Carter, via Rabbi Malcolm Stern.

[26] Marcus, "Light on Early Connecticut Jewry," *American Jewish Archives*, I (1949), No. 2, esp. 27, 37. Malcolm Stern, "The Function of Genealogy in American Jewish History," *Essays in American Jewish History* (Cincinnati, 1958), 85, ventures some conclusions about the rate of intermarriage on the basis of available data, but Stern's list of families is far from complete, and he would be the first to admit that those Jews whom he did not trace were the most likely to have disappeared from the Jewish community through intermarriage. It is hoped that a name-by-name and family-by-family search, such as we have pursued for New Orleans, may be undertaken for other frontier cities and areas; an accumulation of such studies may help to answer our question about the extent of assimilation and disappearance during the first generation of the settlement of Jews as individuals.

[27] Cohen's succession papers, NOPC; after the inventory was taken, the property was sold at auction (*LG*, October 9, 21, 1826).

[28] *The Dedication of the Home for Jewish Widows and Orphans of New Orleans, January 9, 1856 . . . together with the Oration of B. F. Jonas, Esq . . .* (New Orleans, 1856), 18; Association for the Relief of Jewish Widows and Orphans, minute book of the board of directors, AJA, 7 ff. R. D. Shepherd gave a contribution of $250, in May, 1855. Armand and Michel Heine and Joachim Kohn were elected honorary members on March 29, 1857; Carl was elected on May 19, 1857; after the Heine brothers moved to Paris they were elected life members. Armand had been a member of the Dispersed of Judah Congregation (*Constitution*, 1860). When a new "Home" was erected in 1886, a plaque listed the names of major contributors, including Michel Heine (*Israelites of Louisiana*, 52). A brief sketch of Adolph Meyer, called "General," is given in *Israelites of Louisiana*, 117. Both Victor and Adolph Meyer figure in Carl's estate papers, succession no. 46,980, NOPC. Stanley Clisby Arthur, *Old Families of Louisiana* (New Orleans, 1931), 398, lists the White genealogy, but skips the generation between Carl and Clara Kohn and Evelyn and Victor Meyer's children. The obituary tribute to Edouard Kohn in *Archives Israélites*, V (1895), 124–25, gives some data about his philanthropic activity; the files of the

Alliance on Edouard are fairly slim—from 1881 to 1895 he lived at 49 Rue Blanche, Paris; some of his correspondence with the Alliance office was written from Meggenhorn, Switzerland, while he was visiting his cousin Marie Amélie Heine; Edouard regularly made large financial contributions to the Alliance. André Chouraqui, *Cent Ans d'Histoire l'Alliance Israélite Universelle et la Renaissance Juive Contemporaine (1860–1960)* (Paris, 1965), 420, 428, reports that Edouard was first elected to the central committee of the Alliance in 1876, and served as treasurer from 1885 until his death in 1895. Adolph Meyer, incidentally, married Benjamin F. Jonas' daughter Rosalie.

[29] Korn, "Judah P. Benjamin as a Jew," *PAJHS*, No. 38 (1949), 153–71, reprinted in Korn, *Eventful Years and Experiences* (Cincinnati, 1954), 79–97. For several of Benjamin's early Jewish clients, see the succession papers of Levy S. Levy, 1834, NOPC, and *Bee*, May 31, 1834 (J. L. Florance was curator of the estate); *Bee*, April 1, 1835, the bankruptcy of H. M. Hart and L. Solomon.

[1] Little is known of this synagogue building, other than references to it in various newspaper notices about annual meetings. It is located on Zimpel's 1834 map of New Orleans and is keyed in the list of churches.

[2] Shearith Israel Trustees' Minute Book, June 18, 1833, pp. 428-29, microfilm in AJA. Some excerpts from this letter are in Pool, *Old Faith*, 434. The Minute Book also refers to a letter from Luria asking that the Torah be sent to New Orleans.

[3] *Bee*, September 21, 1837. There seems to be no clear record of Dr. Bensadon's arrival in New Orleans. Elzas, *South Carolina*, 206, reports that he graduated in 1838; but the following year he was practicing in Mobile as a former New Orleans physician (*Mobile Commercial Register*, October 25, December 27, 1839). The father had served as Mikveh Israel's *hazan* in Philadelphia in 1817, 1819 and 1822 (Wolf-Whiteman, *Jews of Philadelphia*, pp. 251, 363).

[4] The Reas weddings are in *Bee*, May 5, 1835, where Moses is referred to as "the Revd. Moses S. Reas, of the Israelitish Congregation." One wonders if he could be the B. Rees who was so enterprising as to advertise his Comb and Variety Store, 44 Canal street, New Orleans, in the *Mobile Commercial Register*, November 26, 1828. Wedding ceremonies conducted by Jacobs are announced in *Bee*, March 16, 1837; January 31, 1838; February 9, 1839. Some Jewish couples were married first by a parish judge, then by a Jewish officiant: *Bee*, April 3, 1839 (Jacob L. Levy and Sarah Edwitha Marks), November 16, 1839 (David Aaron and Sarah Jacobs).

[5] *Bee*, October 28, November 7, 1834; October 11, 1836; *NOCD*, 1838; *Bee*, October 8, 1839.

[6] Sarah Cohn will, filed September 23, 1833; Marius Cohen succession papers, 1836; David Lewis succession papers, 1839—all in NOPC; *Bee*, August 29, 1837. The procedure whereby the congregation acted as a sort of "family" for strangers in the community, or for members without relatives, was embodied in a by-law adopted in 1841, which authorized the officers to apply to the courts for appointment as administrators of the estate, and to conduct the inventory in accordance with legal procedures (1841 ms. By-Laws, Touro Synagogue archives).

[7] 1841 ms. By-Laws; Heller, *Temple Sinai*, 8.

[8] *Bee*, July 19, 1832, the text of Crémieux' letter of April 4, 1832, in response to the resolutions which had been passed on August 10, 1831 (the Abbé died on May 28, 1831); this letter was still in the possession of descendants of Manis Jacobs in 1922 when Rabbi Heller wrote his *Temple Sinai*, 4. The synagogue lectures are advertised in *Bee*, October 16, 18, 1834.

[9] Marriage Contract books of the congregation, beginning in 1839, the oldest surviving congregational records, in the Touro Synagogue archives, copies in AJA. The oldest certificate with his signature is that of Jacob L. Levy and Sarah E. Marks, March 30, 1839—not in the congregational books—given to AJA by

their grandson, Charles B. Levy; this was a wedding previously conducted by a judge, reported in *Bee*, April 3, 1839. The grave registers in the Touro Synagogue archives, dating from fairly recent times, but listing some of the oldest interments, do not report the name of the officiating rabbi.

[10] Carson, *Theater on the Frontier*, 127, 130; William Bryan Gates, "The Theater in Natchez," *The Journal of Mississippi History*, III (1941), 87; Kendall, *Golden Age of the New Orleans Theater*, 78, 86, 162, 167, 229–30; N. M. Ludlow, *Dramatic Life As I Found It* (St. Louis, 1880), 269–70 (our quotation), 303–304, 380–81, 389, 423, 561, 660; Sol Smith, *Theatrical Management in the West and South for Thirty Years* (New York, 1868), 201–202; Smithers, "History of the English Theater," 133, 170, 187, 192, 235, 251, 266, 274. The Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, has playbills for Sol Smith's Natchez season of 1830, with Marks appearing in twenty-four performances, sometimes in two different roles the same evening. Marks as fireman is in *Bee*, July 16, 1834; May 17, 1836; September 2, 28, October 16, 1837; March 18, 1840. Other Jews who were active in the fire companies at this time were A. H. Harris, A. C. Labatt and B. Van Ostern.

[11] *Bee*, August 22, 28, September 4, 10, October 11, 1839; February 18, May 22, 1840; *Picayune*, February 5, 1842.

[12] *Allgemeine Zeitung*, VI (1842), 295; *Bee*, July 10, 11, 1835—one James Lawler advertised a $100 reward for another actor named Marks accused of stealing $350 in cash, and jewelry worth more than $200, describing this man as "a London Jew by birth and bad address for one of the sect," but stating that this was not Roley, who had a good family reputation. The New Orleans Public Library's manuscript list of plays and casts takes Marks through 1849; his last appearance was on October 31, 1849, touted as a benefit for him. The Harvard University Library's theater collection has dozens of playbills which include his name during the period 1843–47. The Sol Smith collection at the Missouri Historical Society includes a letter from Marks to Smith and Ludlow, June 9, 1847, New Orleans, offering his services for the fall season at the St. Charles Theater; in the same collection is a list of expenses for a season in Mobile, year not noted—with Marks listed at $12 (per week?). Marks's name does not appear in the incomplete list of early interments in the Shanarai-Chasset cemetery which is in the Touro Synagogue archives, nor in the Dispersed of Judah cemetery register in AJA. He is not in the cemetery card file at LSML, but his daughter Miriam is in that file, as having died on January 6, 1838, buried in the Shanarai-Chasset cemetery. The 1840 census lists Marks with a male child under five years of age, four males between twenty and thirty, one female child between five and ten, one between fifteen and twenty, two females between twenty and thirty, and eleven slaves. His daughter Bell Virginia married Henry William Canney on July 11, 1860, in Christ Church (*NOG*, June, 1963, p. 229); an Albert Stonewall Canney was buried in the Hebrew Rest Cemetery, April 6, 1904, born January 1, 1863 (LSML cemetery card)—he was probably Virginia's son. Eliza Marks, Roley's wife, died on September 8, 1880, while on vacation in Knoxville in the company of her granddaughter Minnie V. Canney. The Knoxville Jews assisted in making arrangements for the shipment of the body, and Eliza's son, Harry H. Marks, came to Knoxville to accompany his

mother's remains back to New Orleans. Eliza had been born in New Berne, N. C., in July, 1812 (Knoxville *Daily Chronicle*, September 9, 11, 1880; LSML cemetery card).

[13] A brief sketch of Leeser is in Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War* (Phila., 1951), 6; further information is given in Maxwell Whiteman, "Isaac Leeser and the Jews of Philadelphia," *PAJHS*, XLVIII (1959), 213–14. Some discussion of the problem of rabbinical leadership in this period is in Korn, *Eventful Years and Experiences*, 35–36, 39–40. Korn, "Isaac Leeser: Centennial Reflections," *American Jewish Archives*, XIX (1967), No. 2, pp. 127–41, is an effort to evaluate Leeser's significance.

[14] The two most informative sketches of Kursheedt's life are obituaries in the *Jewish Chronicle* (London), May 15, 1863, and *Jewish Record* (New York), June 5, 1863. There are many references to the father in Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *Jews of Richmond;* in Pool, *Old Faith* and *Portraits;* and in *PAJHS*. The first mention of Gershom in New Orleans concerns meetings of the Whig Party, in *Bee*, May 14, 27, June 24, 1840. Gershom's activity in the Howard Association is reported in the *Record* obituary, and in *Commercial Times*, January 1, 1849. Leeser's tribute to the father, and his recollection of their meeting, friendship and scholarly contact, are in *OCC*, X (1852), 162–67.

[15] *OCC*, I (1843), 216, 352–53, 516; II (1844), 512; III (1845), 416; mss. by-laws, Shanarai-Chasset, 1841, copy in AJA; *Israelites of Louisiana*, 41; *Constitution of "Dispersed of Judah"* (New Orleans, 1860), 18. *OCC*, VIII (1850), 198, reports that a Society Bikkur Cholim (Visiting of the Sick) had been organized in 1845—this, presumably, was different from the Benevolent Society, which was for charity rather than personal service.

[16] *DeBow's Review*, V (1848), 240.

[17] Kursheedt to Leeser, December 18, 5608 (1847), Leeser Collection, Dropsie College.

[18] Kursheedt to Leeser, March 20, 5608 (1848).

[19] Kursheedt to Leeser, January 1, May 2, 5609 (1849).

[20] *OCC*, VIII (1850), 109–19; XI (1854), 590–91; Isaac Hart to Leeser, September 9, 1851, Leeser Collection; *Delta*, January 6, 1852.

[21] Nathan to Leeser, January 9, 1853, Leeser Collection.

[22] *OCC*, VIII (1850), 8, 262–63, 317, 432; IX (1851), 57–59; Cenas, Book 47, f. 17, July 5, 1850, NONA; Huhner, *Judah Touro*, 89–92; Heller, *Temple Sinai*, 5–7, 48 ff.

[23] *Centennial Volume, Gates of Prayer* (New Orleans, 1950); *Israelites of Louisiana*, 42.

[24] Kursheedt to Leeser, February 19, 5614 (1854).

[25] The most accurate printed version of Touro's will is in Schappes, *Documentary History*, 333–41, 656–62, which also contains information on the background of the various beneficiary institutions.

[26] Kursheedt to Leeser, February 19, 5614 (1854); David de Sola Pool, "Some Relations of Gershom Kursheedt and Sir Moses Montefiore," *PAJHS*, No. 37 (1947), 214–20; Huhner, *Judah Touro*, 105, 123 ff; Michael Avi-Jonah (ed.), *Jerusalem* (New York, 1960), 162. One M. Solomons wrote a mocking letter to Leeser, from New York, February 8, 1854, commenting sarcastically about Shepherd's inheritance. It is worth noting that Shepherd gave large sums of money from his own portion of the Touro estate to the city of New Orleans, amounting to about a quarter of a million dollars (*Asmonean* [New York], February 10, 1854; *Daily Crescent*, January 21, 1859).

[27] Details of these services are in Huhner, *Judah Touro*, 102–17. The quotation is from *Bee*, January 21, 1854.

[28] In the weekly issues of the *Asmonean* (New York), beginning with January 24, 1854, and continuing for months, the reader senses the tremendous excitement which was generated by Touro's will in the non-Jewish as well as the Jewish press. Memorial resolutions were passed by congregations and institutions throughout the country, and printed in the *Asmonean*. News about Touro's benefactions was printed in Jewish papers in London, Paris, Berlin, and Italy. Touro's bounty to the Jews of Palestine was publicized again after Sir Moses finally had the houses built outside of Jerusalem. Touro's name appeared frequently in the European Jewish press throughout the decades as an example of noble generosity.

Foreword

Bertram W. Korn's *American Jewry and the Civil War* is an enduring book. Its articulation of several significant issues in Civil War history, including Jews and Southern slavery, the "Chaplaincy Controversy," and Grant's 1862 expulsion order, remain definitive. It is now being republished for the fourth time in fifty years because of its important position in the literature of both American and Jewish history. The salient differences in each edition reflect fundamental changes in American Jewish life since the book's first appearance in 1951, and like so much of American history, each edition illuminates our current understanding of ourselves as a nation struggling through this country's bloodiest internecine conflict. Indeed, American *Jewry and the Civil War,* first published by this new edition's publisher, The Jewish Publication Society, has become a living text: It tells the story of one of our nation's greatest dramas, as it explores the reactions of American Jews of the time—and then, through each edition, of three successive generations.

Originally prepared as his doctoral dissertation, *American Jewry and the Civil War* is not only the magnum opus of its author, it is also a historiographical tribute to Rabbi Korn's mentor, Dr. Jacob R. Marcus, widely recognized as the dean of American Jewish history and founder of the American Jewish Archives. Typical of Marcusian scholarship, *American Jewry and the Civil War* is primarily document based, fact intensive, Americanistic, and ultimately focused on documenting the hegemony of the American Jewish community in world Jewish history.

Korn, already a veteran chaplain when he began research for his book and later to be the first American Jewish chaplain to rise to the Flag rank (admiral) in any branch of the American armed forces, added a military dimension to his book; it was a natural extension of his own life's work and his passion for the United States Navy. "Pop Korn," as Marcus affectionately called his student, was not only one of Marcus's first disciples but also his most prolific one: Korn had an active pulpit life as rabbi of the historical synagogue of his youth, Philadelphia's Keneseth Israel.

For those reading *American Jewry and the Civil War* for the first time, it is important to note that it is not military history narrowly constructed as a report about Jewish soldiers during the Civil War, but rather a sweeping social history of American Jews during a time of war. As Allan Nevins, the leading Civil War historian of the twentieth century, wrote in his introduction to the original edition, the author "is concerned primarily with the Jewish community as a whole" and then added, "which, of course, was chiefly a Northern community." Korn himself also noted in his original preface that "our concern is not with individuals, Americans who happened to be Jews, but with the community *qua* community, with group experience rather than personal experience." Indeed, the fact that he titled his book *American Jewry and the Civil War,* and not *American Jews and the Civil War,* is significant.

American Jewry and the Civil War is a monument to empirical research. Like Allan Tarshish's massive unpublished 1938 doctoral dissertation, the first written under Marcus's guidance, and Hyman B. Grinstein's even more voluminous 1945 book, *The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York, 1654–1860,* Korn's book represented a new breed of American Jewish scholarship. Remarkably, the American Jewish Archives was only in its infancy, with relatively few documents in its collection. And so Korn needed to travel broadly to collect handwritten accounts, ephemeral publications, and rare books to do his work. Moreover, secondary literature on American Jews in the Civil War was almost non-existent, except for several articles prepared by Max Kohler for the *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society (PAJHS)* between 1897 and 1925 and a handful of books written in the vein of Simon Wolf's *The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier and Citizen* of 1895. (Data on topics not covered by Korn in his book, such as the individual participation of Jews in the army, was available in various published sources, including *The Jewish Encyclopedia* [1905] and *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* [1939–1943].

Korn's emphasis on "community" was complex. On the one hand, his book was clearly written as an apologium for American Jews in the wake of World War II. In the first edition, the author remarks that the United States witnessed a rise in anti-Semitism during both conflicts, that both wars accelerated assimilatory tendencies among American Jews, and that both wars ended with the deaths of outstanding presidents held in high regard by the Jewish community. "Comparison with more recent experience," Korn wrote in his original preface, "is unavoidable."

On the other hand, the reappearance of *American Jewry and the Civil War* in 1961 was celebratory. The country was awash in Civil War centennial activities. Writing in the preface to the paperbound edition, Korn remarked that "this book was originally written ten years ago without thought of the Civil War Centennial commemorations that are now focusing popular attention on every aspect of the most fascinating period in American history." For Korn, however, the republication of his book was also an opportunity to update his work and, in a lively historiographical essay, reintroduce his text to the public. It also enabled him to add new material that he discovered in the primary literature and report on scholarship in the decade since his book first appeared. And it gave him a forum in which to respond to his critics, which included Louis Ruchames and his "rationalization" of the anti-Jewish bias of the Abolitionists, and Oscar Handlin and his attempt to soften Korn's view of American anti-Semitism during the Civil War.

Although originally delivered as his presidential address at the fifty-ninth Annual Meeting of the American Jewish Historical Society in 1961 and republished in *PAJHS* that same year, Korn's chapter "Jews and Negro Slavery in the Old South, 1789–1865" was not added to the book until 1970, when a paperback edition was published by Atheneum. Responding to growing divisions between American Jews and African Americans in the late stages of the Civil Rights movement, Korn concluded that "Slavery . . . played a more significant role in the development of Jewish life in the Old South than Jews themselves played in the establishment and maintenance of the institution [of slavery]." Moreover, he added, "the history of slavery would not have differed one whit from historic reality if no single Jew had been resident in the South."

Finally, this new edition, at the golden anniversary of its original publication, offers yet another opportunity to read Korn's magnum opus. If his book was originally written to demonstrate how American Jews dealt with the challenges of war between 1860 and 1865, today *American Jewry and the Civil War* has new purpose as a case study of how American Jews organized themselves as Jews in an age when the forces promoting their assimilation and limitations on the construction of the Jewish community in the United States were considerably more powerful than they are today. "Has the nature of the American Jewish experience changed drastically since 1860–1865?" Korn asked in his 1951 preface—and then added rhetorically, "Let us see."

In Korn's opinion, American Jews did succeed in organizing themselves during the Civil War; and "in 1865 American Jewry was more than five years older: it had learned the lessons and gained the insights of several generations." Before the war, Korn writes *"despite the failure of all attempts to create a nation-wide Jewish organization, there was already an American Jewish unity in an emotional sense"* (original italics). "The crises of war," he writes in his epilogue, "had demonstrated . . . how feeble American Jewry actually was without representative organizations. Now with the end of the conflict, the leaders returned with renewed vigor and conviction to the task of creating a climate that would be favorable to cooperative endeavors."

American Jewry and the Civil War continues to challenge us to reexamine the American Jewish experience in all its complexity, glory, and weaknesses. The debate over the nature of American anti-Semitism, the possibilities and limits of Jewish communal organization in this country, and the delicate negotiation between the desire to be mainstream Americans and a viable minority community continues unabated today among Jewish scholars and community leaders alike. "The experiences of the American Jewish community during the Civil War . . . had far reaching effects," writes Korn, ". . . out of the crucible of those emotion-laden years came trends that were to shape the life of American Jewry for several generations." Remarkably, fifty years after its first appearance, *American Jewry and the Civil War* can be read again as a new book about an ancient people in unprecedented circumstances.

Lance J. Sussman

Rabbi Lance J. Sussman, Ph.D. is Senior Rabbi at Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, where Bertram W. Korn also served as rabbi. Sussman is the author of *Issac Leeser and the Making of American Judaism* (Wayne State University Press) and editor of *Reform Judaism in America: A Biographical Dictionary and Sourcebook* (Greenwood Press).

Introduction

by Allan Nevins

This is a striking story which the Reverend Doctor Korn has to tell; and it is safe to say that no student of the Civil War period will fail to be astonished by its scope, color and importance. The Jewish community when the war began was not numerically large—only about 150,000 people. It did not, as Dr. Korn points out, possess any great, dominant leader, such as English Jewry had in Sir Moses Montefiore, hero of the successful movement to gain British Jews full civil and political rights. But circumstances repeatedly made the American Jews the focal point of a significant and far-reaching struggle to establish principles of exact justice and equality and make them triumph over ignorance, prejudice and intolerance.

It is this struggle which gives Dr. Korn's scholarly and interesting book, with its wealth of new detail, its chief importance. He has not permitted himself to become immersed in local or special topics—in the history, for example, of the two Jewish companies which were raised for the Union armies in Chicago and Syracuse, and the two Jewish companies mustered for Confederate service in Georgia, or in the record of Jewish war activities in Cincinnati, New York and other centers. Such matters are not neglected, but they are not emphasized, for he is concerned primarily with the Jewish community as a whole—which, of course, was chiefly a Northern community. And in the record of this community what interests him most is the effort to lift human rights above restrictions based on race or religion; to make sure that in a war for enlarging the boundaries of freedom, minority groups which were doing their full share to gain victory would have their full share of liberty and respect. There are thus inspiring episodes in the story which he tells.

It was a battle for a great principle that Rabbi Fischel of New York led in urging that Jewish clergymen should have their due place in the corps of chaplains. The Congressional Act of July 22, 1861, which provided that all chaplains must be regularly ordained Christian ministers, was perhaps rather an expression of heedlessness than of bigotry; most Americans never thought of the Jews, a tiny group until the immigration of the 1850s. But Rabbi Fischel and his followers, rebuffed by Secretary Cameron, had to fight hard before they obtained the virtual repeal of the discriminatory and oppressive rule. With the detachment of a true historian, Dr. Korn shows that Fischel's brave and self-sacrificing effort was by no means given the complete rabbinical support it should have had. After Lincoln acted, success was slowly won; and on September 18, 1862—a memorable day—Jacob Frankel became the first American rabbi to serve as army chaplain.

Equally striking is the story of the spirited protest of Jewish champions against the shocking General Order No. 11, which General Grant issued on December 17, 1862, for the expulsion of all Jews "as a class" from his army department. That Order is a blot on the fame of one of our greatest generals; and the indifference which some high officials (such as Attorney-General Edward Bates) showed toward the instant movement for its abrogation is a blot on the record of our government. Here, again, a brave laughter arose. Cesar Kaskel of Paducah, one of the chief organizers of the protest, hurried to Washington and held a conversation with President Lincoln of which Dr. Korn gives a delightful account. The result was Halleck's peremptory revocation of The Order on January 4, 1863. All honor to Lincoln!—but the responsibility of Grant himself for this unjust act seems clear, and the historian shows also that not only the crass Ben Butler, but the brilliant and generally enlightened William Tecumseh Sherman, had shared a prejudice based on ignorance of the facts. It is good to note that Grant never again manifested any feeling against the Jewish community and was, indeed, a warm friend of some of its members. Cesar Kaskel's gallant captaincy of the campaign against this display of intolerance deserves to be remembered by all lovers of American liberty and fraternity.

Other parts of Rabbi Korn's book, based as it is on original and often previously unused sources, will instruct every student of the Civil War period. He tells us far more than we knew before about Lincoln's friendship for the talented British Jew, Abraham Jonas of Quincy, Illinois, and for that other interesting British-born figure, the chiropodist-peaceplanner Isachar Zacharie. Having Jewish contacts in the South, Zacharie felt able to carry on consultations with Southern leaders in which Lincoln (but not the Cabinet) took a keen interest. It was with good reason that the Jewish community took a fervent share in the national mourning on Lincoln's death. He had been a warm and constant friend of that community. But it was primarily because of their own determined energy that the Jewish group emerged from the war with their rights and immunities fortified and acknowledged; and in battling for their own due place in the American democracy, they had performed an important service to all Americans.

Author's Preface to the 1961 Edition

This book was originally written ten years ago without thought of the Civil War Centennial commemorations which are now focusing popular attention on every aspect of the most fascinating period in American history. Current interest prompts this republication in convenient paperback form, although I should have preferred to prepare a more thorough revision at this time. But in view of the flood of new Civil War source materials now appearing in ever-increasing numbers, it would be wiser, I am told, to defer a complete rewriting of the book, embodying the results of my continuing research during these years since 1951, until the Civil War Centennial has been concluded. I accede to this counsel, although I suspect that in the future as in the past, Civil War materials may well continue to outweigh those relating to any other event in our nation's history. Indeed, it seems quite unlikely that any volume on the Civil War, no matter how narrow its compass, will ever be "definitive" or "complete."

I cannot hope, in this brief preface, to present very much of the additional data which I have accumulated during these intervening years; but it may be instructive to add some references to and examples of new material, as indications of the rich and varied detail yet to be gleaned from the documents and publications of a century ago.

It should be stated, however, that none of the major contours or conclusions of any chapter or theme has been controverted as a result of my own researches or those of historian colleagues. Indeed, I have been heartened by the verification of my conclusions which has been provided by other students of the period.

The one general work of great significance which the interested reader should consult is Jacob Rader Marcus's three-volume *Memoirs of American Jews, 1776–1865* (Philadelphia, 1954–5). This splendid compilation includes a goodly proportion of informative Civil War reminiscences and autobiographical fragments which present the war from the vantage-point of many varied individuals.

There is little to add to the first chapter, other than to refer the reader to Barbara Miller Solomon's *Pioneers in Service, The History of the Associated Jewish Philanthropies of Boston* (Boston, 1956), for the history of one community's charitable organizations, an example of local historical research which has unfortunately not been followed by other Jewish federations; and to the writer's *The American Reaction to the Mortara Case, 1858–1859* (Cincinnati, 1957), for an account of the maturing of American congregations and leaders under the pressure of the notable case, together with an examination of the attitudes towards Jews expressed by Catholics, Protestants, the secular press, and government officials.

Two works provide additional material on the subject of the attitude of Jews towards slavery. The writer's paper on "Jews and Negro Slavery in the Old South, 1789–1865," in *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, Vol. 50 (1961), pp. 151–201, offers a detailed examination of the following subjects: Jews as planters, and as owners of slaves, the treatment of slaves by Jews; the emancipation of slaves by Jews; Jews as harsh taskmasters; business dealings of Jews with slaves and free Negroes; Jews as slave dealers; cases of miscegenation involving Jews and Negroes; and opinions of Jews about the slave system. Morris U. Schappes (in his *Documentary History of the Jews of the United States* [New York, 1950], pp. 405ff. and 682ff.) has presented some interesting facts about the circumstances surrounding the second oral delivery and subsequent publication of Rabbi Morris J. Raphall's crucial sermon on slavery. The presentation of the sermon was originally requested by non-Jews associated with the American Society for Promoting National Unity which was composed of Northerners and Southerners who were strongly opposed to abolitionism and the Republican Party, and who wished to promote American unity even at the cost of supporting slavery. The sermon was then repeated at a public meeting called by the Society, at which an appeal was made for funds for its publication. Raphall was not the only rabbi listed as a supporter of the Society's program and thesis, George Jacobs of Richmond, James K. Gutheim of New Orleans, and J. Blumenthal of Montgomery joined a number of Jewish laymen in giving public commendation to the Society.

A further interesting note needs to be added to the material on the experiences of the rabbis as narrated in the third chapter. Charles M. Segal has published an important new letter from Isachar Zacharie to President Lincoln in his article, "Isachar Zacharie: Lincoln's Chiropodist," in *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, Vol. 44 (1954), pp. 112–13, which relates, in part, to Rabbi Gutheim:

St. Charles Hotel
New Orleans, May 8th, 1863

To his
Excellency A Lincoln
President of the United States
Washington D C
Dear Sir

An intense excitement has pervaded this city for the past few days. First the issuing of General Banks' order notifying "regestered [*sic*] enemies" to leave this Department by the 15th inst. Then the arrival of the invincible Illinois Cavalry at Baton Rouge, having performed the most brilliant feats of the War. Again the news of Porter joining Farraguet [*sic*]. You can form no idea of the joy which overcomes the hearts of all loyal people.

As for the rebels, I can see their despondency, not only for themselves but their cause. Were it not for the female portion of their families who I fear have become perfect monomaniacs, they would in many instances take the oath.

Revd Doctor Gutheime [*sic*] Minister of the Portagees [*sic*] Israelite Congregation of this city—registered enemy—called yesterday to see me & spoke most feelingly. In his heart he wishes the Union restored—for he says under its Government the Israelite has lived and prospered—Why then should he leave? It is his wife who influences him. Another thing he took the oath of allegiance to the Confederacy & could not satisfy his own conscience to take it now to the Government, but as I said before at heart he's for the Union & I believe his going out will do good.

Col Gardner Commanding the Illinois Cavalry is now here on a few days furlough. he is one of the most modest unassuming gentlemen I have ever seen[.] You should make him a General as he possesses the true mettle.

A friend with Schooner left here yesterday on mission to Pemberton. I look for him back in ten or fifteen days when I expect to go over. Please inform Mr Seward of this fact. While writing Commodore Farraguet has arrived from above Port Hudson, Porter took possession of Alexandria on the morning of the 6th that evening the advance Column of General Banks reached them. Thus the work goes bravely on.

Very respectfully
Your Most Obt Sert
I Zacharie M D.

Zacharie wrote a similar description of Gutheim's feelings to General Banks, which Segal quotes in *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, Vol. 43 (1953), pp. 97–8. Segal takes Zacharie's report as evidence that Gutheim was a pure and simple opportunist. But I question this conclusion. Gutheim was probably a Unionist at heart, as were many if not most Southerners before Secession; but there is no evidence of disloyalty to the Confederacy on his part either before or after his journey into exile. At no time during his years in Montgomery after the writing of Zacharie's letter, so far as we know, did he attempt to influence people against the Confederacy, even in the darkest days of 1865. His friends in New Orleans and elsewhere continued to think of him as a patriotic Southerner. Had he actually felt as Zacharie reported, would he have gone into exile, would he have ministered to Southerners with such devotion, would he have returned to New Orleans, and would he later have refused to remain in the North as he did when he left the Temple Emanu-El pulpit in New York? Perhaps Zacharie's report was only wishful thinking; perhaps the chiropodist was trying to impress Lincoln and Banks with his influence on a Jewish leader. The diary of Major Isaac Scherck (in the possession of his grandson, Henry J. Scherck of St. Louis), contains notations referring to Rabbi Gutheim's friendly ministrations to Confederate military personnel in the Montgomery area; this day-by-day loyalty can hardly be squared with Zacharie's report. If a choice has to be made between the chiropodist-spy and the gentle rabbi, I prefer to believe Gutheim, not Zacharie.

The chapter on the Jewish chaplaincy can be expanded with the addition of a number of further items. My suggestion, on page 67, that the Confederate Congress was more liberal than its Federal counterpart has caused a few eyebrows to be raised fairly high. One critic asserted that this thought could not be sustained with factual evidence. The simple truth is, of course, that there is no evidence whatever to the contrary; no rabbi is known to have applied for a commission as chaplain, nor did anyone in the government indicate that such an application would have been fruitless. But I have now turned up an interesting piece of ancillary evidence, which ought to satisfy all but the most rabid anti-Confederate historians. On September 4, 1862, a bill was introduced into the Confederate Senate, known as the Exemption Bill, which listed all of the categories of persons who would be exempt from conscription. The phrase which referred to the clergy was originally worded in this form: "every minister of the Gospel, licensed to preach according to the rules of his sect, and in the regular discharge of ministerial duties." This section was discussed in the Senate on September 16; an anti-clerical Senator moved to strike it out altogether, but his effort was defeated. On the following day, the word "licensed" was changed to "authorized," and an additional exemption which applied to all members of the Quaker and Dunkard sects was introduced. At that session, no one questioned the omission of rabbis from the list. On the following day, September 18, however, the *Richmond Dispatch* featured an editorial discussion of the issue, referring to the discrimination against rabbis and urging the further emendation of the bill. "Whilst this is a Christian country," said the editorial writer, "the principles of religious liberty are opposed to any such discrimination as is implied. . . . The Jewish ministers are entitled to exemption on the principles of the Constitution as much as any others. . . ." There are no verbatim minutes of the Confederate Congress's sessions nor of the meetings of its committees; fortunately, the Richmond newspapers reported these sessions quite fully, and their reports have been assembled and published in the *Southern Historical Society Papers*. But these reports do not record any discussion of the question. When the bill was passed on September 20, 1862, the phrase had been changed from "every minister of the Gospel" to "every minister of religion." Obviously what had happened in the meantime was that some legislators had read the *Dispatch's* comments and were disturbed by the implication of the original wording of the bill. Without any public debate or comment on the issue, then, they changed the bill so that Southern rabbis would also be exempted. These details are taken from *SHSP*, VIII (1928), pp. 29–30, 158, 168–9, 192–3. This swift remedy must be compared with the experience in the Union, as narrated in the text, where a Congressman actually did call attention to the question but was ignored, and where a whole year's worth of protests, petitions, conferences, and intercessions were necessary before the Federal law was changed. There was quite enough wrong with the Confederate Government without anyone's imputing to it a lack of consideration for Jewish citizens for which there is no evidence.

Although no Confederate rabbi was commissioned as a chaplain, two Confederate privates, who had previously acted as volunteer rabbis in their communities, may actually have officiated as chaplains. These men were Uriah Feibelman of Petersburg, Virginia, who later "produced proof of his ordination as a minister of the gospel in the Hebrew Church [sic] and of his being in regular communion with the said church and . . . [was] authorized to solemnize the rites of matrimony"; and B. Nordlinger of Macon, Georgia, who served as spiritual leader of Temple Beth Israel for a time during 1862. Feibelman was a private in the Petersburg Grays, Company C, of the 12th Regiment of Volunteer Virginia Infantry, and Nordlinger was a bugler in the Macon German Artillery. Louis Ginsberg refers to Feibelman in his *History of the Jews of Petersburg, 1789–1950* (Petersburg, 1954), pp. 42–5, and Nordlinger appears in Dr. Newton J. Friedman's manuscript *History of the Jews of Macon*,

p. 32. There is, however, no contemporary documentary evidence of these men's services; only family traditions attest to their activity as leaders of Jewish worship in the Confederate forces.

Chaplain Jacob Frankel's monthly reports to the Office of the Surgeon General, recently located in the National Archives in Washington, indicate his responsibility for all of the Jewish patients in six military hospitals in the Philadelphia area. In view of the transportation problems, he could not visit more than one hospital a day, but the Chief Medical Officer of one complained to Washington that he had never been there at all; Frankel retorted by way of a letter that he had indeed served regularly at the institution, and had consistently reported his presence to the Executive Officer. That personage probably never bothered so to inform his superior.

Chaplain B. H. Gotthelf bore a heavier duty; he attempted to serve eighteen army hospitals, traveling as far as New Albany and Jeffersonville, Indiana. Since there were only two other (Christian) chaplains visiting these institutions, Gotthelf did not restrict his ministrations to Jews, as he informed his superiors in his monthly reports. In one of these, dated April 1, 1865, Gotthelf reported that he had thus far "succeeded in procuring about one thousand volumes of good German books for the hospitals," in his campaign to establish German libraries for both Jewish and non-Jewish German-speaking soldiers, which is discussed in the text.

An interesting problem which Rabbi M. Michelbacher of Richmond faced in his career as a volunteer civilian chaplain for the Confederacy concerns the court-martial of Private Isaac Arnold, of Company D of the Eighth Alabama Regiment, who was sentenced to execution by a firing-squad for cowardice and absence without leave in the presence of the enemy. Michelbacher appealed to General Robert E. Lee for mercy, and submitted a petition signed by a number of distinguished non-Jews, including Confederate Congressmen from Mississippi and Alabama. Michelbacher urged consideration for this young immigrant because, said the rabbi, he had not been aware of the seriousness of his offenses; and he also suggested that anti-Jewish prejudice had played some part in the court-martial:

> From what we have heard, we fear that the fact of being an Israelite and of foreign birth, has had an injurious tendency towards the decision of his deplorable fate—we hope for the sake of the common humanity of our race, that this report may be untrue. You, we feel assured, would not hesitate, were it necessary, to testify to the courage and soldier-like abilities of the Israelites in those legions of our beloved Confederacy that have aided in giving an heroic name to the army. . . .

It has not been possible to ascertain any further information about Arnold's fate beyond Lee's reply to another letter from Michelbacher, which stated that "the sentence in the case of Isaac Arnold has been suspended, until the decision of the President shall be known." (The petition, dated March 18, 1863, is in the possession of Mrs. Harry Fivel of Norfolk, and was brought to my attention by Rabbi Malcolm Stern of that city; Lee's letter, dated April 2, 1863, is in J. William Jones, *Personal Reminiscences of Gen. Robert E. Lee* [New York, 1875], p. 443.)

Rabbi Michelbacher's requests to General Robert E. Lee for leave for Jewish soldiers so that they might attend services on Holy Days were more successful than I had originally thought. The London *Jewish Chronicle* (Dec. 16, 1864), in an undated reprint from a Richmond newspaper which relates the story of the death of Captain Madison Marcus at the defense of Fort Gilmer, states that Marcus had "asked no leave, considering that in performing his duty to his country he worshipped his God in an acceptable manner," "although a number of his people who were in the army were granted leave of absence to attend upon the ceremonies of the 'Feast of Atonement,' which is a season of release from all labor." Private Eugene Henry Levy of Company C, Dreux's Louisiana Battery, wrote in his diary on October 1, 1864, "as Mr. Michelbacher had appealed to Gen'l Lee on the subject of granting furloughs to Israelites, I attended his synagogue to testify my appreciation of his conduct." (Marcus, *Memoirs of American Jews, 1775–1865,* III, pp. 305–7.) We have discovered no record of such consistent activity on the part of any rabbi in the Union.

There is a heart-warming epilogue to Joseph A. Joel's description of the *Seder* in the mountains of West Virginia on Passover, 1862, as related on pp. 106–8. Subsequent to the original publication of this book, I discovered a letter from Joel's commanding officer which referred to the Jewish soldier:

> I got a letter from Joel tonight. He is the Jew who got eight bullet holes in his person and lives. He says he thinks he can stand service in a couple of months. He dont want to be discharged.

This commanding offficer was a future President of the United States: Rutherford B. Hayes; the letter, dated "Log Cabin Camp, Dec. 21, 1862," and addressed to Hayes's wife, is in the Hayes Memorial Library, Fremont, Ohio, which also has files of a fascinating correspondence between Hayes and Joel indicating a long friendship and great mutual regard.

As local Jewish historical research continues, more data will be made available on the participation of Jews as individuals and as members of synagogal groups in war efforts on the home front. Newton J. Friedman's previously mentioned dissertation on the Jews of Macon refers to Mrs. S. Dessau's role as a founder and directress of the Macon "Ladies' Soldier Relief Society" (p. 30); Irving I. Katz's *The Beth El Story* (Detroit, 1955), p. 75, describes the participation of a number of Jewish ladies, representing their synagogue, at the organizational meeting of the Detroit Soldiers' Aid Society. Kate Cumming, in her *Kate: The Journal of a Confederate Nurse*, ed. by Richard B. Harwell (Baton Rouge, 1959), pp. 85, 152, refers to gifts to her hospital unit of money and food delicacies by the Hebrew Military Aid Society of Mobile. The Jews of New Orleans gave notable support to their city's Free Market, which was established for the benefit of the families of soldiers away on duty. Henry Florance, a noted Jewish leader, was a member of the executive committee of the Free Market, while B. DaSilva and B. Cohen held other committee posts. Lists of contributions sent to the Market by individual Jews include such varying items as a bundle of tape, boxes and barrels of fish, one live sheep, and four sacks of meal. Two New Orleans congregations made cash contributions, and the proceeds of a Hebrew Charity Ball were also presented to the committee. These facts are gleaned from *The Report of the Committee of the Free Market of New Orleans Established for the Benefit of the Families of Our Absent Volunteers* (New Orleans, 1862), pp. 2, 58, 60, 61.

Further investigation of the reports of Jewish companies at West Point and Macon, Georgia, has failed to establish their authenticity. The diary of Louis Merz of West Point indicates that all of the Jewish young men of the community tried to enlist in the West Point Guards, but two were rejected because of poor eyesight; only five, including himself, were accepted. In view of this eyewitness account of Jewish participation in the Guards, which ultimately became Company D of the Fourth Georgia Regiment, it is unlikely that an all-Jewish Company existed. (*Pioneer Members and History of Temple Beth-El, 1859–1959; Diary of Private Louis Merz, C.S.A. of West Point Guards 1862,* [Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society Bulletin 4, West Point, 1959], pp. 10–11, 46–7.) Rabbi Newton J. Friedman searched the Macon records for information about a Jewish company, but he reports, as did Simon Wolf (in *The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier and Citizen*, p. 135), that while more than thirteen Jews enlisted in the Macon German Artillery, references to an exclusively Jewish company cannot be found.

No further data has been published which might cast additional light on the circumstances surrounding the issuance of Grant's Order Number 11. But a slight flurry of excitement has been created over the detail of the numbering of the order, by Nathan Reingold's "Resources on American Jewish History in the National Archives," *PAJHS*, Vol. 47 (1958), p. 193. Originally labeled "Order Number 12," the heading of the edict expelling civilian Jews was changed by the government's editors when the total compilation of army orders was published in *The War of the Rebellion: Official Records*. The facts are clearly explained by Kenneth P. Williams, in *Lincoln Finds a General* (New York, 1956), Vol. IV, p. 512: General Order Number 9, which was drawn up at La Grange, Mississippi, on November 25, 1862, was never issued. The headquarters records carry the notation, "Recalled—will not be issued." But it was too late to change the numerical sequence of later orders. To avoid confusion now, however, it would seem to be wise for all concerned to accept the Federal editorial decision, and to continue to utilize the emended number rather than insist puristically that the original number be cited.

I find myself unable to permit Louis Ruchames's contentions in "The Abolitionists and the Jews," *PAJHS*, Vol. 42 (1952), pp. 131–56, to remain unanswered. Though the abolitionist movement was not *per se* anti-Semitic, some of its leaders did have anti-Jewish leanings. At the very least it can be asserted that the abolitionists were *not* interested in defending the civil rights of Jews; their reactions to the Mortara case, as outlined in the writer's volume on the subject, make that clear. Despite Ruchames's advocacy, it is certain that if they and other Republican Congressional leaders had been friendly to Jewish interests, they would have had *something* to say about the Grant order. As we have indicated, the Democrats utilized the Grant affair for political purposes; but Republicans should not be applauded for doing the same thing. Ruchames insists that "no question of constitutional rights was involved." Does he really believe that the banishment of members of a specific religious group, without trial, and without any evidence of grave conspiracy or danger, was not a violation of constitutional rights? Ruchames says further, in defense of the refusal of the Republicans to criticize Grant, that the real responsibility for denouncing the Grant order was Lincoln's, and that if the President did not see fit to do so, the Republican Senators and Congressmen certainly should not be expected to have done his job. But Lincoln's revocation of Grant's anti-Semitic order was highly publicized! Newspapers throughout the land carried reports far and wide that "the President instructed Gen. Halleck to countermand the order imperatively"—those were the words of the Washington correspondent of the *New York Tribune;* and the *New York Times* said, "The immediate and peremptory abrogation of Grant's order by the President saved the Government from a blot, and redeemed us from the disgrace of a military assault upon a people whose equal rights and immunities are as sacred under the Constitution as those of any other sect, class or race" (*Baltimore Sun*, Jan. 9, 1863; *New York Times*, Jan. 18, 1863). Dr. Ruchames has presented a useful corrective to Isaac Mayer Wise's prejudices against the abolitionists; but he has gone to the other extreme of rationalizing everything relating to the Jews that the abolitionists did or said. Perhaps reformers always need to be single-minded. I would not want to imply that the abolitionists were wrong in opposing slavery; I do suggest that their humanitarian concerns were quite limited if they could not interest themselves in the problems which Jews also faced.

The *American Jewish Archives*, Vol. IX (1957), pp. 83–125, has published a fascinating document about the life and activities of Jews in Memphis during the period of the Grant order, entitled "Kronikals of the Times," a composition in mock-Biblical style by Abraham Ephraim Frankland, president of the Memphis congregation. A fanatical supporter of the Confederacy; Frankland insists that he himself never took part in any of the speculative excesses of the time, and that he was innocent of wrong-doing, even on the one occasion when he himself was arrested, during services, at the synagogue. But, despising both the Northern Jews who came South after the Federal occupation, and the local Jews who took the oath of allegiance to the Union, he bitterly criticizes most of his co-religionists. He tells one story after another: of Rabbi Tuska's preaching to the congregation, warning the people against malefaction, and being denounced to the military authorities by Northern worshippers; of Northern Jews being driven out of town by Southern Jewish boycott; of cotton smuggling by Jews whom he calls by name; of the arrest of certain Jews for the sale of contraband; of Jewish prisoners bribing their way out of jail; of deals which Jews consummated with high-ranking (Gentile) officers. It makes for enthralling reading: this spiteful, self-righteous man's denunciation of his co-religionists. But it is especially important because even Frankland, with all his disdain for so many of his fellow-Jews, was shocked at the widespread corruption of detectives, civil officials, and military officers.

The chapter on anti-Semitism might well be expanded to twice its present length. Much additional material has appeared in newly published diaries, reminiscences, and letter collections, revealing a serious amount of anti-Jewish prejudice both North and South. Yet when I describe it as "serious," I should not want to be misunderstood. All of the anti-Semitism of the war period put together, including the Grant order, was only a minor social malady in the total outpouring of hatred, fear, anger, privation, suffering, propaganda, tragedy, and grief which made the war so cruel an experience for the American people. Yet, in terms of the Jewish experience in America, with which we are here concerned, this outbreak of prejudice loomed large. It was far greater in articulation, repetition, frequency, and in action too, than had ever before been directed against Jews in America.

There is no need here for further illustrations of this prejudice, since I hope to be able to publish a fresh study of the subject within the next several years. But some indication of the shock of the all-pervasive mood of recrimination against Jews on a sensitive young Jewish boy's mind might be gathered from a letter which Gratz Cohen, a student at the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, wrote to his distinguished father, the Honorable Solomon Cohen of Savannah, on January 9, 1864, now preserved in the Miriam Gratz Cohen Papers at the Southern Historical Collection of the University of North Carolina:

> It is a mournful fact that in these troubled times when intolerance & prejudice cast their baneful seed throughout the land, which from one quarter of it to another rings with abuse of God's people, that we have done nothing for our religion & are so blind to our own interests. Jewish wealth, rapidly gained has been scattered in all directions & for every body's benefit, but their own—private charities, public charities, sectarian charities have been enriched by their bounties, yet the newspapers of the country lift up their lying tongues against them & no defending voice has been heard.... Why have we no Jewish newspaper to justify us before the world & explain to us our position, to remind Israel, that it is not a race of shopkeepers, but a peculiar people set apart by *Jehovah* for His service & glorification. Indeed! there should be a paper devoted to Jewish interests, established at Columbia or some other safe inland town, with Mr. [George] Jacobs or some other such man as editor & those Jews, who have given their thousands to Gentile charities should contribute their mite to its support....

The journal was never established; before the war came to its inevitable end, Gratz Cohen had been drafted from his studies and killed in battle. Despite his resentment at the anti-Semitic propaganda so characteristic of the time, Gratz Cohen did not withhold from the Confederacy the greatest service in his power to offer—his life.

My reading of anti-Semitism in general and in particular has been challenged by Dr. Oscar Handlin in *Commentary*, XII (1951), pp. 287–9. He calls special attention to certain articles in *Harper's Weekly* by the commentator who signed himself "the Lounger," and suggests that they were really "a long argument *against* anti-Semitism." Without taking up too much space, I will ask the reader to judge from this excerpt from *Harper's* of August 1, 1863, whether its author was encouraging anti-Semitism or arguing against it:

> AN OPEN LETTER
>
> My Dear Friend:
>
> You are a German and a Jew, and you have come to make your living in a foreign land, of which Christianity is the professed religion. You have no native, no political, no religious sympathy with this country. You are here solely to make money, and your only wish is to make money as fast as possible. You neither know our history nor understand our Government; but, believing that all men are selfish and mean, nothing is absurder to your mind than the American doctrine of popular government based upon equal rights.
>
> This being the case with you and thousands like you, you are inevitably a Secessionist, a Copperhead, and a Rebel. But why deceive yourself since you deceive nobody else? Your opinion is of no value, because you neither know nor care anything about the subjects upon which you pronounce. If things can be kept quiet by agreeing to dissolve the Union and to destroy the Government, you are for that course. And you are the enemy of all who will risk war to save the nation. If things can be kept still by slaughtering Irishmen, you cheerfully agree. . . . You want money. . . . If you can have a fine house, and horses, and servants, and fifty thousand dollars a year, you have what you want, and all the rest is moonshine. . . . And whatever in this country is despotic, mean and repugnant to the great and fundamental doctrines of equal rights before the law, receives your hearty sympathy and support. The country you left did not regret your coming away; the country in which you trade will not mourn your departure.
>
> Yours, with all the respect possible,
> THE LOUNGER

Handlin conveniently forgets to mention that this writer of "a long argument *against* anti-Semitism" (his italics) was silent at the time of the Grant order, when he really had an opportunity to declare himself in favor of the "great and fundamental doctrines of equal rights before the law" over which he so piously pontificated.

Charles M. Segal has added to our knowledge of Isachar Zacharie's war-time career in two articles already cited; Zacharie will probably continue to attract interest as one of the most unusual personalities in the entire constellation of Lincoln's Washington. Yet another Lincoln–Zacharie letter needs to be added to the Appendix in order to complete the record of that peculiar relationship. The letter, the only extant one which Lincoln wrote to Zacharie, is in the Robert T. Lincoln Papers in the Library of Congress in draft form:

Executive Mansion
Washington, Sep. 19, 1864.

Dr. Zacharie
Dear Sir

I thank you again for the deep interest you have constantly taken in the Union cause. The personal matter on behalf of your friend, which you mention, shall be fully and fairly considered when presented.

Yours truly
A. Lincoln

The writer has given additional consideration to Lincoln's relationship to the Jews, with particular reference to his "About Jews" letter of January 25, 1865, in "Lincoln and the Jews," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, XLVIII (1955), pp. 181–90. This paper also furnished the writer with the opportunity to publish and discuss a newly discovered Lincoln letter (in the writer's collection of Jewish Americana), only the third known letter in which the Civil War President referred to a Jew as such:

Executive Mansion,
Washington, Nov. 4, 1862

Hon. Sec. of War.
Sir

I believe we have not yet appointed a Hebrew—As Cherie M. Levy, is well vouched, as a capable and faithful man, let him be appointed as Assistant Quarter-Master, with the rank of Captain.

Yours truly
A. Lincoln

Much more research into Civil War Jewish history remains to be done. The whole story of Jewish military participation needs to be told; hundreds upon hundreds of regimental histories will have to be searched before that can be done. The remarkable story of Jewish economic development in the North, particularly in the clothing industry, has yet to be written. Hardly any community's local experiences during the Civil War, with the notable exception of Memphis, Tennessee, have been transcribed in detail. If this book can serve an additional purpose beyond informing and enlightening the casual reader and the serious student, it will be to encourage some of those in the latter category to make it possible for all of us to learn more about Jewish experiences during that crucial period, 1861–1865.

B.W.K.

Wyncote, Pa.
March 2, 1961

Author's Preface to the First Edition

This volume is an effort in group biography. Its subject is the American Jewish community and its experiences during that most fascinating of all eras in the American drama, the four years of Civil War.

It does not attempt to offer a full-scale portrait of American Jews—as individuals—in this period, but rather a portrait of American Jewry—as an organized, articulate, self-conscious community of Jews who expressed their sense of togetherness or distinctiveness in a concrete manner: religious, cultural, philanthropic, social or political. Our concern is not with individuals, Americans who happened to be Jews, but with the community *qua* community, with group experience rather than personal experience.

Severe limitations are inherent in this approach. It excludes such areas as the individual participation of Jews in the army, as well as their personal political affiliation and economic activity, except as these have some direct bearing upon religious or other communal problems.

It is with the area of consciously-lived Jewish experience that we are here concerned: the support which Jews, acting together as Jews, gave to the war efforts of the Union and the Confederacy; the expressed attitudes of their recognized leaders—rabbinic, lay and journalistic, speaking as Jews—towards slavery and abolitionism, Union and secession, war and peace; the problems of equal treatment before the law which confronted Jews as Jews in connection with the war; the prejudice against Jews as Jews which was stimulated by wartime tension; the attitude towards Jews which was expressed in the life and words of the Civil War President; the influence of war experiences upon the developing American Jewish community.

Comparison with more recent experience is unavoidable. The reader will instinctively draw his own parallels. . . . There has never been a duplication of the Grant order of expulsion of Jews from the Department of the Tennessee, yet World War II saw as serious a rise in anti-Jewish prejudice as did the Civil War. Confederate Congressman Henry S. Foote has long since been forgotten, yet violent bigotry like his was again heard in Congress during World War II.

Over three hundred Jewish chaplains served in the Army, Navy and Air Corps during the years 1941–1946, but thousands of isolated Jewish servicemen were still without benefit of a Jewish chaplain's ministrations. Early in World War I, American Jewish organizations centralized their welfare work for servicemen by the creation of the National Jewish Welfare Board, a step which Civil War Jewry was too weak to make; yet Jews were still as unwilling as their grandfathers had been to accept the idea of segregated Jewish participation in other war-related welfare activities. More accurate records of the numbers and honors of Jewish servicemen were compiled during the two World Wars than during the Civil War, but their major purpose was still to refute the canards of the prejudiced. 1945 saw as sincere an expression of grief over the loss of a martyred war president as 1865, another president who demonstrated firm friendship for the Jews in a time of stress. . . .

Has the nature of the American Jewish experience changed drastically since 1860–1865? Let us see.

B.W.K.

Philadelphia, Pa.
August 5, 1950

American Jewry *and the* Civil War

1

American Jewry in 1860

Although Jews had lived in the New World since 1654, when twenty-four unwanted refugees had insisted on remaining in New Amsterdam over the objections of Peter Stuyvesant, the American Jewish community as a nationally organized community was still in the process of birth in 1860. There had simply been too few Jews previously to establish anything more complex than a localized communal life in various cities and towns. At the time of the first census, in 1790, it is estimated, there were, at the most, two thousand Jews in a population of four million. By 1850, when the nation had passed boldly through a period of tremendous territorial expansion and numbered over twenty-three million inhabitants, there were about fifty thousand Jews.[1]

During the decade 1850–1860, however, when a little less than two million immigrants flooded into the United States from Ireland, England, and Central Europe, the number of Jews almost tripled. It was American Jewry's greatest period of expansion prior to the 1880s. Severe economic depression, the failure of the revolutionary movements which swept through Europe in 1848–9, and America's gradual growth in stature in the mind of the downtrodden peoples of Europe, combined to propel ever more Jews as well as non-Jews across the Atlantic. Exact statistics are unavailable, but we cannot be very far from the mark in estimating that at least two-thirds of the approximately one hundred and fifty thousand American Jews in 1860 were immigrants. Sizable Jewish communities had already been established in the metropolitan areas of New York, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Baltimore, and Louisville by 1850, with a sprinkling of individuals and family groups in every other section of the country. There were, then, about fifty Jewish congregations in the country, with fifteen concentrated in New York City alone. New York City's Jewish community had already become the leading one in the country, with a population of eleven or twelve thousand souls, over twenty percent of all the Jews in the United States. The following decade saw the formation of fifteen more congregations in that metropolis, and one hundred and thirty-five others spread far and wide across the nation.[2]

By 1860, cities whose Jewish population had been insignificant in 1850 had become Jewish centers: St. Louis, San Francisco, Boston, Cleveland, New Orleans, Newark, Milwaukee, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Chicago. Immigrant Jews came to those cities because they were growing commercial and manufacturing centers; Jews followed general population trends. Altogether, those ten cities, and the five mentioned above which had large Jewish communities prior to 1850, contained about two-thirds of all the Jews in 1860. The urban tendency of American Jews had already become fixed as a norm: European despots had prohibited them from owning land through too many centuries for many to think of tilling the soil; as a religio-cultural minority they were naturally inclined to dwell together in order to preserve their religious practices and worship.

These hundred thousand immigrants of the pre-Civil War era were faced with the necessity of adjusting themselves to a strange new civilization. Practically all of them came from lands where the life of the Jew was hemmed in by mediaeval restrictions. Not only were the rights of citizenship denied them, but freedom of residence, of travel, of education, of occupation, of religious expression—all these facets of life were subject to discriminatory regulations. Jews suffered all of the disabilities of their neighbors and many others designed especially for them. Large numbers of those who came to America had fled from Europe not only for materialistic reasons, although they were human enough to hope for a good livelihood, but even more because they despaired of achieving any kind of equality with their neighbors under the rotting political systems of a reactionary Europe. Practically all of the immigrant Jews came to the United States to taste the nectar of the freedom which was denied them in their native lands.

The story of their individual adjustment to this new, free life is a fascinating story, but too long for telling here. It should be told: how they learned the new language and manners and attitudes, how they earned a living, how they adjusted themselves to their neighbors, how they reacted to the freedom they sought, and how they contributed of their talents and imagination to the country in which they built their home.

Our concern, however, is with the other adjustment which the Jews were forced to make: the group adjustment. What, if any, kind of Jewish life should they establish in the new land? Their forebears had for centuries preserved and nurtured a separatistic, autonomous religion-culture, set up walls against the stratagems and onslaughts of a hostile environment. There had not yet been time or circumstance to effect a gradual realignment of Jewish life in a modern, liberal environment. In most of Europe the problem was still primarily theoretical; in America it was immediate and urgent. How much of the Jewish religion-culture should or could be maintained in a democratic society? What intra-mural relationship between Jews should or could be contrived to replace the old European patterns?

It was both an individual and a communal problem. Individual Jews could and did decide to abandon their Jewish affiliation, not as in Europe where public conversion was necessary to obtain what Heine called the "passport" to participation in European culture, but by default. Many of the colonial Jewish pioneers had chosen not to maintain their Jewish loyalties; practically every Jew who settled in Connecticut prior to the Revolution intermarried with his neighbors and reared his children as Christians.[3] Sometimes the process took two generations or even three, but eventually the majority of the descendants of colonial Jews disappeared into the non-Jewish environment. Many Jews who attained prominence in American life—men like August Belmont, the banker and leader of the Democratic Party; Judah P. Benjamin, the senator from Louisiana and active Confederate statesman; and David (Levy) Yulee, the Florida politician and senator—intermarried with Christians and abandoned Jewish life. Untold numbers of immigrants in every generation made the same choice.

For those Jews who were determined to remain faithful, however, a vague, amorphous pattern of American-Jewish life, centered in the synagogue, had already been established. During the colonial age, wherever a sufficiently numerous and stable Jewish community existed, a Jewish congregation was founded. By the time of the Revolution, congregations had been organized in New York, Newport, Philadelphia, Charleston, and

Savannah. These synagogues were not merely houses of worship. They were Jewish communal centers; educational, philanthropic, and social activities were carried on within their precincts. This pattern became fixed during the following decades. In an average town, like Mobile or Easton, parochial schools, charitable and philanthropic societies, and fraternal organizations were all part of the synagogue complex in 1860. In larger cities, however, where the population was numerous enough to support a number of synagogues, Jewish life had already begun to expand beyond the boundaries of the synagogue, and the gregarious German Jew organized clubs and societies of every character and description.

The inpouring of poor immigrants had always taxed the ingenuity of established communities. So long as the rooted population outnumbered the newcomers, the synagogue could serve as a centralized relief agency. When immigrants came in such overwhelming numbers as they did during the 1850s, however, the synagogues were unable to cope with the need for assistance. A large number of extra-synagogal philanthropic societies sprang up in all of the metropolitan areas, cutting across synagogue lines and attracting membership from affiliated and unaffiliated alike. Their leadership was substantially the same as that of the synagogues, but it had already been discovered that denominational divisions hindered effective action. In 1860 there were thirty-five permanently organized charitable societies in New York City, and twenty-three in Philadelphia. Generally they selected one specific aspect of need and concentrated upon it: fuel, clothing, loans, assistance to widows and orphans, burial, visitation of the sick, mutual benefit among immigrants themselves, collections for the poor in Palestine, employment, food, hospitalization, education of poor children, and the distribution of Passover *Matzat* (unleavened bread) to the poor.[4]

Philanthropy had become a major activity of the Jewish community, although it was completely disorganized and anarchic. Charity balls and carnivals and benefit banquets, which had previously been infrequent and unusual, were commonplace in the large cities during the 1850s. Some leaders realized that complete chaos would result if the multiplication of charitable activities continued, so they bent their efforts towards the establishment of *institutions*, rather than *organizations*. The first steps towards centralized, unified Jewish philanthropy were taken during this decade: Jewish Foster Homes for orphans were organized in New Orleans (1854), Philadelphia (1855), and New York (1860), and the first Jewish Hospitals were created in Cincinnati (1850) and New York (1856).[5] It would take another half-century, however, before the logical instrumentality for Jewish charity, a city-wide federation of all activities, was first tested in Boston in 1895.

Organized social activities had also been separated from the synagogue by 1860. Jewish fraternal orders were already an accepted expression of the Jewish community. The Independent Order of B'nai B'rith (Sons of the Covenant), the first in the United States, had been created in New York in 1843 by a group of German Jews who proposed to undertake a varied program of cultural, philanthropic, and mutual-aid activities. By 1855 the Order had expanded to twenty lodges in various sections of the country. German had been abandoned as the official language of lodge meetings, thus paving the way for a completely Americanized membership and program. By 1860, the Order was organizing District Grand Lodges to supervise and centralize the activities of its more than fifty local chapters, and its annual conventions were beginning to attract nation-wide attention. Other organizations followed the B'nai B'rith pattern and attempted to duplicate its success. By 1860, four more fraternal orders had been founded: the Independent Order Free Sons of Israel, the Order of B'nai Abraham (Sons of Abraham), the Order of B'nai Mosche (Sons of Moses), and the Order Kesher shel Barzel (Chain of Iron).[6]

Even more fashionable and numerous during the 1850s were Jewish young men's literary societies and associations. Ignoring the secret ritual appeal of the fraternal orders, they concentrated on cultural programs. In reading rooms which they established for the exclusive use of their members, debates, poetry-readings, plays, and German songfests were regular features. These societies, the forerunners of the Young Men's Hebrew Associations, also had an elaborate social phase consisting of dress balls and parties. Their membership was almost exclusively Jewish, but their programs were practically void of Jewish content. An unacknowledged purpose of these literary associations, perhaps even an unconscious one, was the Americanization of young immigrant lads. Other than these groups, which were organized in all of the major Jewish communities during the 1850s, there was no formal Americanization activity by Jews—a decided contrast to the 1890s and 1900s when the native-born bent every effort to "Americanize" the Eastern European Jewish immigrants.[7]

Although philanthropic and social activities had by 1860 very largely been separated from the synagogue, educational functions still remained within its purview. Practically every congregation had some kind of school. Parochial schools, which met on weekdays and included general as well as Jewish subjects, were maintained by the synagogues in all of the larger and many of the smaller communities. Many had adopted the Jewish Sunday School idea which was first propounded by Rebecca Gratz in 1838. But if there was any constant complaint throughout the ranks of American Jewry, it was in reference to education: rabbis as well as laymen bewailed the lack of trained teachers, the lack of satisfactory textbooks, the indifference of the children.

There were a few pedantic, dull textbooks translated from the German or written by local rabbis, but the complaints were fully justified. Some parents turned to private Jewish schools, but these were hardly more satisfactory. All in all, the state of American Jewish education was depressing, if not frightening; but the manifest concern of congregational leaders and their willingness to experiment with varying techniques were healthy signs which pointed towards a more satisfying future. Basically, however, the whole dilemma of American Jewry was and continued to be symbolized by its failure to construct an adequate program of religious education.[8]

Jewish leadership was divided, on the local scene, between well-intentioned laymen, who frequently tended to be autocratic, and earnest, conscientious (but too often ill-trained and inept) spiritual leaders. The laymen worked hard to mould their communities into self-respecting, active, and productive entities. Apparently, however, they were men of little imagination and forcefulness, for no single lay leader of the pre-Civil War era achieved national prominence. There was no American counterpart to Sir Moses Montefiore of Britain. Judah Touro of New Orleans, for all his wealth and philanthropic virtue, was a shy and colorless person. Major Mordecai M. Noah, the Grand Sachem of Tammany, had come upon the scene too early, and his schemes for Jewish colonization in the Niagara River smacked too much of the visionary. Leading Jews there were—senators like Benjamin and Yulee, and a sizable number of congressmen and military officers—but no single one of them threw his weight of mind and energy into the arena of Jewish life. If American Jewry lacked a single essential element, it was national leadership by laymen possessed of vision and ability.

Fortunately, national leadership was not entirely lacking. Although the rabbis were in many cases dominated by the petty jealousies and struggles of their local lay leaders, some of them were strong and inspired enough to direct their energies beyond the local scene. They were the leaders who attempted to lift American Jewry up by its bootstraps. Every major step towards unity and harmony in American Jewish life prior to the Civil War was initiated by a rabbi.

There have been, from time to time, complaints about the domination of Jewish life in America by the rabbinate. Those who are jealous of the role of the rabbis should not forget that the entire future and structure of American Jewry at one time depended solely on the talents, imagination, and perseverance of clergymen. There would be today hardly a trace of Jewish life had it not been for the devotion of these consecrated leaders—men like Isaac Leeser, Samuel M. Isaacs, Isaac M. Wise and David Einhorn. Most of them, incidentally, were not actually ordained rabbis. Some were only cantors or teachers who assumed the functions of spiritual leaders because they were the only available personnel to fill the vital role of full-time congregational leadership. For the sake of convenience, we shall call all of them "rabbi," although many did not have the technical requirements for the title and some of them conscientiously insisted that they could only be regarded as "ministers," a term previously unknown in Jewish religious life.

Isaac Leeser was the earliest to offer the kind of leadership which American Jewry required so desperately. Born in Westphalia in 1806, he had come to Richmond at the age of eighteen to enter his uncle's mercantile establishment. He had been given a modicum of Jewish education in Germany, and continued studying on his own in Richmond, where he voluntarily assumed such tasks as conducting services and teaching the youngsters of the local congregation. Several articles in defense of Judaism, which he wrote for the *Richmond Whig* when he was only twenty-two years old, attracted nation-wide attention. The following year (1829) Mikveh Israel Congregation of Philadelphia invited him to become its *hazzan*. For thirty-nine years Leeser served Philadelphia and American Jewry with love and devotion and energy. He was responsible for so many "firsts" in American Jewish history that it is difficult to list them all: the introduction of regular preaching in English in the synagogue; the organization of an American Jewish Publication Society; the publication of an English translation of the Bible in keeping with the traditions of Jewish scholarship; the publication of a monthly Jewish journal (*The Occident*); the successful organization of a Jewish school; the founding of an American institution for higher Jewish learning (Maimonides College). Many of his ideas were so new and revolutionary that they failed for want of popular support. He was a difficult and eccentric man; his sermons and writings were so long-winded and pedantic as to exasperate the most patient. Despite all his faults and troubles, however, he was one of the heroes of American Jewish communal development: traditional (called conservative today) Judaism might never have survived without his leadership.[9]

Ten years after Leeser was called to Philadelphia, Samuel M. Isaacs, who in many ways was his counterpart and partner, was invited to come to New York from England. Born in Holland in 1804, he was taken to London at an early age and educated in the family's rabbinical tradition. Before coming to the United States he acted as principal of the Jewish Orphan Home in London. Like Leeser, Isaacs was highly conscious of the wilderness that was Jewish life in America, and was unremitting in his efforts to create some sensible pattern out of the chaos. He did not have Leeser's imagination, but he was unassuming enough to assist his Philadelphia friend as a kind of New York agent. He was, in addition, active in every Jewish institution and organization of any significance in that city, and frequently held embattled elements together by the persuasiveness of his peacemaking. His weekly periodical, *The Jewish Messenger*, was a strong unifying force in New York, where unity was most difficult to achieve even on a local scale. To Isaacs goes the credit for initiating the first successful nation-wide Jewish organization, which we shall discuss later. Less original than Leeser, Isaacs had the more difficult assignment: his achievements in New York were possibly greater than Leeser's in Philadelphia simply because the Empire City's Jewish community was already the phantasmagoria which makes it simultaneously the greatest and the most chaotic Jewish community in history.[10]

Isaacs and Leeser were the stalwarts of the traditionalist movement. Leading the agitation for Reform was Isaac M. Wise, destined to make his great contributions long after the period under discussion: the founding of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (1873), the Hebrew Union College (1875), and the Central Conference of American Rabbis (1889). Born in Bohemia in 1819, Wise had emigrated to New York in 1846 after his rabbinical activities in Radnitz had been interfered with by the governmental authorities. Even during his early years of service in Albany, from 1846 to 1854, he demonstrated those qualities which were to make him a storm-center all his life. He attracted nationwide attention as a fighting Reformer in theological articles in Leeser's *Occident* and Robert Lyon's *Asmonean*. Attempts to organize American Jewry into a religious union, which we shall trace later in this chapter, pointed to him as a determined practical idealist. After his departure from Albany to Cincinnati in 1854, Wise became the most active rabbi in the mid-West and the acknowledged leader of the Reform movement everywhere but in the East. His *Israelite*, founded in 1854, and *Die Deborah*, its German-language counterpart which was first published in 1855, were his personal sounding boards: they bound Jews all over the country to him and were an important factor in the later success of his organizational proposals.[11]

A second great leader of the Reform wing was David Einhorn, the last of the great Civil War rabbis to come to the United States. Born in Bavaria in 1809, he was an outspoken liberal from his early youth. After studying at the rabbinical academy in Furth and at the Universities of Wurzburg and Munich, he entered the active rabbinate, arousing opposition to his radical Reform ideas wherever he served. He played an energetic role in the Reform rabbinical conferences in Germany during the 1840s and was widely attacked and acclaimed by the respective parties of the era. When the Austrian government ordered the Reform temple in Budapest to be closed because Einhorn had been selected as its rabbi, he turned his eyes to the west. He was the first of the great leaders of the German Reform movement to come to America. Arriving in Baltimore in 1855 as the rabbi of Har Sinai Congregation, he immediately became the focal point of religious conflict. His sermons and writings were attacked unmercifully by moderate Reformers as well as traditionalists all over the country. He in turn founded a monthly organ, *Sinai*, in 1856, for the dissemination of his radical ideas, and published his own prayer book, *Olath Tamid*, in 1858, by far the most extreme prayer book to appear in America in this period. In 1860 there was still no sign on the horizon that Einhorn's version of Reform would win out over Wise's in the long run, but because of the bitter criticism by his opponents, he was probably better known than most of his colleagues.[12]

These, then, were a few of the outstanding leaders of the Jews in 1860, men who fought among themselves over details of theology and ritual but who were simultaneously waging war against Jewish ignorance and apathy. Theirs was no easy task. They had to revise the institution of the rabbinate before they could succeed, for the traditional European rabbi had been a learned judge who rendered verdicts on questions of ritual but preached infrequently. The Jewish immigrants had little use for such a rabbi; very soon after their arrival most of them sloughed off ritualistic scruples, and they were far too busy earning a living to engage in leisurely Jewish scholarship. A new kind of rabbinate and a new kind of congregational life, the first faint glimmerings of an American Judaism, were gradually being created by the rabbis who jumped into the fray, determined that Judaism should take root in America. They instituted regular preaching in the vernacular (German as well as English) to combat religious ignorance; they wrote and preached and organized new institutions in the effort to perpetuate that kind of Judaism which they believed to be true.[13]

One of the agencies which the rabbis adopted in the attempt to transmit their attitudes to a wider public was the periodical press. With three exceptions[14] all of the periodicals published for the Jewish reading public prior to the Civil War were edited by rabbis. Leeser's *Occident* (1843), Wise's *Israelite* (1854) and *Deborah* (1855), Einhorn's *Sinai* (1856), Isaacs' *Messenger* (1857) and Julius Eckman's San Francisco *Gleaner* (1858) were the sounding-boards for a virile, positive Jewish life in America.

These papers fulfilled a multitude of functions. Those which appeared in English became a tool in the process of Americanization, while the German papers and magazines sustained the interest of those who had not yet learned the vernacular. Serious articles and essays brought a knowledge of Judaism to the untaught; short stories and serialized novels transmitted the facts and atmosphere of Jewish history. News of Jewish personages and events in all parts of the United States and Europe welded bonds of brotherhood which counteracted the isolation of Jews in small towns and rural areas. They publicized the success of Jewish ventures in one locality and thereby stimulated similar projects in many other cities. Funds were raised for overseas relief through appeals printed in their columns; rabbis were secured through advertisements; decisions of European rabbis on ritual problems were printed for the information of readers. The battle between the Reformers and traditionalists was fought with ink and type, Leeser and Isaacs speaking in behalf of traditionalism, Wise and Einhorn for the cause of Reform. Both sides strengthened their forces through the periodicals by offering the reading public an opportunity to come to its own decision. Communication between Jews in those days when transportation was slow and uncertain was almost completely dependent upon the periodicals: they thereby became a tangible step in the building of a united American Jewish community. All of the positive forces in American Jewish life were represented in the newspapers and magazines and for a few dollars a year the Jews of Summit, Mississippi, and Keokuk, Iowa, could read the sermons of the great rabbis, take part in the debates of the times by writing letters to the editors, and feel as though they were participants in the unfolding story of American Jewry.

Rabbinic leadership had initiated every attempt at the formation of an American Jewish union. Leeser had earned himself another "first" in 1841 when he and another Philadelphia minister had issued the first call for a congregational union. They persuaded five Philadelphia laymen to sign with them an appeal which was sent to every Jewish congregation then in existence. Their purpose was threefold: to raise the standards of the ministry and of *shehitah* (ritual slaughter); to organize a system of Jewish schools throughout the country; and to facilitate unity of action, whenever necessary, by the various Jewish communities. There is no record of the answers to these proposals, but they must have been disappointing. No action was taken.[15]

Leeser joined forces with Isaac M. Wise in 1848–9 in another attempt to convoke a national meeting of congregational leaders. Only eight synagogues responded to the appeal, however, and the two rabbis were forced to admit failure. Six years later they tried a different tack: a rabbinical conference. Cleveland was the scene of this first American Jewish ecclesiastical gathering. It opened auspiciously: both Reformers and traditionalists appeared willing to compromise on certain theological issues for the sake of harmony. Unfortunately, however, after Leeser left for Philadelphia and while the conference was still in session, the Reformers decided that they had compromised enough, and passed some resolutions which utterly alienated the Orthodox camp. No further meeting of the group was ever held, but the personal hostility engendered between Wise and Leeser predetermined the ultimate failure of the next and most promising attempt at Union: the Board of Delegates of American Israelites, founded in 1859 at the behest of Samuel M. Isaacs.[16]

The immediate cause of Isaacs' appeal was the Mortara case. On June 23, 1858, Edgar Mortara, an Italian Jewish child of six years, was seized by the Papal guard on the grounds that, during an illness some years before, he had been secretly baptized by his Catholic nurse. All efforts to restore him to his family were fruitless. News of the incident reached Jewish communities all over the world; a fever-pitch of indignation was the natural result. Had mediaeval experiences come back again to plague the harried Jews? Liberal governments instructed their envoys to the Papal States to intercede, but to no avail; Sir Moses Montefiore, the leading British Jew, made a personal trip to Rome, but for the first time since he began traveling in defense of his people his efforts were fruitless.[17] In this emergency, when Jews all over the world were united in the effort to defend the most elementary of human rights, the integrity of the family, many American Jews became aware of and felt impelled to correct the anarchy which prevailed in American Jewish life. Isaacs argued that a union of American Jewry could no longer be postponed; nine New York congregations responded to his call in the *Messenger* and thirteen congregations outside New York agreed to send representatives to the organizational meeting of the Board. The delegates were enthusiastic; a constitution was drawn up, officers were elected, and the first representative, nation-wide body of American Jews was in existence.[18]

But the Board was doomed to a slow death. None of the radical Eastern Reformers was willing to participate in it; they would not even consider joining an organization partly composed of traditionalists.[19] Snobbery and insecurity were equally involved in their objections. The Board might have survived none the less had Wise been willing to rise above his personal animosity and cooperate with Leeser. He, after all, controlled the policies of numerous congregations in the mid-West and South; their adherence would have strengthened the Board so greatly that Einhorn and his fellow radicals could not have remained outside the fold. But Wise was stubborn and declared his opposition from the first. The traditionalists, for their part, could not counteract the opposition of both radical and moderate Reformers. Although it survived for a number of years, the Board of Delegates thus never had a fair opportunity to develop its program and demonstrate its effectiveness. Wise's hostility to rivals and his fear of domination by New York Jewry postponed by seventeen years the realization of his own vision of an American union of Jewish congregations.

The factors militating against the success of all these union projects are an interesting indication of the state of American Jewry in 1860. Religious disunity obviously played a major role. The rabbis were the only leaders convinced of the desirability of a single, all-encompassing, representative Jewish organization, and yet they were least likely to succeed because they were so deeply committed to one religious position or another. Powerful and influential lay leaders, free of religious prejudices, would have been able to achieve the goal which the rabbis failed to reach, but the day of Schiff and Straus was many decades in the future.

The Reform movement had been initiated in the United States with the secession of a group of liberals from the congregation in Charleston, S.C., in 1824. Strongly influenced by echoes of German Jewish Reform ideas, the new congregation might have endured had it not been for the premature death of its most ardent leader, Isaac Harby, one of the most famous dramatic critics and essayists of the day. Its members returned to the parent congregation in 1833, but continued to agitate for Reform and eventually, in the 1840s, successfully captured the congregational offices. Meanwhile, a liberal congregation was organized in Baltimore in 1842, and Temple Emanu-El of New York, still one of the leading Reform congregations of the country, followed in 1845. During these years, also, rabbis who were liberal or potentially liberal had begun to arrive in the United States from Germany and Austria.[20]

Motivated by a desire to modernize Judaism through the use of the vernacular, to harmonize traditional ideas and practices with nineteenth-century rationalism, and to supplement the ancient ritual with attractive innovations such as the Confirmation ceremony, the Reformers found a favorable climate in the free and fluid American civilization. American democracy seemed to invite the development of Judaism into a more modern and Westernized faith. Conditions of living seemed to demand abandonment of practices which were difficult to fulfill in a non-Jewish environment. Although laymen, in the final analysis, were responsible for the acceptance of change, Reform would never have made the rapid progress it did in America without the leadership of rabbis like Wise and Einhorn.[21]

That the agitation for change did not proceed without opposition goes without saying. The traditionalist congregations were firmly entrenched in the United States and were gifted with splendid leadership. Leeser and

Isaacs and their colleagues were no mean opponents for the Reformers, and they had the advantage of numbers. Their logic was concise and pointed: simple changes in ritual cannot be made without endangering the entire structure of Judaism; challenge the divine sanction for one law or practice or idea, and all laws and practices and ideas would be bereft of authority; Judaism is all that tradition means it to be, or nothing!

There was bitterness and name-calling on both sides of the conflict. The Reformers felt that the Orthodox were reactionary fanatics, holding back the forces of progress and enlightenment; the traditionalists accused the modernists of being destructive opportunists, radicals, atheists, heretics.

To men of both camps Judaism was a precious heritage; its future in the American environment was a matter of deep personal and spiritual concern to all of them. The occasions were all too infrequent, however, when they understood that they had a common enemy: indifference and, worse, hostility towards any version of Judaism. Neither Reform nor traditionalism would win the day; secularism was already on the march, and the internecine warfare which raged between the two camps paved the way towards the time when the majority of American Jews would belong to no synagogue whatever. Indeed, there were already considerable numbers of German-Jewish secularists and atheists in the large cities.

They attacked Judaism as "priestcraft" and "superstition" with the same vehemence with which their non-Jewish German friends denounced Christianity. Since they despised all religion, they did not turn Christian, but their life as Jews was restricted to social contacts, marriage and burial. They, of course, were utterly opposed to any nation-wide organization of Jews on a religious basis.[22]

Added to the incompatibility of Reformers and traditionalists was a further heterogeneity of background which divided the immigrant Jews. Unlike national immigrant groups like the Irish, the Germans, the British, and the Swedes, Jews had come to America from widely separated European areas. They spoke different languages (Yiddish, German, French, Dutch) and represented a wide variety of cultural backgrounds. Even in regard to Jewish culture, there was no unity or harmony. Jewish life, handicapped and cramped though it may have been, had flourished for centuries in Poland, Bohemia, Austria, Hungary, the German states, England, and Holland. The hundreds of rooted Jewish communities in Europe had developed distinctive customs and traditions of their own. Groups of immigrants sought to preserve these local religious usages in the new American milieu by organizing their own synagogues. Indeed, these local traditions were frequently the cause of bitter disagreement in smaller communities. To give up familiar synagogue chants and customs was too much like repudiating one's parents and grandparents. In Zanesville, Ohio, the Jews were unable to organize a congregation because they could not agree on any one of the four rites represented among them.[23] In New York City, in 1860, there were over twenty different German congregations, perpetuating specific local backgrounds and religious modes, in addition to synagogues maintained by French, Polish, Portuguese, English, Russian, Dutch, and Bohemian Jews.[24] If Jews were so divided by linguistic and cultural barriers that they could not unite for synagogue organization on a local scale, is it any wonder that these divisions contributed to the failure of schemes for national unity?

Another factor which worked against the successful accomplishment of Leeser's and Wise's ideas was, strangely enough, the very democracy for which most Jews had come to America. Throughout the centuries, European Jews had been forced to maintain an inner discipline in self-defense. Disaster could sometimes be alerted through absolute unity of effort, though frequently even this did not avail. Even in times of prosperity, the government often required representation of the community by plenipotentiary representatives. Frequently, therefore, the community and its institutions were under the control of self-appointed plutocrats and rabbinical dictators.[25] Here in America every organization was a voluntary one, and there were undoubtedly many Jews who saw no need for a national agency, or who actually relished the anarchy in which it was now possible for them to live. Why should they, who had fled from authoritarian governments and sometimes chafed under ecclesiastical tyranny, surrender their new-found freedom and set guardians over their religious life? This fear was, of course, unfounded, but it was, nonetheless, genuine.

Anxiety about prejudice was undoubtedly another strong factor which deterred Jews from supporting the union projects. They were afraid to call attention to themselves, afraid of creating suspicion. They knew the effects of anti-Jewish hatred from personal experience. Disabilities, expulsions, riots—these were the legacy of mediaeval bigotry to the Europe which they had left behind. Newcomers, they had not been in America long enough to assess its democratic strength; they could not know how much anti-Jewish prejudice lay latent under the smooth appearance of equality. They were determined, therefore, to avoid offense. Unquestionably, the underlying sense of the preachments of rabbis and editors against a "Jewish vote," and the background of much of the reluctance to support the idea of a national Jewish organization, was this fear: perhaps the Gentiles would misunderstand the purposes of such an organization, regard it as a counterpart of the Catholic hierarchy against which the Know-Nothing crusade was waged, attack it as un-American. The insecurity which Jews brought from their European experience was an unconscious freight which they carried over the ocean. It is still among our possessions.[26]

These were the inner cleavages, tensions and dissensions which prevented the realization of any of the projects of union which the leading rabbis envisaged. *Actually, however, despite the failure of all attempts to create a formal nation-wide Jewish organization, there was already an American Jewish unity in an emotional sense.* An American Jewish community did exist, without specific agencies or instrumentalities. It expressed itself in the sense of community which most American Jews shared.

This sense of comradeship revealed itself in many actions, opinions, feelings and reactions which were characteristic of the overwhelming majority of American Jews. They were, for instance, bitterly opposed to all attempts to convert them from their ancient faith. The implication that they were adherents of an inferior religion was a source of deep and constant resentment.[27] This was a negative aspect of the loyalty which held them faithful to the religion and heritage of their fathers . . . they were still the "stiff-necked" people, even in the pioneer towns of Texas and Kansas. Another characteristic shared by most Jews was their determination to fight for the civil rights which all citizens were accorded by the Constitution. As Jews, they asked for equal treatment with Christians before the law: permission to work on Sunday because it was not the Sabbath which they observed; excision of references to Christianity in public proclamations and documents; repeal of religious tests for office in those few states which still maintained such tests.[28] This willingness, even eagerness, to stand up in America as Jews also expressed itself in their jealous safeguarding of their name. It was not only fear which impelled them to defend themselves against anti-Jewish libels, but pride in their heritage and the high resolve to bring honor to their name in this new land. Yet another area which revealed their unity of purpose was a growing sense of companionship with Jews all over the world. They responded with eagerness to calls for assistance from Sir Moses Montefiore for oppressed Jews in Morocco, in Turkey, in Tripoli. They shared the anguish of their European brethren over the Damascus blood-libel trials and the Mortara case.[29] Palestinian messengers came in increasing numbers to this frontier of the Western world for contributions to the funds which supported the poor in Jerusalem. These were hints and signs of the relationship between American and world Jewry which was to expand and deepen with the passing years. In all of these ways, there was an unconscious, groping, aspiring American Jewry. How this American Jewish community acted in and reacted to the holocaust of the Civil War, and what its experiences, activities and status were during the years of fratricidal conflict, form the burden of the following pages.

2

The Rabbis and the Slavery Question

> The Jews of the United States have never taken any steps whatever with regard to the Slavery question. As citizens, they deem it their policy "to have every one choose which ever side he may deem best to promote his own interests and the welfare of his country." They have no organization of an ecclesiastical body to represent their general views; no General Assembly or its equivalent. The American Jews have two newspapers, but they do not interfere in any discussion which is not material to their religion. It cannot be said that the Jews have formed any denominational opinion on the subject of American slavery. Some of the Jews who reside in slave States, have refused to have any property in man, or even to have any slaves about them. They do not believe that anything analogous to slavery, as it exists in this country, ever prevailed among the ancient Israelites . . . The objects of so much mean prejudice and unrighteous oppression as the Jews have been for ages, surely they, it would seem, more than any other denomination, ought to be the enemies of *caste* and the friends of *universal freedom.*[1]

This report by a non-Jew on the relationship of the synagogue to the slavery issue, presented to the 1853 meeting of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, was substantially correct, and in that regard rather unusual for an age in which so much misinformation about the Jews was broadcast far and wide. The autonomy of the individual congregation, and the freedom of individual rabbis from hierarchical control, precluded any official Jewish pronouncements on the most important single religio-cultural question of the day.

Individual Jews, of course, had participated in the development of the institution of slavery, as well as in the discussion of its merits, from the very first. Jewish merchants of Newport, Rhode Island, had been active, before the Revolution, in the well-known "triangle trade" which brought African slaves to the colonies.[2] Jewish residents of the slave states had bought Negroes for use on their plantations and in their homes, and had even made their living from slave marketing.[3] As the report to the Anti-Slavery Society stated, there were other Jews, in the South as well as in the North, who had, out of personal kindness or in keeping with their general convictions, freed their slaves. The records of the Manumission Society of New York City preserve the names of many Jews who emancipated their Negroes.[4] In the political arena, Jews were to be found on both sides of the question: Mordecai M. Noah's New York newspapers took a strong pro-slavery position,[5] while Moritz Pinner's *Kansas Post* was vehemently pledged to the opposite course.[6] Judah P. Benjamin[7] and David Yulee,[8] the two Jewish senators, were both champions of the slave system, while other Jews who were active in politics, like Isidor Bush[9] of St. Louis and Philip J. Joachimsen[10] of New York, were enlisted in the anti-slavery ranks.

If it were possible to uncover and catalogue the opinions of all the Jews who lived in the United States during the years leading up to the Civil War—slave dealers like J. F. Moses of Lumpkin, Ga., who, "being a regular trader to this market," said that he would "warrant every Negro sold to come up to the bill, squarely and completely";[11] immigrants like Seligman Kakeles of New York who, in the perennial manner of hero-worshippers, named his first-born American child after the abolitionist leader Gerrit Smith;[12] philanthropists like Judah Touro who, living in a slavery environment, disagreed with the system enough to free his own slaves;[13] abolitionists like Michael Heilprin of Philadelphia, who was mobbed by a pro-slavery crowd at a Democratic Party meeting in 1858[14]—we should have to conclude that Jews were represented in all the various shadings of opinion from fanatic abolitionists to fire-eating slavery proponents. The Jews were as thoroughly divided as the American population itself. It is possible, however, that we should discover that there were fewer Jews than other Americans, proportionately, at the extreme wings of the controversy, and more in the middle ground, because, as immigrants, the great majority of them would naturally have taken less interest in theoretical and sectional political questions than in the more personal problems of economic and social adjustment.

Since there was no unified expression of Jewish opinion on the subject, Judaism, unlike the various Christian denominations, played no role in the moulding of public sentiment in the crucial years when the battle lines were being drawn. This is not to say, however, that Jewish leaders were silent. The rabbis and publishers spoke *for* no official group of Jews, certainly not for their congregations and readers—but, speaking *to* American Jewry they could hardly avoid exerting the influence of their religious and intellectual leadership. An examination of the opinions voiced by the rabbis during the turmoil over slavery will be interesting for a number of reasons. It will, firstly, demonstrate the extent to which the rabbis participated in the various political currents which eddied through American life, and, secondly, it will indicate how far they were from unanimity.

I

The most highly publicized rabbinical pronouncement on the merits of slavery was made at the very peak of the secession crisis by Dr. Morris J. Raphall of New York City, one of the most celebrated orators in the American rabbinate of his time. President Buchanan had proclaimed January 4, 1861, as a National Fast Day, in an effort to mobilize national sentiment against the impending break-up of the Union. Jews as well as non-Jews all over the nation gathered for worship and prayer; Rabbi Raphall believed that this was the logical occasion for a discourse on "The Bible View of Slavery."[15]

What he did was to place Judaism squarely in opposition to the philosophy of abolitionism. He denied that any statement or law in the Bible could be interpreted to prohibit slavery, and insisted that, to the contrary, biblical tradition and law guaranteed the right to own slaves. Translating the Hebrew word for servant (*'ebed*) as "slave," he claimed that "the very highest authority" in the Bible, the Ten Commandments, sanctioned human slavery.[16] He accused Henry Ward Beecher and the other abolitionist preachers of rationalistic attempts to pervert the meaning of the biblical text and challenged them to produce factual evidence to back up their contention that biblical law was designed to abolish slavery:

> I would therefore ask the reverend gentleman from Brooklyn and his compeers—How dare you . . . denounce slaveholding as a sin? When you remember that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job—the men with whom the

> Almighty conversed, with whose names he emphatically connects his own most holy name . . .—that all these men were slaveholders, does it not strike you that you are guilty of something very little short of blasphemy? And if you answer me, "Oh, in their time slaveholding was lawful, but now it has become a sin," I in my turn ask you, "When and by what authority you draw the line? Tell us the precise time when slaveholding ceased to be permitted, and became sinful?"[17]

Raphall made a half-hearted attempt to appear objective by distinguishing biblical slavery from the evils of the Southern system. The Bible, he said, had regarded the slave as "a *person* in whom the dignity of human nature is to be respected," while the Southerners treated the slave as "a *thing*" without rights and privileges. The Bible had safeguarded the slaves against cruelty, mutilation, and abuse; the Bible was humanitarian, and the South would do well to adopt its merciful attitude.[18] But he directed his major attack against the abolitionists for their misrepresentation of the Bible and for their agitation against the legitimate rights of the Southerners who, to his mind, had done no wrong. He claimed that he himself was not an adherent of slavery, but that an objective consideration of the text of the Bible forced him to assume this position.[19]

This sermon aroused more comment and attention than any other sermon ever delivered by an American rabbi. The pro- and anti-slavery forces had for years been arguing about the attitude of the Old Testament to slavery. For Fundamentalist ministers, at least, the testimony of the Bible on slavery was preeminently important. Now, at the very time when propagandists, both North and South, were delivering their final appeals for support, a learned rabbi had finally settled the argument in favor of the proponents of slavery. Printed in its entirety in the daily press,[20] as a separate pamphlet, and in a compilation of similar sermons, "The Bible View of Slavery" was given wide circulation. The *Richmond Daily Dispatch* said that it "receives the praise of the press as the most powerful argument delivered" in the entire religious controversy about slavery.[21] It was used frequently, throughout the Southland, as proof of the sympathy of the Jews for the seceding states. In the Virginia House of Delegates, for instance, when ex-Governor Wyndham Robertson[22] was urging support for his resolution to invite the Richmond rabbis to open the daily sessions of the House with prayer (only Christian clergymen had previously been permitted to do so), the Raphall sermon served as a fine argument:

> . . . . It is fit, at a time when we are standing on our rights of equality in other respects, we should be careful not to refuse lightly the benefit of that principle to others. Nor perhaps is it inappropriate to remember here a late powerful and eloquent voice that has been raised by a learned Israelite in New York in vindication of that social institution in which our peace and welfare are vitally involved, and in defense of which we are now engaged in a struggle before (I might almost say against) the world.[23]

In Memphis, when the Rev. Simon Tuska wrote a letter to the *Memphis Daily Appeal* defending Jews as loyal citizens, he pointed to the fact that it was not a Christian clergyman, but a rabbi who had delivered "the most forceful arguments in justification of the slavery of the African race, and the most thorough refutation of the rabid, abolition views of Henry Ward Beecher."[24] The *Charleston Mercury* praised Raphall for "defend[ing] us in one of the most powerful arguments put forth north or south."[25]

Abolitionist Jews and non-Jews could not, therefore, permit Raphall's theses to go unanswered, or it would be assumed that he spoke for all Jews, and that his summary of the biblical attitude was the final, definitive one.

The first Jewish answer to Raphall's presentation, published in *The New York Tribune*,[26] was written by Michael Heilprin, a Polish-Jewish intellectual who had taken an active part in the 1848 Revolution in Hungary and was now a member of the editorial staff of Appleton's *New American Cyclopaedia*.[27] He was shocked that a Jewish voice should be raised in support of slavery:

> I had read similar nonsense hundreds of times before; I knew that the Father of Truth and Mercy was daily invoked in hundreds of pulpits in this country for a Divine sanction of falsehood and barbarism; still, being a Jew myself, I felt exceedingly humbled, I may say outraged, by the sacrilegious words of the Rabbi. Have we not had enough of the "reproach of Egypt?" Must the stigma of Egyptian principles be fastened on the people of Israel by Israelitish lips themselves? . . [28]

A learned Jew himself, Heilprin proceeded to examine and refute each of Raphall's contentions and interpretations. His invective and scorn of

Raphall's scholarship and ideas were unbounded. He did not even try to disguise his feeling that Raphall was either a fool or a knave; he could discover no excuse for the rabbi's misinterpretation of Judaism. Beyond all the details of translation and interpretation, he could not understand how Raphall could ignore the fact that Jewish law is fluid, flexible and organic. The rabbis of the Talmud had "explained away" many "contradictory, unjust, and even barbarous" laws and statements in the Bible, he said—it was nonsense to pretend that everything preserved in the Bible retained a divine sanction.

Several months later, Christian abolitionists began the serial publication of another Jewish analysis of the biblical attitude towards slavery, a treatise on "Slavery Among the Ancient Hebrews" by Dr. Moses Mielziner, then principal of the Jewish school at Copenhagen, later to become the rabbi of Anshi Chesed Congregation of New York City. Written as Mielziner's doctoral dissertation at the University of Giessen, without any reference to the contemporary American agitation, Mielziner's work was a dispassionate, rationalistic study of the scriptural law governing slavery. The Danish rabbi was convinced that the Mosaic law had so thoroughly delimited the practice of slavery as to all but abolish it, and that the enslavement of Hebrews had actually ceased with the destruction of the First Temple. Of course, he had not intended to write a textbook for abolitionist clergymen, but his work so impressed its first American reader, Professor Francis Lieber of Columbia University, as an antidote to Raphall's supposedly authoritative presentation, that its translation and publication were arranged for immediately, first in the American *Theological Review* of New York in April 1861, and again in the *Evangelical Review* of Gettysburg, Pa., in January 1862."[29]

Raphall's sermon was answered even in England. Rabbi Gustav Gottheil, later to become rabbi of Temple Emanu-El of New York City preached two sermons to his Manchester congregation on the subject:[30]

> We have had to learn, by reports in the public journals, that a Teacher in Israel, a man to whom people would look as having a right to speak with authority; and at a time when any utterance on the Slave Question could not fail to be eagerly listened to, did from his pulpit maintain that *slave-holding is no sin according to the Scriptures* . . . How can we be silent when we find him using [this] . . . as an argument to show that the

> people of the Republic are wrong in condemning and denouncing the slavery of the south . . . [31]

He, like Heilprin, examined and refuted Raphall's points, one by one, and discussed the relevance of Negro rights to Jewish rights, of Negro freedom to human freedom. For him, slavery found justification neither in the Bible nor in Jewish history.

II

The leading abolitionist propagandist among the rabbis was David Einhorn of Baltimore, who had been writing and preaching against slavery since 1856.[32] He devoted four separate articles in his monthly, *Sinai*, to the Raphall sermon and its arguments.[33] The question, he said, was not whether slavery was mentioned in the Bible, but

> whether Scripture merely *tolerates* this institution as an evil not to be disregarded, and therefore infuses in its legislation a mild spirit gradually to lead to its dissolution, or whether it *favors, approves of* and *justifies* and *sanctions* it in its moral aspect.[34]

Christian clergymen were apologizing for slavery, even in the South, he said; could a *rabbi* sanction it? If a Christian, he continued, had said Judaism was pro-slavery, all Jews, from the extremest Orthodox wing to the most radical Reformers, would have "call[ed] the wrath of heaven and earth upon such falsehoods."[35]

Einhorn had never had any patience with literalists like Raphall. Jews should be concerned with the spirit of the Bible, he felt, not with its letter. Of course, slavery was acknowledged in the Bible: it had been established long before biblical times. Since it could not be eradicated all at once, certain regulations were ordained to prohibit its most serious abuses. But it was always intended that the system would be abolished in its entirety. It was blasphemy, he believed, for the proponents of slavery to identify God and the Bible with the cruelty and heartlessness of slavery:

> . . . Is it anything else but a deed of Amalek, rebellion against God, to enslave human beings created in His image, and to degrade them to a state of beasts having no will of their own? Is it anything else but an act of ruthless and wicked violence, to reduce defenseless human beings to a

> condition of merchandise, and relentlessly to tear them away from the hearts of husbands, wives, parents, and children. . . ?
>
> It has ever been a strategy of the advocate of a bad cause to take refuge from the spirit of the Bible to its letter, as criminals among the ancient heathen nations would seek protection near the altars of their gods. Can *that* Book hallow the enslavement of any race, which sets out with the principles, that Adam was created in the image of God, and that all men have descended from *one* human pair? Can *that* Book mean to raise the whip and forge chains which proclaims, with flaming words, in the name of God: "break the bonds of oppression, let the oppressed go free and tear every yoke!" Can *that* Book justify the violent separation of a child from its human mother, which, when speaking of birds' nests, with admirable humanity commands charitable regard for the feelings even of an animal mother? . . .[36]

Arguing religious sanctions for human bondage on the basis of ancient practice made as much sense to Einhorn as urging the reestablishment of polygamy, blood vengeance, or royalty, because they were conventional in biblical times. As to the historic right to enslave others, could custom ever justify evil? "Does a disease, perchance, cease to be an evil on account of its long duration?" Would mankind ever progress if improvements were thwarted out of consideration for the past? Would the United States ever have been created if the national founders had been moved by regard for "historic right?" "If such principles were true, could it ever have been possible to cease burning heretics and witches, aye! even to sacrifice the blood of one's own children?" Did God himself show any regard for "historic right" when he emancipated the Hebrew slaves from Egyptian slavery? Religious principles of freedom and righteousness, Einhorn maintained, must ultimately triumph over "ancient prejudices, over usurped titles and privileges, over hallowed atrocities."[37]

Like Heilprin and Dr. Gottheil, Einhorn perceived a fundamental relationship between the rights of the Jew and the rights of the Negro. He saw no possibility of freedom for minorities in an atmosphere which condoned the enslavement of any people. The philosophy of exclusionism would inevitably set more and more people outside the bounds of equality, unless it were repudiated completely. For him, slavery and the KnowNothing agitation against aliens were of a piece; as it was intended to enslave the Negro forever, so foreigners were to be degraded into second class citizens. The extension of democratic rights to the Negro would safeguard the status of all other groups. Even more important, it would also enable America to forge to the forefront of leadership in the movement for world-wide democracy.[38]

The Rabbi of Har Sinai Temple in Baltimore was not merely preaching. Maryland was a festering sore of sectional strife; it would in all probability have joined the Confederacy after the outbreak of hostilities, had it not been for the prompt action of the government in arresting secessionist ring-leaders and declaring martial law in order to safeguard the passage of Northern troops through to the national capital. Anti-slavery declarations were not idle talk in such an atmosphere. Einhorn had been warned many times before, by both friends and enemies, to discontinue his public crusade. His articles against Raphall, printed in New York papers and in separate pamphlet form, were the last straw; open threats were made against him, and Baltimore Jews who belonged to other congregations were forced to state in the public press that they did not accept his leadership.

Open rioting between Baltimore Unionists and Confederate sympathizers broke out on April 19, 1861. Abolitionists and many innocent persons who were merely suspected of sharing their ideas were molested; some were beaten and killed. Printing presses, including those which printed Einhorn's *Sinai*, were destroyed; homes were set afire. His friends urged the rabbi to flee north, but he refused to show the white feather. Soldiers came to him with proof that his name was listed among those proscribed by the secessionist instigators of the riots. Still he refused to leave. A group of young men of his congregation, armed for guard duty, set up a cordon around his home to protect him and his family. Finally, on the fourth day of the rioting, he consented to leave, for his family's sake, proposing to return as soon as law and order were restored in Baltimore.[39]

He never did return. His congregation was itself so riddled by political differences, and many members were so thoroughly frightened by the violence of the rioters, that the only condition on which they would consent to their rabbi's return was that he promise to refrain from political controversy. On May 13, the Board of Trustees directed that he be written to as follows: "it would be very desirable—for your own safety, as well as out of consideration for the members of your congregation— if in the future there would be no comment in the pulpit on the excitable issues of the time."[40]

Such a condition was utterly unacceptable to David Einhorn. If he had been interested in conciliating the secessionists he would never have undertaken to write and preach against slavery in the first place. He could not and would not compromise one of his most fundamental principles for the sake of expediency.

It was painful to part with his first American congregation without a word of personal farewell; Baltimore had been the scene of his initiation into America and American-Jewish life. There he had first flexed his muscles against American Orthodox and Conservative Judaism in the battle for Reform. He had made many enemies, with his ruthless logic, and his outspoken criticism of reaction in religion and politics; but he had found close friends and supporters in Baltimore, men and women who upheld his hands in controversy, and with whom he still longed to sit and talk.[41]

But a warm welcome had been given him in Philadelphia. Keneseth Israel Congregation promptly invited him to occupy its pulpit; there he could speak his mind and his heart without hindrance. The problems of the war continued to be a major subject of his preaching and writing, but the *Sinai* lasted only another year and a half. Its transfer to Philadelphia was healthier for its editor, but completely unprofitable. Even in the North, Jews were not prepared to identify their religious thinking with the anti-slavery movement. Einhorn wrote in the final number of the journal that "Sinai . . . dies in the battle against slavery."[42]

The only other abolitionist among the rabbis was the Rev. Bernhard Felsenthal of Chicago, who had, while occupying the pulpit in Madison, Ind., taken an active role in the Fremont presidential campaign in 1856,[43] and later refused to apply for the rabbinical position in Mobile, Ala., because he felt that he could not live at peace with himself in a slave environment.[44] As the rabbi of Sinai Temple in Chicago, and then of the newly organized Zion Congregation, he is said to have delivered many anti-slavery sermons and speeches during the war.[45] In his only sermon to be preserved in print, a Thanksgiving Day message of 1865,[46] he rejoiced over the successful termination of the war and the final death-blow to slavery. God had freed America from the bondage of Egypt, he said; the nation was now rid of "an ugly and hateful institution" which had shamed her before the entire world:

> Four millions of men, children of the same heavenly Father, descendants of the same Adam, were held in—slavery! And now they were freed, and

> now they will be free . . . And should the nation not rejoice? Still many more millions of white people languished in slavery. They were fettered by the shackles of prejudices. Were not those who spoke for universal freedom and acted for universal justice in a small, small minority? And was not the name *Abolitionist* a name of disgrace? And now this name has become a name of honor, and three-fourths or seven-eighths of the nation glory in this name. The fetters of prejudices are broken. The white people have become emancipated just as well as the black people. The Abolitionists were the true statesmen of the nation. . . .

Unlike Einhorn, who believed that "any Jew who lifts his hand against the Union, is as a Jew to be considered equal to a parricide,"[47] Felsenthal apologized for but did not condemn Jews who approved of slavery and supported the Confederacy.[48] They were in the small minority, he said; American Jews by and large were "heart and soul, dedicated to the anti-slavery movement." He agreed that "if anyone, it is the Jew above all others who should have the most burning and irreconcilable hatred for the 'peculiar institution of the South,'" but he was still unwilling to disown them for their mistaken ideas.

III

Indicative of the mood of large segments of the Jewish population of the North were the comments of Isaacs' *Jewish Messenger* on Einhorn's flight from Baltimore:

> It seems that he has been mistaking his vocation, and making the pulpit the vehicle for political invective. The citizens of Baltimore, not regarding this as part of the Dr's duty, politely informed him, that 12 hours' safe residence was about all that they could guarantee him, in *that* place. Accordingly, taking the hint, the political Rabbi left, and at last accounts, was in the neighborhood of Philadelphia. We wonder whether our Baltimore co-religionists grieve over his departure? At the same time, we commend his fate to others, who feel inclined to take a similar course. A Minister has enough to do, if he devotes himself to the welfare of his flock; he can afford to leave politics to others. Let Dr. E's fate be a warning.[49]

Samuel M. Isaacs nursed his own private grudge against the Baltimore rabbi for his refusal to co-operate in the establishment of the Board of

Delegates of American Israelites. This accounted in part for his gloating over the Baltimore experience. But Isaacs did honestly seek to avoid controversy over national politics unless a Jewish issue was involved. When letters about the Raphall sermon poured into the *Messenger's* office, he refused to print any of them. "We are determined not to engage in a controversy, and have made up our mind to admit in our columns *no* articles on the subject, either for or against slavery."[50]

Later, when inflammatory discussions of slavery were no longer so common, the *Messenger* was willing to commit itself by reprinting parts of a learned German treatise which maintained that slavery did not have divine sanction.[51] Still later, it gave its support to the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, but cautioned that equality would have to be earned by the Negro, rather than legislated for him.[52]

Although his Virginia background undoubtedly gave a pro-slavery bent to his thinking, Isaac Leeser never published his personal views in *The Occident*. Like the *Messenger's* editors, he said he was profoundly opposed to any Jewish discussion of general political questions. Judaism, so far as he was concerned, had nothing specific to say about slavery and abolitionism, about the North and the South. So he chose not to preach on the National Fast Day on January 4, 1861, because "we could not have avoided political allusions had we spoken"; instead he gave a brief prayer for peace and harmony. He regretted that Dr. Raphall had decided to speak on slavery, although he admitted that he agreed with most of the New York rabbi's conclusions.[53]

The closest that Leeser ever came to discussing slavery was an editorial in which he cautioned Jewish merchants in the South against disobeying local regulations concerning commerce with Negro slaves. In late 1860 he wrote, "we have been shown a notice from a committee of vigilance addressed to a Hebrew in a town of Georgia, ordering him 'and his brethren' to quit the place by the 15th of November, alleging as a reason, that they had offended the public sense of propriety by their traffic. . . ." If Jews disagreed with regulations against commercial intercourse with Negroes, said Leeser, let them move North rather than stir up trouble.[54]

IV

Isaac Mayer Wise[55] was another rabbi-editor who objected to political discussions from a Jewish viewpoint, from any religious viewpoint, in fact. He carried his attack against the Protestant abolitionists so far, however, that he actually did take a political position without admitting that he did so. He considered the abolitionists to be "fanatics," "demagogues," "red republicans and habitual revolutionaries, who feed on excitement and delight in civil wars, German athei[sts] coupled with American puritan[s] who know of no limits to their fanaticism, visionary philanthropists and wicked preachers who have that religion which is most suitable to their congregations," and "demons of hatred and destruction." It was the Protestant preachers, in the final analysis, who were responsible for the outbreak of the Civil War, Wise was convinced:

> Who in the world could act worse, more extravagant and reckless in this crisis than Protestant priests did? From the very start of the unfortunate difficulties the consequences of which we now suffer so severely, the Protestant priests threw the firebrand of abolitionism into the very heart of this country . . . There was not a Protestant paper in existence that had not weekly an abolitionist tirade. There was scarcely a sermon preached without a touch at least of the "existing evil." You know who made Jefferson Davis and the rebellion? The priests did, and their whiners and howlers in the press. The whole host of priests would rather see this country crushed and crippled than discard their fanaticism or give up their political influence.[56]

Never did the editor of *The Israelite* write on an issue connected with the war without pausing to attack abolitionism. But he was not a proponent of slavery, although he would have been quite willing to see the perpetuation of slavery guaranteed forever, in order to avoid civil bloodshed.[57] From a moral and ethical viewpoint he was moderately anti-slavery. Far from approving Raphall's stand, as has been charged, Wise was one of those who found many flaws in Raphall's analysis of the biblical text.[58] When the controversial discussions of slavery in the Bible died down, he published a series of articles in which he concluded that Moses had attempted to abolish slavery "by indirect-direct laws which rendered its existence impossible."[59] Agreeing with Einhorn to a surprising extent, he said:

> It is evident that Moses was opposed to slavery from the facts: 1. He prohibited to enslave a Hebrew, male or female, adult or child. 2. He legislated to a people just emerging from bondage and slavery. 3. He legislated

> for an agricultural community with whom labor was honorable. 4. He legislated not only to humanize the condition of the alien laborers, but to render the acquisition and retention of bondmen contrary to their will a matter of impossibility.[60]

Taking a totally unrealistic view of the situation in the South, however, he said that:

> We are not prepared, nobody is, to maintain it is absolutely unjust to purchase savages, or rather their labor, place them under the protection of the law, and secure them the benefit of civilized society and their sustenance for their labor. Man in a savage state is not free; the alien servant under the Mosaic law was a free man, excepting only the fruits of his labor. The abstract idea of liberty is more applicable to the alien laborer of the Mosaic system than to the savage, and savages only will sell themselves or their offspring.[61]

For all his theoretical objections to the inhumanity of slavery he was more hostile to the warmongers in the North than to the evils of slavery, and became, in effect, a defender of the South.[62]

In thorough agreement with Wise on the question of abolitionism was the Rev. Judah Wechsler of Portsmouth, Ohio. He, too, believed that the abolitionist preachers were responsible for the war.

> Under the pretext of philanthropy [he said], the everlasting slavery question has been made the text point of almost every sermon. This more than anything else has been instrumental in [bringing on] this war . . . Had the clergymen excluded politics entirely from the pulpit . . . I for one believe we should not have experienced this war.[63]

Wechsler's ideas on the subject were well known to the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation, whose rabbi he had been in 1858–1860; when he applied for the position again in 1863, the Board of the congregation resolved that he be not permitted even to conduct services on trial because of his "disloyal" political ideas.[64]

Another rabbi who agreed with Wise was Einhorn's Orthodox colleague in Baltimore, the Rev. Bernard Illowy, who denounced the abolitionists as "ambitious aspirants and selfish politicians, who, under the color of religion and in the disguise of philanthropy, have thrown the country into a general state of confusion." Illowy preached the same kind of message as Raphall on the National Fast Day on January 4, 1861, but it did not attract the same amount of attention from the public as Raphall's; it must have been partially responsible, however, for Einhorn's violent outbursts against proslavery rabbis. Illowy asked:

> Why did not Moses, who, as it is to be seen from his code, was not in favor of slavery, command the judges in Israel to . . . take forcibly away a slave from a master? . . . Why did Abraham, Ezra, etc., not free slaves? . . . All these are irrefutable proofs that we have no right to exercise violence against . . . institutions even if religious feelings and philanthropic sentiments bid us disapprove of them. It proves, furthermore, that the authors of the many dangers, which threaten our country with ruin and devastation, are not what they pretend to be, the agents of Religion and Philanthropy . . .[65]

One of Wise's major objections to the abolitionists was his suspicion that they were not actually humanitarians who were interested in the progress of mankind, but politicians bent on securing power. He believed that their religious fanaticism would fasten upon the Jews as their next victims, after the conquest of the South. As evidence of this he cited the 1859 Massachusetts law which denied the right to vote and hold office to the foreign-born until they could certify a residence of seven years in the United States. "Do you think," he asked, "the Israelites of the South must be your white slaves, as you in your naturalization laws treat the foreigner, placing him below the Negro?" The preachers who were so incensed about the treatment of the Negro, Wise claimed, turned a deaf ear to the Jew's claim for equality.[66]

The Jewish Record of New York seconded Wise's opposition to the abolitionist forces on the grounds of their attitude towards the Jews. They were only scheming fanatics who were determined to seize hold of the government and then destroy every free institution, smother every group, with which they disagreed. After the Confederacy was quelled, said the *Record*, the New England radicals would set themselves to the task of disfranchising the Jews.[67]

It is interesting to compare the diametrically opposed views of the *Record* with Einhorn's *Sinai* in reference to the Negroes. For Einhorn, Jewish rights would not be safe until Negro rights were secure. His humanitarianism made him the friend of the oppressed Negro. The *Record*, however, became a vicious spokesman of anti-Negro prejudice:

> We know not how to speak in the same breath of the Negro and the Israelite. The very names have startlingly opposite sounds—one representing all that is debased and inferior in the hopeless barbarity and heathenism of six thousand years; the other, the days when Jehovah conferred on our fathers the glorious equality which led the Eternal to converse with them, and allow them to enjoy the communion of angels. Thus the abandoned fanatics insult the choice of God himself, in endeavoring to reverse the inferiority which he stamped on the African, to make him the compeer, even in bondage, of His chosen people.
>
> There is no parallel between such races. Humanity from pole to pole would scout such a comparison. The Hebrew was originally free; and the charter of his liberty was inspired by his Creator. The Negro was never free; and his bondage in Africa was simply duplicated in a milder form when he was imported here . . . The judicious in all the earth agree that to proclaim the African equal to the surrounding races, would be a farce which would lead the civilized conservatism of the world to denounce the outrage . . .
>
> Alas, that the holy name and fame of the Prophet Moses should be desecrated by a comparison with the quixotic achievements of President Lincoln![68]

The *Record*, in typical Democratic fashion, revealed no sympathy with the Administration's program of emancipation or with its hopes for the Negro. Lincoln might just as well have abolished the institution of monarchy throughout Europe, it said, as proclaim the emancipation of slaves in the very parts of the South which were not under Union control.[69]

It objected to every step taken for the welfare of the Negro with sarcastic comments to the effect that whites would soon have to disguise themselves as colored men to obtain favors from the government.[70] The *Record* had no faith in the ability of the Negro to take his place in the ranks of the civilized. Those who said that he would do as well as the Jew were blind to the facts. Compare the achievements of Jews in the arts and sciences even under the most oppressive regimes of Europe with the failure of freed Negroes in the North to demonstrate any potentialities whatever, said the *Record*, and it would be clear that the Negro did not deserve freedom.[71]

At the very beginning of the slavery agitation, one of the most respected rabbis in America, Max Lilienthal of Cincinnati, had agreed with most of his colleagues that the abolitionists were incendiary radicals who were bringing the nation to the brink of disaster. However much he believed that slavery was an immoral institution, he was willing to defend the right of the Southern states to determine their own economic system. But once the war broke out, he threw all his strength on the side of Lincoln and the Union cause, confident that it was right and just to drive back "the surging waves of the ocean of rebellion" for the sake of the Union.[72]

Lithographs of Lilienthal, a very popular rabbi, had been sold all over the country. One of these was returned to him, shortly after his declaration of allegiance to the Union, with a message scrawled across its face:

> Sir:
> Since you have discarded the Lord and taken up the Sword in defense of a Negro government, your picture that has occupied a place in our Southern home, we return herewith, that you may present it to your *Black Friends*, as it will not be permitted in our dwelling. Your veneration for the Star Spangled Banner is, I presume, in your pocket, like all other demagogues who left their country for their country's good. I shall be engaged actively in the field and should be happy to rid Israel of the disgrace of your life. Be assured that we have memories; our friends we shall not forget. Should you ever desire to cultivate any acquaintance with me, I affix my name and residence, and you may find someone in your place who can inform you who I am.
>
> Jacob A. Cohen,
> New Orleans, La., C.S.A.[73]

How wrong Jacob Cohen was to regard Lilienthal as an abolitionist was demonstrated in his Victory Sermon, delivered on April 14, 1865, in which he publicly apologized for not having been anti-slavery until Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation! He confessed his shame that he had been willing to defend the slave property of the Southern states, and that he had been wanting in the moral courage to denounce "the scourge of slavery." He realized now, he said, that the abolitionists were the heroes of the age: "Right must be right, whatever may be the consequences." All the credit for having "freed [the country] from the everlasting blemish of slavery" was due to the abolitionists who had risked reputation, honor, and security, for a moral principle.

V

If the rabbis of the North were in such thorough disagreement about the Jewish approach to slavery and abolitionism, it is not surprising to find that their Southern colleagues gave complete support to the slave system. At least one of them, George Jacobs of Richmond, employed slaves in his own home without feeling that he was acting contrary to the dictates of Judaism. He was no Simon Legree, of course; in fact, long after the Negroes had been freed, a former slave woman continued to cling to his family, following them to Philadelphia where the Rev. Jacobs accepted a pulpit. She continued to serve them until old age forced her retirement.[74] The Rev. J. M. Michelbacher of Richmond appears to have been completely convinced of the justice of Negro slavery, judging from his only war-time sermon to be preserved. In a lengthy prayer summoning God to the assistance of the Confederacy in an hour of danger, he revealed his belief that slavery was ordained of God:

> The man servants and maid servants Thou has given unto us, that we may be merciful to them in righteousness and bear rule over them, the enemy are attempting to seduce, that they, too, may turn against us, whom Thou has appointed over them as instructors in Thy wise dispensation . . . Behold O God, [our enemies] invite our man-servants to insurrection, and they place weapons of death and the fire of desolation in their hands that we may become an easy prey unto them; they beguile them from the path of duty that they may waylay their masters, to assassinate and to slay the men, women and children of the people that trust only in Thee. In this wicked thought, let them be frustrated, and cause them to fall into the pit of destruction which in the abomination of their evil intents they digged out for us, our brothers and sisters, our wives and our children.[75]

Michelbacher was voicing the fears of most Southerners in this prayer, unjustified fears that the Union would inspire the slaves to savage destruction.

VI

It is important to note that, with the exception of the activities of the two abolitionist rabbis, David Einhorn and Bernhard Felsenthal, and of a few isolated editorials on abolitionism and the Fugitive Slave Law in *The Asmonean*[76] in 1850–51, the discussion of slavery among the rabbis did not begin until late 1860, when the fate of the nation had already been fixed, and public opinion, by and large, already formulated.[77] This would indicate that the rabbis, with the exceptions already noted, were followers, rather than leaders, in political thought, and that they were not prepared to discuss the most burning issue of the day until it was already tearing the Union apart. As immigrants new to the nation's problems and as spiritual leaders of a minority faith, then, they were, for the most part, wary of political activity.

Once they felt it essential to commit themselves, however, they adopted no single political formula, but, to the contrary, all the varieties of political thought then current on the national scene. Personal background and environment, rather than Jewish teachings, determined their views; their version of Judaism was cut to fit the pattern of the conclusions which they reached independently. As with the Christian denominations, so with Judaism; religious ideals and principles were interpreted in widely disparate ways when a crucial issue faced the entire nation.

Yet another observation is necessary. The division of the United States into two warring fragments had been foreshadowed long before 1861 by the violent sectional strife in Christian denominational conventions, conferences and assemblies. As early as 1845, the Southern Baptists had seceded from their national convention over the issue of slavery. In 1854, after eleven days of heated debate, the Annual Methodist General Conference ordered a slave-holding Methodist bishop to dispose of his slaves; the Southerners left the Methodist fold the following year. Schism along sectional lines took another form in the Presbyterian ranks when the New School group, including most of the abolitionists, withdrew from the national synod in 1857. The inability of Southerners and Northerners to adjust their differences within a religious framework concretized and perhaps even deepened the nation's dilemma.[78]

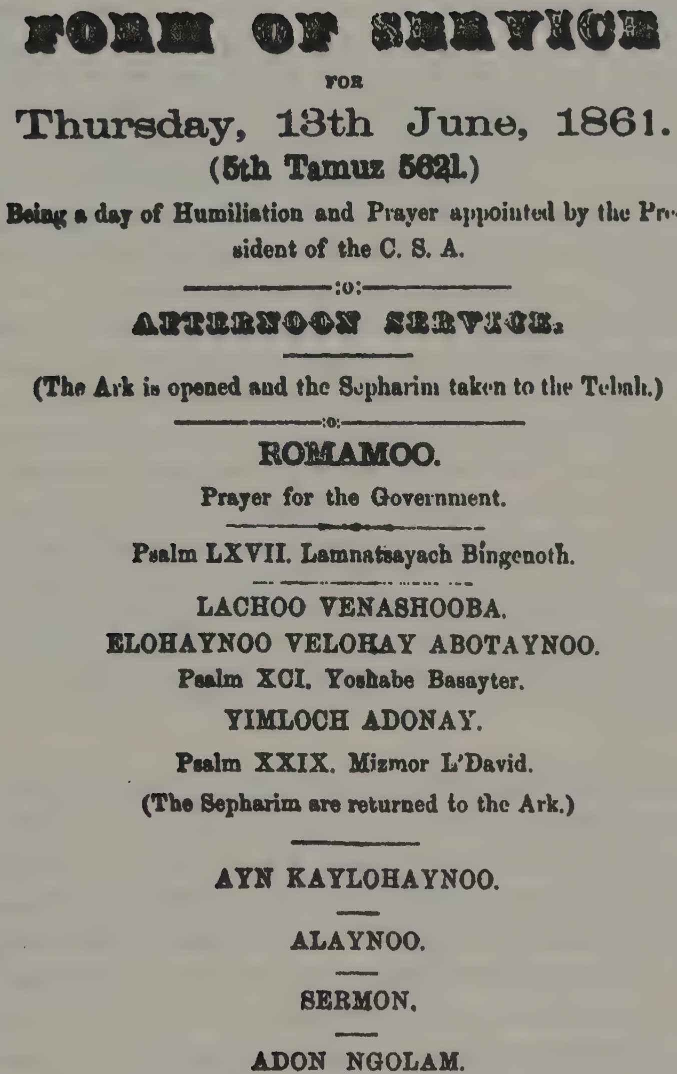
Such a split did not occur among the Jews. There *were* national Jewish bodies, although they were not in the least comparable to the Protestant denominational organizations. The Independent Order of B'nai B'rith and other fraternal groups appear to have ignored the South-North turmoil in the pre-war years, tolerated the enforced separation of the war years, and continued as before once the war had been ended; indeed, in 1866, the Memphis Lodge of B'nai B'rith urged that the annual district convention be held in that Southern city because "it would tend greatly to the extension of our beloved Order in the South."[79] The Board of Delegates of American Israelites discussed only Jewish subjects during its few pre-war years, and hardly even met during the period of the war. It was a weak, incomplete organization, altogether, but its leaders were moderates who would not for an instant have injected politics into its proceedings. Einhorn and Felsenthal might have attempted to do so, but they were among its more forceful opponents. There was actually, then, no attempt to divide the few nation-wide organizations along sectional lines on the basis of the slave question, nor on the issue of war either, although, as we shall see, certain rabbis did take an active political role when the military phase of the Civil War followed hard upon the heels of the propaganda phase.

3

The Rabbis Take Sides

Organized religion serves one of its most obvious purposes in moments of crisis in the life of an individual or of a community. During the Civil War, the churches of the Union and Confederacy zealously fulfilled their religious role as sources of inspiration, comfort, and strength; they were significant factors in the reinforcement of that spirit which the twentieth century has labeled "civilian morale." Several times during every year of the conflict, Lincoln and Davis called upon their people to attend special church services on Days of Humiliation and Prayer and on Thanksgiving Days, to seek divine blessing for their respective armies. It is impossible to calculate in statistical terms the benefit which accrued to both sides, the number of men who enlisted in the armed forces, the number of war bonds purchased, the number of hours devoted to war work, as a result of the hymns sung, the prayers spoken, and the sermons preached at religious services during the war. But it is probably no exaggeration to say that neither the Union nor the Confederacy could long have maintained the war effort without the active participation of the churches.

The synagogues of both sections cooperated fully in this religio-patriotic activity. Wherever there were Jewish congregations—in Peoria,[1] New Haven,[2] Syracuse,[3] Rochester,[4] Easton,[5] Memphis,[6] Richmond,[7] to name only a few—the Jews gathered together to pray for the success of the cause and the end of hostilities. Special penitential prayers were chanted and inspirational sermons were delivered by the rabbis. The periodical published the proclamations of the President and urged the attendance of their people. Afterwards, the sermons were printed so as to reach those Jews who had not themselves participated.



FORM OF SERVICE

FOR

Thursday, 13th June, 1861.

(5th Tamuz 5621.)

Being a day of Humiliation and Prayer appointed by the President of the C. S. A.

AFTERNOON SERVICE.

(The Ark is opened and the Sepharim taken to the Tebah.)

ROMAMOO.

Prayer for the Government.

Psalm LXVII. Lamnatsayach Bingenoth.

LACHOO VENASHOOBA.

ELOHAYNOO VELOHAY ABOTAYNOO.

Psalm XCI. Yoshabe Basayter.

YIMLOCH ADONAY.

Psalm XXIX. Mizmor L'David.

(The Sepharim are returned to the Ark.)

AYN KAYLOHAYNOO.

ALAYNOO.

SERMON.

ADON NGOLAM.

Facsimile of the program of the Patriotic Confederate Service at Beth Shalome Synagogue, Richmond.

Typical of the editorial comment on the Days of Prayer was that of *The Jewish Messenger*, which said:

> By no class of people will this recommendation of the President be more faithfully acceded to, than by those whom we are particularly addressing. To no body of citizens has the Union been more prolific of good, of blessings untold, than to us; and by none is its present afflicted condition more deeply, earnestly deplored than by the Israelites of America. It is but natural, then that a day set apart for national prayer should be observed with a due sense of its import, and that thereon should ascend to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, fervent aspirations for the deliverance of this hitherto most favored land from the evils surrounding it, and its speedy restoration to its wonted tranquility and prosperity . . .
>
> We should be as ready as the heroic men of the Revolution, to pledge even our lives for the maintenance of the national honor. But we desire to see a speedy termination to this war, for we feel it a blot on our escutcheon, that there should be found among citizens of America, any who would calmly contrive her downfall, who would deliberately plot her ruin . . . Our satisfaction with a vigorous prosecution of what is conceived to be a necessary resort to force, is not at all inconsistent with the earnest desire we at the same time experience, that the "swords may soon again be beaten into plowshares." For a successful issue to the nation's efforts for the reestablishment of law and order, as well as for the early enjoyment of the blessings of peace, right heartily do we pray to Heaven. . . .[8]

In addition to these special services held in response to presidential request, prayers for the welfare of the government and the success of the armed forces were read in many synagogues at weekly Sabbath services and on Jewish holidays.[9] At least one synagogue held a special service one day every week during the entire four-year war period.[10] The raising of the national emblem over synagogues in New York City,[11] Cleveland,[12] and Easton,[13] to name those which were recorded, was celebrated by special prayers; the departure of large numbers of members of the congregation for military duty was also utilized as the occasion for patriotic religious devotions.[14]

Non-Jewish clergymen and military officers occasionally came to the synagogues to participate in patriotic demonstrations.[15] One interesting example of this was recorded by *The Jewish Messenger*. When Major

Anderson of Fort Sumter fame returned to New York, some of his Jewish friends escorted him to Sabbath services at Temple Emanu-El where naturally, his presence created a sensation. Raphael de Cordova, the lecturer-humorist who was employed to deliver English sermons at Emanu-El, hastily revised his address of the morning and paid tribute to the guest of the congregation, urging his congregants to tender their complete support to the Union cause. At the conclusion of the service, the organ played the national anthem while those in attendance milled around the national war hero and overwhelmed him with congratulations.[16]

A list of the sermons and prayers on patriotic subjects which were delivered by the rabbis is printed as an appendix to this volume. Every preacher and minister had his own individual attitude towards specific aspects of the war; but there was a common denominator, which transcended the differences of opinion between abolitionists, moderates and pro-slavery men, which transcended even the diametrically opposed view of Unionists and Confederates. They were, after all, rabbis, dedicated to a religious interpretation of life. There was an almost uniform quality of sadness, compassion, and piety in their religious pronouncements. Whether they supported or opposed the Administration in the North, whether they bespoke God's blessing on the Federal or Confederate cause, human suffering and need concerned all of them: the horrors of war on the battlefield, the snuffing out of young lives, the misery of poverty-stricken families on the home front, the destructive passions and hatreds engendered by the war.

Beyond this common denominator of interest were specific aspirations and personal loyalties. We are limited, of course, to the records preserved in synagogue minute-books, periodicals and personal manuscripts. Five rabbis emerge from the faded print and yellowing paper of the 1860s more clearly than their colleagues: They were men whom personal conviction and fate conspired to set in the path of the excitement and anxiety of the war years.

II

Of those rabbis who spoke out most forthrightly in favor of the Union cause—Max Lilienthal of Cincinnati, Liebman Adler and Bernhard Felsenthal of Chicago, David Einhorn of Philadelphia, S. M. Isaacs of New York —Sabato Morais of Philadelphia was perhaps the most dynamic.

Unlike Einhorn and Felsenthal, he was not an abolitionist. His profound loyalty to the Union and his unswerving support of the Lincoln administration derived rather from his conviction that the future of republicanism all over the world would be severely threatened by America's failure to preserve its constitutional integrity. If the United States were unable to quell internal dissension, democracy would be ridiculed everywhere as too weak to live up to its promise. He recognized the evils of slavery, but he could not side with the abolitionists who were willing to sacrifice all of the cherished achievements of four generations of American life rather than live with slavery. It goes without saying that he was equally opposed to the Southerners who would, in defense of slavery, "cast away as worthless the precious legacy of their fathers." When the South did seek to destroy his beloved Union, he could do naught else but support the war effort:

> When dearly bought freedom is in jeopardy; when the angry billows of a political sea impede the march of civilization, and the adversaries of human brotherhood are skilfully marshalled for the onslaught, deeds of self-denial more than psalmody, will sanctify the life of man ... Let him, therefore who values his country's honor speed on, let him trustingly follow the path which leads to national deliverance, and when the happy goal shall have been attained, raise the anthem which will be reverberated from sea to sea, even from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean ...[17]

Peace was as dear to him as to any other American, but the integrity of the Union was even more precious. "We *must* have peace," he exclaimed, "but not at the cost of our national existence." Only a peace of unity which would "render America what its illustrious founders had made it, the pattern of freedom and the haven of the oppressed," was worth accepting.[18]

Much as he urged his people to take part in the struggle for the Union, Morais could not find it in his heart to stir up their hatred against the people of the South. They were invaders, it was true, enemies who had erected a "citadel of Rebellion" against the nation which had nourished them. But they were still brothers, for all their rebelliousness and treachery. He prayed for the defeat of the military forces of the Confederacy, but he also asked God to speak to the hearts of his "misguided ... disaffected children," and to renew within them the loyalty which they had once felt for the United States. He applauded Lincoln's conciliatory policy towards

> dearest interests of mankind, aye the lives of myriads, too, in order to obtain some ephemeral power; dare we invoke in our favor the assistance of the God of Justice and Truth? . . . Like the inflexible Joshua, we must destroy the impious Achans with their plunder . . .[24]

If America would repent herself of "vice and pride . . . fraud, perjury and rebellion" against God, then, in truth, God would bless the Union with victory and peace.[25]

Morais preached pro-Union sermons on every possible occasion, National Fast Days, Thanksgiving, Jewish holidays, and on the Fourth of July. One he delivered at the express request of the Philadelphia Union League, of which he was an honorary member.[26] He offered his services to the government as a chaplain, and was responsible for the organization of a women's group in his synagogue which cooperated with the United States Sanitary Commission. More of his sermons were printed in the daily press than any other American rabbi's.[27] Short of giving his life in battle, Dr. Morais could hardly have done more for the cause to which he was so sincerely devoted.

It was inevitable that there should be complaints against his undisguised Republican sympathies by those members of the congregation who were Democrats. The *Parnas* (president), Abraham Hart, seems to have defended him against such criticism during his term of office. In late 1864, however, Hart was succeeded by L. J. Lieberman, one of those who resented Dr. Morais' frequent political allusions and activities. A struggle immediately commenced between the rabbi and the *Adjunta* (Board of Trustees) over the freedom of the pulpit.

Shortly after Thanksgiving, 1864, when Morais had delivered one of his customary pro-Union addresses, Lieberman was able to persuade a majority of the Board to pass a resolution which declared that "henceforth all English Lectures or Discourses shall be dispensed with, *except by particular request of the Parnas, made in writing. . . .*"[28] This denial of Morais' right to express his personal political philosophy in the pulpit was a radical action considering the fact that the minutes of the *Adjunta* contain no record of previous discussion of the problem. It indicates, however, how hostile the new regime was to Morais' Republican declarations.

The rabbi was not content to accept the Board's verdict, but inspired a campaign among his friends for a reversal of the Board's action. To the

the slave states and hoped that they would return to the Union of their own free will, without having to be conquered.[19]

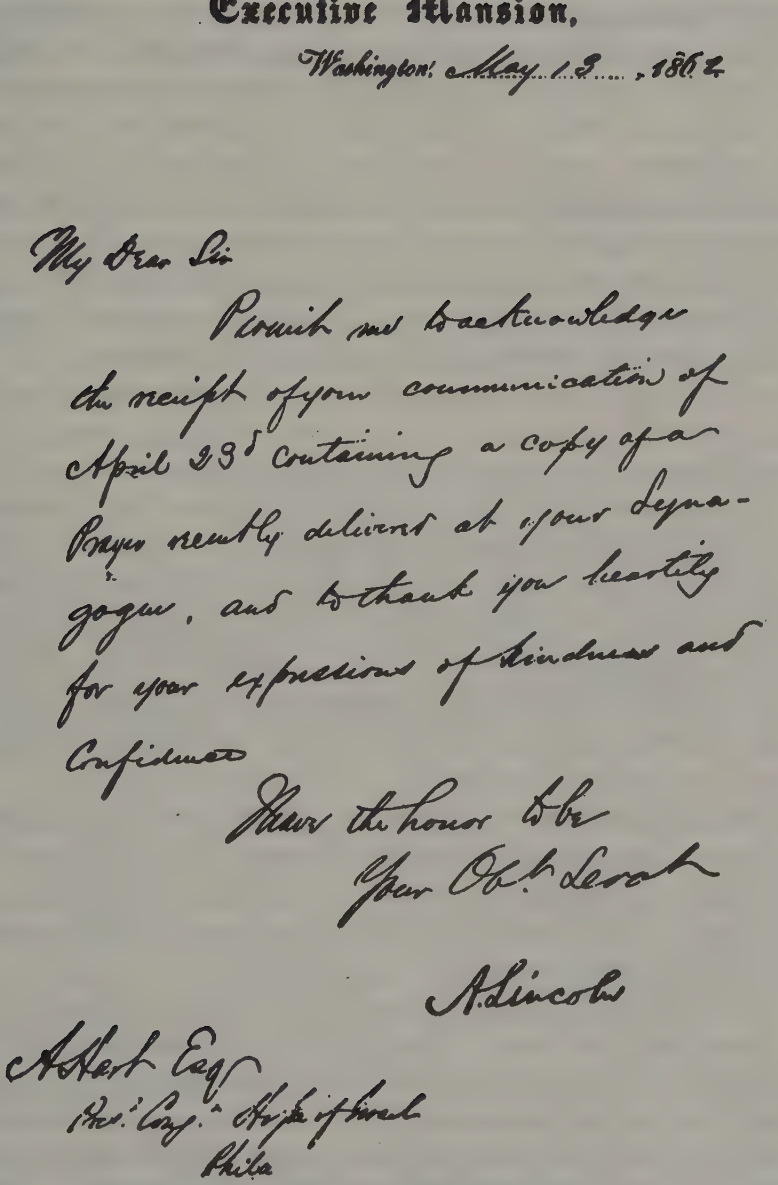
Morais had a deeper affection for Lincoln than any other rabbi. He responded almost instinctively to those qualities of Lincoln's mind and soul which served the nation in its most serious crisis. He, like millions of others, shared in Lincoln's most intimate personal problems. After the death of Lincoln's little son, Willie, Morais prayed in this wise:

> . . . Direct the hands into which the temporal welfare of this people is entrusted. Sustain them, that their strength may never flag. Bless the President of the United States; bless him for his sterling honesty, bless him for his firmness and moderation. Rekindle with joy his domestic hearth; pour on him the balm of divine consolation. Grant that the issues of his momentous obligations be a united and prosperous country. Grant that the end of his career be the maintenance of this Government, unimpaired and unsullied as bequeathed by our illustrious ancestors . . .[20]

Copies of this prayer and the sermon which preceded it were sent to the President by Abraham Hart, the *Parnas* of Morais' congregation.[21] Lincoln acknowledged its receipt with hearty thanks "for your expressions of kindness and confidence."[22] Hart also sent the President a copy of his rabbi's Thanksgiving Sermon of 1863 in which he had suggested, in keeping with Lincoln's national message proclaiming Thanksgiving Day, that the major task of those who remained at home was to stretch out the hand of sympathy to the widows and orphans of the soldiers who had given their lives in battle.[23]

Like many of his colleagues, Morais criticized those who placed personal safety and profit above the national welfare while men were dying for the cause. He could not honestly ask God's blessing, he felt, while selfishness and materialism were rife on the home front. Why should God help the country, when the people themselves were not bending every effort to win the war? Pernicious politicians, greedy men of commerce, and dishonest military officers, he said, must be exposed and stripped of power before the nation would be worthy of God's favor upon its struggle for life:

> Dare we, with hands polluted with bribe, with minds engrossed in the pursuit of ill-gotten wealth, with hearts of stone that will sacrifice the



Executive Mansion,

Washington, May 13, 1862.

My Dear Sir

Permit me to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of April 23d containing a copy of a Prayer recently delivered at your Synagogue, and to thank you heartily for your expressions of kindness and confidence

I have the honor to be
Your Obt. Servt

A. Lincoln

A Hart Esq
Prest. Congn. Mikve Israel
Phila

Facsimile of Lincoln's letter to A. Hart, President of Mikveh Israel congregation, Philadelphia.

Parnas he wrote, not by way of apology, but in explanation, that the paragraphs of the Thanksgiving Sermon which were regarded as objectionable had not been intended to gloat over the re-election of Lincoln and the defeat of the Democratic Party's nominees, but merely to express "the gratification, which every honest man must have felt, at the absence of sedition and violence in our midst."[29] Unfortunately, no copy of the sermon has survived, and we are therefore unable to judge for ourselves. But, at any rate, this explanation appears to have been unacceptable to Lieberman. Meanwhile, Morais' supporters were circulating a petition among the members of the congregation, demanding a revision of the Board's policy.

On February 5, 1865, this petition was presented to the Board; it insisted that Morais be permitted to speak at least once a month and on all holidays. So many members and seat-holders had signed the document that the Board could not reject the demand, but it emphasized in its new declaration of policy that all sermons would have to be "religious Discourse[s]" and that they could only be delivered at the discretion of the *Parnas*.[30]

This was a victory, but only a partial one. On April 7, 1865, therefore, Morais again petitioned the Board for permission "to address the Congregation, whenever I deem fit."[31] It was decided to air the entire matter at a congregational meeting two days later. The voting demonstrated how loyal the rank and file membership was to the rabbi. Every effort to secure approval for the Board's action was defeated, and a final motion, passed by a large majority, empowered Morais to preach on "moral and religious subjects" whenever he chose to do so, and "on the subjects of the day . . . whenever the Synagogue may be opened by order of the *Parnas*."[32] Just a few days later, Morais preached his first sermon on a "subject of the day"—a moving eulogy in memory of the martyred President. Never again was his freedom to preach disputed. In 1866 he was elected to life-time occupancy of the Mikveh Israel pulpit.

Why should the fate of America have been so close to the heart of this immigrant rabbi that he was willing to risk the displeasure of his congregation and, even more, to forfeit the fulfillment of his professional duties? He explained the reason for his passion, indirectly, in many of his sermons. He had been born and educated in Italy. His father had been imprisoned for republican activities. Mazzini and other Italian revolutionaries were his personal friends. He knew at first hand the effects of political strife and disunity, the evils of autocratic regimes. He knew how difficult it was to regain freedom once it was lost. He knew, also, how profoundly the example of democratic America had inspired irredentist and revolutionary movements all over Europe. How could he remain silent when the great shining beacon of freedom was threatened with extinction? Risk displeasure, indeed, he would have said; his father had risked his freedom! He felt he had good reason to lecture his congregation on the value of democracy.[33]

III

Isaac Mayer Wise was in many ways the direct antithesis of Sabato Morais. Peace was more important to him than the Union. He believed that once the South had seceded, the North had no right to resort to arms. "Force will not hold together this Union," he said; "it was cemented by liberty and can stand only by the affections of the people."[34] With the outbreak of war he lapsed into a resentful silence:

> What can we say now? Shall we lament and weep like Jeremiah over a state of things too sad and too threatening to be looked upon with indifference? We would only be laughed at in this state of excitement and passionate agitation, or probably abused for discouraging the sentiment. Or should we choose sides with one of the parties? We can not, not only because we abhor the idea of war, but also we have dear friends and near relations, beloved brethren and kinsmen in either section of the country, that our heart bleeds on thinking of their distress, of the misery that might befall them . . .[35]

Wise abided by this declaration of neutrality. He rarely commented upon the war or its problems when there was no specific Jewish aspect which required his attention; he made no profession of loyalty to the Union nor did he urge his readers to support the war effort. Rather than blame Southern Jewry for its advocacy of the Confederacy as Einhorn did, or apologize as Felsenthal did, Wise defended its right to do so:

> If the largest proportion of the Jewish population of Richmond, Charleston and New Orleans give "aid and comfort to rebellion," as our opponents maintain, they do exactly as others do in the same localities . . . You abolitionists with the grandiloquent and bombastic declamations of philanthropy, freedom and attachment to the government, why do you not go down South and expound your doctrines to the

> community; and if you dare not do it, why do you expect the Jews there to stand in opposition to the masses of people?[36]

Always eager to keep abreast of Jewish news from the South during the war, Wise questioned every Southerner who reached Cincinnati and published as much information as he was able to obtain. In 1862, for instance, he took pleasure in telling his readers that all was well with the congregations in Jackson and Summit, Miss., Atlanta and Columbus, Ga., Montgomery and Mobile, Ala., and that "our informant tells us wonders of the material prosperity of our friends in the far South."[37] Wise did consider the Southerners to be friends, not enemies, and after the war he preached vigorously for an end to the bitterness against the ex-Confederacy.

Feeling as strongly as he did against the abolitionists, Wise had little sympathy for Lincoln and the Republican Administration. When Lincoln stopped in Cincinnati on his way to his Inauguration, Wise wrote:

> Poor old Abe Lincoln, who had the quiet life of a country lawyer, having been elected President of this country, and now going to be inaugurated in his office, the Philistines from all corners of the land congregate around their Dagon and worship him . . . Why all this noise? . . . Wait until he has done something . . . Some of our friends might like to know how the president looks, and we can tell them; he looks . . . "like a country squire for the first time in the city." He wept on leaving Springfield and invited his friends to pray for him; that is exactly the picture of his looks. We have no doubt he is an honest man, and, as much as we can learn, also quite an intelligent man; but he will look queer in the white house, with his primitive manner.[38]

After Lincoln, in his first Inaugural Address, referred to Christianity as a mainstay for the country in its hour of crisis, Wise wrote:

> We have only to say for Mr. Lincoln, that his style of writing is so careless and without any successful attempt at either correctness or elegance that he must not be criticized in using this or that word to express an idea. He takes domestic words, as used in Springfield and vicinity to express familiar ideas. In Springfield religion is called Christianity, because people there do not think of any other form of worship, hence Mr. Lincoln uses the same word to express the same sentiment. We do not believe there is a German infidel, American eccentric, spiritual

> rapper or atheist in the northern states who did not vote for Mr. Lincoln. Let us see how much benefit he will derive from their Christianity, or how he will settle the political troubles with such piety . . .[39]

Editing a Jewish newspaper in war time was no easy matter. Like *The Occident* and the *Messenger*, Wise's *Israelite* lost large numbers of its subscribers when the war broke out: over half, he said, had been Southerners. The cost of paper and printing rose steadily and money was so scarce that some of his Northern readers cancelled their subscriptions.[40] Some refused on principle to continue reading his "Secessionist sheet" as it was called by some non-Jewish Cincinnatians.[41] But that was not the worst of his troubles.

For all his theoretical objections to mixing politics and religion, Wise was a loyal member of the Democratic Party and derived many of his political sympathies from that affiliation.[42] On September 5, 1863, he was nominated for the office of State Senator by the Democratic State Convention at Carthage, Ohio, on the first ballot. Since the meeting was held on the Sabbath, Wise himself could not be there, but his friend Israel Brown apologized for his absence "and informed the convention that the Doctor would accept the nomination." "Cheers," followed this announcement, according to the *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, a Democratic paper, which said that "Dr. Wise . . . a gentleman of learning and accomplishment . . . well known as an estimable Hebrew Rabbi of this city . . . would make an excellent Senator."[43] The *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, a Republican organ, had some sarcastic things to say about ministers and politics, and made a ribald statement about the possible relationship of circumcision to the biblical attitude towards slavery.[44]

Both the *Gazette* and the *Enquirer* understood that Wise had accepted the nomination. But no one seems to have taken the feelings of his Board of Trustees into consideration. Two days after the nominating convention, the Board held a meeting, discussed the matter, and decided to instruct the rabbi to decline:

> The Board feels greatly honored by this demonstration of confidence bestowed upon you; they are also well aware of your sincere attachment to our common country; nevertheless, as it is an established law with us that our minister should be present in the synagogue whenever divine service is held, and also, your services otherwise being indispensably necessary in our congregation, as well as in the scholastic department,

> you are hereby politely, but most emphatically requested to decline said nomination at once . . .[45]

The Board of the Talmud Yelodim Institute, the congregation's parochial school, passed resolutions to the same effect and forwarded them to the rabbi.[46]

Wise could have argued with his Boards. There had never been any objections to his extensive travels all over the country to preach at temple cornerstone laying and dedication ceremonies. No one had ever before invoked a congregational ruling about his attendance at all services. But he knew very well that the Boards were inventing excuses and hiding the real reason for their "emphatic" order. Most of them were Republicans and they were shocked to think that their own rabbi might attract votes to the Democratic Party in so crucial an election. The Democratic gubernatorial candidate was Clement L. Vallandigham, now returned from political exile in Canada, leader of the anti-Lincoln Copperheads; he was a hateful symbol to all Republicans, and those who controlled the Jewish community in Cincinnati were willing to go to any length to prevent their rabbi's helping to elect Vallandigham. The pressure they brought to bear was more intense than their communications indicated. The alternative which they offered was dismissal from the pulpit. On the surface all was politeness and respect, but underneath there was agitated resentment on both sides, as reports in the Cincinnati dailies indicated.[47] Wise actually had no choice:

> As you maintain you cannot dispense with my humble services for the time I might be obliged to spend at the Capital of the State, and the law of the congregation especially ordains it so, I certainly feel obliged to decline a nomination so honorably tendered, notwithstanding my private opinion, that I might tender some services to my country, not altogether unessential, especially as those who nominated me know well my sincere attachment to this country and government. God will save the Union and the Constitution; liberty and justice for all, without my active cooperation, being, after all, without any political aspirations—only an humble individual . . .[48]

The fact that he wrote nothing about the episode in *The Israelite* and published only the correspondence, might indicate that for once in his life he was intimidated. But actually we do not know what he thought about the political tactics of the Republican Jews of Cincinnati. The *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer* was not so silent as the rabbi himself:

> The Rev. Dr. Wise has been forced, by outside pressure, to decline the Democratic nomination for State Senator. Had his name been on the other ticket, the Shoddy contractors who have been so busy in pulling the wires to produce this result, would have been contented to let it remain. The names of these Shoddy contractors do not appear on the record, but they are known nevertheless.[49]

He was never intimidated, however, into withdrawing from the position which he took in *The Israelite.* A year later he was still inveighing against the materialism, demagoguery, and fanaticism which had brought on the war, and was still refusing to take either side in the struggle:

> Either [a man] must rejoice over the defeat of our armies and pray for their destruction, or he must blindly admire the blunders of our military leaders and shout Hosannah to Abe Lincoln and his thousand and one demonstrations of imbecility, in order to gratify one or the other faction. Either one must believe the Negro was created to be a beast of burden to others or you must say he is just as good as you are . . .[50]

The other Jewish papers, with the exception of the *Record,* had nothing to say about Wise's nomination. The *Messenger* and *The Occident* tried to ignore him as much as possible; otherwise they would have devoted most of their editorials to attacks upon him. The *Record* was not interested in his politics or religious creed, but felt that the stand taken by the Cincinnati Jews was completely unpatriotic: "while the country is in danger, everybody must put his shoulder to the wheel, and do his utmost to save it." The *Record* said that Wise was a "bright ornament . . . among the wilderness of stupidity and ignorance out West," that he would have brought honor to Jewry and America in the sordid game of politics, and that the Cincinnati Jews had performed a grave disservice to the nation and to American Jewry by refusing to permit him to run for the office.[51]

What is so interesting, of course, is that whenever a rabbi took an outspoken political position, the right of every American citizen, those who controlled his congregation used every means to silence him. The Democrats refused to permit Morais to preach; the Confederate sympathizers in Baltimore made it impossible for Einhorn to return to his congregation; the Republicans in Cincinnati forced Wise to withdraw from the 1863 election. It was not a question of the rabbi's *brand* of politics; powerful Board members objected to *all* politics. They interpreted Judaism in a narrow, ritualistic sense; they preferred a religion which was withdrawn to a safe distance from all of the controversial problems of the day. It was to take another generation before the American rabbinate defied the laity and declared itself firmly in favor of Jewish pronouncements on questions of social justice.[52]

IV

Isaac Leeser was a natural bridge between the rabbis of the North and those of the Confederacy. If anyone tried with desperate sincerity to occupy the unhappy, sad position of neutrality during the entire war period, it was the bachelor rabbi of Philadelphia. Five years of young manhood spent in Richmond and close ties of blood and friendship with many people throughout the Southland could not be erased by thirty years of devoted ministry in the North. But he was too much a part of the life of the Union to lean towards the South either. Actually, he understood and sympathized with both sides of the conflict so sincerely that he was unable to divorce himself from one or the other. He gave his thoughts and his prayers to both the Union *and* the Confederacy, as though he were living far, far away from Philadelphia.

Sincerely and wholeheartedly believing that all politics (not merely those he disagreed with) should be eschewed by the Jewish preacher and editor, Leeser consistently avoided discussions of a political nature in his *Occident*, except when Jews and Judaism were directly involved. He believed that Jews should participate in the political life of the nation, as individuals, not as Jews. As he had refused to discuss the slavery issue, so he would not present his personal opinions on other differences between the North and South.[53]

But he did write a few incidental words in criticism of the demagogues and agitators on both sides who were pushing the nation towards disaster, "the ruthless spirit of intermeddling in matters which concern them not on the part of the inhabitants of the North,"[54] and "the partisan leaders of the opposite section" who, if they "would but *think* . . . could not be so ready to subvert the government, and would rather put up with some grievances, and forego even some rights, sooner than run the risk of establishing a military despotism. . . ."[55] Leeser thought that it was the responsibility of Jews to act as peacemakers, to attempt to placate the people on both sides. In his own prayers and writings, he spoke only for "conciliation and truth . . . moderation . . . peace and brotherly love."[56]

It was agony for Leeser to think of civil war, of Jews lifting up their hands to slay those "with whom they were but lately on terms of friendship," of all America divided into two warring camps.[57] This was not verbiage. With his vivid imagination, Leeser was dramatizing his own feelings. If he had been young enough to serve in the Army, he would not have been able to fight for the North against his Southern friends any more than he could have fought for the Confederacy against the Union. This was not fence-straddling; it was the dilemma of a man of divided loyalties in a day which required undivided allegiance.

All through the war, Leeser wrote from a neutral point of vantage, with equal regard for both sides. He hoped that the contest would be brief and that peace and plenty would bless the land again,[58] but the protracted war did not change his sentiments. He was proud that Jews in both sections were loyal to their neighbors, and asked Jews in the South as well as in the North to

> turn to the God of their fathers for support in the direful calamity which now sweeps over this once peaceful country, and brings sorrow and mourning to many a bereaved heart. Now is the time for the soul to be touched with contrition when the Lord makes it manifest to all on what a broken prop they lean when they trust in human strength, and a mortal's wisdom . . . Let us be humble when we contemplate the extent of the evil which no human forethought or knowledge was able to avert.[59]

After the cessation of hostilities, Leeser made several trips to the South. On a visit to Richmond, where he installed two new Lodges of the Independent Order of B'nai B'rith, he noted with pleasure that the congregations and charitable organizations of the city had survived the havoc of war, although their members had endured much suffering and were now in very narrow straits. He was delighted to see his old rabbinical friends again, and hoped that "the intercourse now resumed between the sections may be productive of harmony and concert of action, among the Israelites especially. . . ."[60] From Chattanooga, Tenn., he wrote feelingly of the battlefields "literally trodden down by the steps of marching armies making roads, or tracks, rather, in every direction, obliterating forests, houses, fields, and the natural growth of the soil. . . ." He was pleased that war-time enmity had not been perpetuated in the Jewish soldiers' cemetery there, that "those who were not personal enemies, but merely driven to slaughter each other by the folly and madness of rulers, will sleep side by side in undisturbed rest, awaiting the resurrection."[61]

The impression that Leeser was pro-Confederate seems to have been rather wide-spread. It was not easy for the partisan to understand a genuine and sincere neutrality. After Leeser's death, for instance, Congregation Beth Elohim of Charleston, S. C., paid tribute to his supposed Confederate sympathies in a memorial resolution:

> . . . As Southerners, we grieve over the loss of a bold defender of our rights; a true and consistent friend to constitutional liberty, who, through great personal peril, remained unshaken in our vindication, undismayed by our reverses, unconquered by our defeat. . . .[62]

The Charleston Jews did not grasp the fact that Leeser's friendship for and interest in the South did not preclude an equal interest in and friendship for the North.

Moses A. Dropsie, a prominent Jewish lawyer in Philadelphia, one of the organizers of the Republican Party,[63] who later bequeathed to the community the funds with which the Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning was established, was also unable to understand Leeser's attitude. On May 7, 1861, Dropsie gave a resounding patriotic address when the flag was raised atop the school house of the Hebrew Education Society. In his next issue of *The Occident* Leeser wrote an article on the event, deploring as always the outbreak of the war, but congratulating the Southern Jews for being as loyal to the Confederacy as Northern Jews were to the Union.[64] Dropsie sought out the rabbi and gave him a verbal whipping. After a long denunciation of Leeser's supposed Secessionist proclivities, Dropsie said: "You better take care what you say; you are already on the suspected list, and you may be compelled to quit the city before long!"[65]

Poor Leeser could not contain his anxiety. He immediately wrote a letter to Mayor Alexander Henry informing him of Dropsie's threat and asking for an official statement on the matter:

> . . . I know nothing of a *legal* or illegal suspected list of the inhabitants of this city, nor am I conscious of any offense against the laws of this corporation, or the constitution, or the laws of the State or the Union, why I should be suspected of anything, much less why I should be ordered by anyone to quit Philadelphia. You will therefore greatly oblige an old resident who knew your grandfather thirty years ago, whether such a suspected list is in existence, and if so, for what cause my name was placed thereon; and if so whether I shall be liable to a summary expulsion from this place; so that I may make in time the necessary preparations, to go back to a country less free than this, but where the people at least have the assurance, that they are not liable to be molested by anyone who, in time of trouble, may endeavor to denounce them to an irresponsible power which being unknown to the law places the law and common sense at defiance.[66]

It is quite interesting to note that Leeser thought of being deported back to Germany, not of being transported across the Confederate lines. It is also noteworthy that he appeared willing to accept the fate of an exile if necessary, rather than give up his neutral position.

Mayor Henry put Leeser's spirit at rest. Not only was there no list of the proscribed, to his knowledge, but he had no idea "why the language of which you complain should have been used by Mr. M. A. Dropsie."

And to reassure the rabbi completely, he concluded his letter with the statement that "your loyalty has never been impugned, so far as I am aware."[67]

This was the only "peril" on record which Leeser had to endure during the war years, so the Charleston congregation's eulogy was something of an exaggeration. But the forty-eight hours which elapsed between Moses Dropsie's threat and the Mayor's reply were time enough for Isaac Leeser to contemplate, with sadness, the necessity of leaving the little comforts of his rooms, the homes of his friends, accustomed haunts, and the strong odor of printer's ink.

V

One of the leading rabbis of the South, the Rev. James K. Gutheim, who had inaugurated his rabbinical career at the Nefutzoth Jehudah Congregation in New Orleans, after a few years in business in New York and teaching in Cincinnati, agreed with his Northern colleagues that it was not "the province of the pulpit, to discuss the political questions of the day and to point out the course, which should be pursued."[68] His sermons over a long and fruitful ministry lived up to his declaration. Religion, for him, was not intended to be mixed with specific political considerations.[69] Even during the excitement of secession talk after Lincoln's election, Gutheim would not depart from his policy. The farthest he would go was to counsel his people to be deliberate and objective:

> Whatever the cause or the result of the present agitation may be, every good citizen ought . . . with moderation and wisdom espouse the cause of right and justice, be ready for all sacrifices, and; discarding all prejudice and self-interest, exhibit a true and pure patriotism. Actuated by such a spirit we may at all times assuredly count on the protection of Providence, and look with a cheerful countenance into the immediate Future. . . .[70]

What Gutheim meant by "the cause of right and justice," and how sincerely he intended his congregants to "be ready for all sacrifices" became abundantly clear in May 1863.

The Union's military policy in New Orleans required that each citizen take an oath of allegiance to the United States, or be transported into the Confederacy. Innumerable men took the course of least resistance and pronounced the words of the oath, rather than give up their homes, livelihoods, and personal belongings; they did not really think they were committing a sin; it was the enemy of their people whom they were deceiving. But Gutheim was a rabbi; he could not take a false oath to God, nor could he betray "the cause of right and justice" which was, to him, the cause of the South. So he prepared to go into exile. The day before his departure for Mobile, Ala., he wrote to his friend in Philadelphia, Isaac Leeser, who, he knew, would not think of him as an enemy:[71]

> New Orleans
> May 8th 1863
>
> Rev. I. Leeser –
> My dear friend –
>
> Day after tomorrow I shall leave N[ew] O[rleans] by order of the military authorities. All those who have refused to take the oath of allegiance to the Dictator of Washington are ordered beyond the lines—that is, into Dixie. I am of that number. Nearly the whole of my congregation are similarly situated.[72] We can now realize what a [deportation] means. Nothing but my wearing apparel and provisions for ten days are

> permitted. My heart feels sick. Amidst the general distress I forget my own. I am so far lucky, that I have an asylum for my wife and child—at La Grange Geo. where the family of Mr. Jones [Mrs. Gutheim's father] now resides. What I shall do in [the] future, I cannot say. I trust to God, to guide my steps. If possible I shall write you from the Confederacy. You must excuse my brevity. I am too busy in preparing for my departure. You are well! May God bless you and grant you length of days and happiness!
>
> Yours truly,
> James K. Gutheim
>
> Please acquaint Dr. [Jonas] Bondi [of New York] of my condition, and remember me kindly to him.

From another friend in New Orleans, Leeser gained further details of Gutheim's departure:

> The Sabbath before he left, the Synagogue was crowded, as many persons besides his own congregation wanted to hear him once more in the place which will know him no longer under the present condition of things . . . When about to sail with his banished members and their families from their late home, he offered up a touching prayer to the throne of the Most Merciful, which moved the hearts of his hearers . . .[73]

Even in this case, Leeser was cautious, quoting word for word from the letter which he had received from New Orleans, and offering no opinions of his own besides the hope that Gutheim would find security and safety somewhere in the Confederacy, and that a swift end to the war would soon permit him and his members to return home.

Neither Leeser nor Gutheim need have had any fears about his future. Jews all over the South knew and respected him as one of the most eloquent and learned of the Southern rabbis. His reputation, indeed, was enhanced by his heroic decision to remain true to the Confederacy. On May 21, 1863, the Mobile congregation met and paid tribute to his courage:

> WHEREAS, We have learned with deep regret that the Rev. James R. [*sic*] Gutheim is among the numerous victims of tyranny now exercised in New Orleans, and has nobly preferred the martyrdom of his principles and sacrifice of worldly goods to a degrading submission . . .
>
> RESOLVED, That the members of the Congregation "Shangarai Shaulayim" will be proud of the presence of that worthy and learned

> defender of Judaism in their midst, and most cordially tender him the hospitality of this Congregation.
> RESOLVED, That they desire him to consider himself entirely at home among them, and they will endeavor, by showing him that love and respect which he so highly deserves, to sink all his past troubles into a state of oblivion . . .[74]

But Mobile already had a rabbi, so Gutheim looked elsewhere for a position. He had no difficulty in obtaining one; in fact he obtained two positions, and occupied both! The Kahl Montgomery Congregation, whose new Temple he had dedicated a year previously, voted to engage him as their preacher on June 23, 1863,[75] little over a month after he left New Orleans, although the congregational treasury was so depleted that his salary had to be raised by private subscription. A month later the B'nai Israel Congregation in Columbus, Ga., which had been disappointed when he declined the invitation to occupy its pulpit, requested the Montgomery congregation to permit Gutheim to circuit-ride to Columbus every sixth Sabbath.[76] For the duration of the war, Gutheim and his family resided in Montgomery, while he served his two congregations. Even after milder treatment of the New Orleans population made it possible for many exiles to return to their homes, Gutheim preferred to remain in the Confederacy.

His passionate loyalty to the Southern cause is revealed in a prayer which he delivered in Montgomery:[77]

> Regard, O Father, in Thine abundant favor and benevolence, our beloved country, the Confederate States of America. May our young Republic increase in strength, prosperity and renown; may the helm of state be piloted with judgement; may wisdom resound in the halls of legislation, and harmony, obedience to the law, fortitude in trials and a self-sacrificing devotion prevail among the people. Endow, O God, the chosen Executive and his advisers with the spirit of wisdom, of knowledge and of strength, so as to be able to devise and to execute the best measures for the defense of our liberties and the protection of our homes and our lives. Behold, O God, and judge between us and our enemies, who have forced upon us this unholy and unnatural war—who hurl against us their poisoned arrows steeped in ambition and revenge. May they soon discover the error of their ways, relinquish their cruel

> designs of subjugation, their lust of gain and dominion, and yield a ready and willing ear to the dictates of humanity, of justice and of right.
>
> Bless, O Father, our efforts in a cause which we conceive to be just; the defense of our liberties and rights and independence, under just and equitable laws. May harmony of sentiment and purity of motive, unfaltering courage, immovable trust in our leaders, both in national council and in the field, animate all the people of our beloved Confederate States, so as to be equal to all emergencies—ready for every sacrifice, until our cause be vindicated as the light of day.
>
> And we pray Thee, O God, to bless and protect the armed hosts, that now stand forth in the defense of our sacred cause.—Vain are the exertions of man without Thy aid. Behold, O Father, and cover with the shield of Thy heavenly Guardianship our sons, our brothers and our friends—the flower and the hope of the land. Endow their hearts with courage—nerve their arms with strength in the hour of combat. May the breaches lately made in our lines soon be repaired, a series of glorious victories blot out our recent reverses, and the unrighteous invaders be repulsed on every side, abashed, confounded and discomfited. Thou, O Lord, who makest peace in the highest heavens, mayest Thou bless us with a speedy and honorable peace, so that safety, confidence and happiness again smile upon the land, and our independence be recognized by all families of the earth . . .

On July 9, 1865, the New Orleans congregation invited their rabbi to return to his ministry in their midst. The war had ended; the "chivalrous" cause had been lost; there was no longer any point in suffering exile. Kahl Montgomery knew that they were too small to retain his services. The fluctuations of Confederacy currency had made it extremely difficult to raise even his small salary. But they were grateful that his Confederate loyalties had enabled them to be served by him for two years. On his departure the Montgomery Board of Trustees presented him with a set of engrossed resolutions which hailed him as "a shining light in Israel." He had been that to them in the crushing last months of the Confederacy.[78]

News of Dr. Gutheim's return to New Orleans was greeted with pleasure by his Northern friends. Dr. Bondi, who had recently assumed the editorship of *The Jewish Record* (renamed *The Hebrew Leader*) wished him "joy most cordially, and expect[ed] soon to receive favorable news from him. . . ."[79] Isaac Leeser recorded the event with typical reserve, but anticipated that a spiritual revival would be under way in New Orleans now that Gutheim would be preaching there again.[80]

Gutheim did not give up his devotion to the South with the end of the war. In 1868 he accepted the call to occupy the pulpit of Temple Emanu-El of New York, but four years away from New Orleans was as much as he could bear. In 1872 he asked Emanu-El to release him from his contract so that he could return home and become the rabbi of the newly-organized Temple Sinai.[81] In 1875 he joined with Catholic and Protestant spokesmen in public declarations which denied General Sherman's charges that the people of Louisiana were still rebellious against Federal authority.[82] He was an active member of the Southern Historical Society, that thinly disguised attempt to perpetuate Confederate loyalties, and spoke at its New Orleans meeting in 1882.[83] Mrs. Gutheim was one of the founders of the Ladies' Confederate Memorial Association of New Orleans, and is said to have collected a larger amount of money for the erection of their Confederate monument than any other member.[84]

Who can look deeply enough into the heart of a man to search for the roots of loyalties? Why should a German immigrant rabbi, who had been in New Orleans only eleven years when Louisiana seceded, have been so devoted to Southern interests that he would face the hardship of exile in preference to taking an oath of loyalty to the United States? Perhaps part of the answer is to be found in Mrs. Gutheim, the young and vivacious daughter of a proud and wealthy Mobile family. Perhaps she was partly responsible for instilling in her husband a love for the South. Actually, however, we know so little about his experiences in New Orleans during the pre-war years, and so little about his inner life, despite a plethora of manuscript sermons, that we are ill-fitted for any real explanation of his personal devotion to the Confederacy. All we know is that he and the large majority of his congregants were so fiercely opposed to the Union that they went into voluntary exile.[85]

VI

The Jewish Messenger of New York City, edited by the conservative Rev. S. M. Isaacs, avoided political discussions as it would a plague.[86] But when secession began to take its course among the slave states, it seemed to Isaacs to be no longer a political question: "We are not citizens of the North or of the South, we are not republicans or democrats, but loyal citizens of that great republic, which has ever extended a welcome to the oppressed and has ever protected Israel."[87] The *Messenger*, therefore, could not but proclaim its loyalty to the Union and to the maintenance of the Constitution:

> . . . The Union—which binds together, by so many sacred ties, millions of freemen—which extends its hearty invitation to the oppressed of all nations, to come and be sheltered beneath its protecting wings—shall it be severed, destroyed, or even impaired? Shall those, whom we once called our brethren, be permitted to overthrow the fabric reared by the noble patriots of the revolution, and cemented with their blood?
>
> And the Constitution—guaranteeing to all, the free exercise of their religious opinions—extending to all, liberty, justice, and equality—the pride of Americans, the admiration of the world—shall that Constitution be subverted, and anarchy usurp the place of a sound, safe, and stable government, deriving its authority from the consent of the American people?
>
> . . . Then stand by the flag! . . . Whether native or foreign born, Christian or Israelite, stand by it, and you are doing your duty, and acting well your part on the side of liberty and justice.[88]

From the moment that editorial was published, name-calling letters from Southern readers began to pour into the *Messenger's* offices.[89] Unfortunately for us, Isaacs did not choose to publish them, but one communication amused him so much that he could not forebear passing it on to his readers. It was a series of resolutions which was passed by the congregation in Shreveport, La.:[90]

> WHEREAS, we received the "Jewish Messenger" of the 26th of April, a paper published in New York in which an appeal has been made to all, whether native or foreign born, Christian or Israelite. An article headed "Stand by the Flag!" in which the editor makes an appeal to support the stars and stripes, and to rally as one man for the Union and the Constitution. Therefore be it
>
> RESOLVED, That we, the Hebrew congregation of Shreveport, scorn and repel your advice, although we might be called Southern rebels; still, as law-abiding citizens, we solemnly pledge ourselves to stand by, protect, and honor the flag, with its stars and stripes, the Union and Constitution of the Southern Confederacy with our lives, liberty, and all that is dear to us.

> Resolved, That we, the members of said congregation, bind ourselves to discontinue the subscription of the "Jewish Messenger," and all Northern papers opposed to our holy cause, and also to use all honorable means in having said paper banished from our beloved country.
>
> Resolved, That while we mistook your paper for a religious one, which ought to be strictly neutral in politics, we shall from this [hour] treat it with scorn as a black republican paper, and not worthy of Southern patronage; and that according to our understanding, church and politics ought never to be mingled, as it has been the ruination of any country captivated by the enticing words of preachers.
>
> Resolved, That we, the members of said congregation, have lost all confidence and regard to the Rev. S. M. Isaacs, Editor and Proprietor of the "Jewish Messenger," and see in him an enemy to our interest and welfare and believe it to be more unjust for one who preaches the Word of God and to advise us to act as traitors and renegades to our adopted country, and raise hatred and dissatisfaction in our midst, and assisting to start a bloody civil war amongst us.
>
> Resolved, That we believe like the Druids of old, the duties of those who preach the Holy Word to be first in the line of battle, and to cheer up those fighting for liberty against their oppressors, in place of those who are proclaiming now from their pulpits, words to encourage an excited people, and praying for bloody vengeance against us. Brutus, while kissing Caesar, plunged the dagger to his heart.
>
> Resolved That a copy of these resolutions be sent to the editor of the "Jewish Messenger."
>
> Resolved, That papers friendly to the Southern cause, are politely requested to publish the foregoing resolutions.
>
> M. Baer, President.
>
> Ed. Eberstadt, Secretary, pro tem.

What amused the Rev. Isaacs so much was that there was only one subscriber to the *Messenger* in Shreveport, and he had not paid his bill for two years!

Another one of those who wrote in anger to the Rev. Isaacs was Henry S. Jacobs, the rabbi of Congregation Shearith Israel of Charleston, S.C. Jacobs said later that "at the breaking out of the War, [Isaacs] became so political and violent in his crusade against the South that I abandoned the agency of the paper and even my continuance as a subscriber."[91] Jacobs' own deep political convictions are revealed by his interpretation of Isaacs' moderate expression as "violent." When Charleston was shelled in 1863, as many of the civilian residents as could departed for safer places. Some, including Penina Moise, the gentle poetess, went to Sumter, S.C.[92] Most of the Jews, however, moved to Columbia, among them the Rev. Jacobs, who officiated in the Tree of Life Synagogue[93] there until the city was captured and set aflame by General Sherman's army. Jacobs wrote later of this experience:

> I will not now recall the horrors of that Sabbath Eve, (the 17th of February), when I and my family were driven forth from our home to a park in the suburbs, where wrapped in blankets we passed Friday night, and nearly the whole [Sabbath]. Save a change or two of raiment and my [phylacteries], I lost everything in the world—clothing, furniture, books, manuscripts, provisions, even my canonicals and [prayer shawls]—everything except hope and confidence in our Heavenly Father. He indeed helped me, for I have found warm friends here in Augusta [Ga.], whence wagons were sent for my family as soon as intelligence reached of our sad condition . . . I have accepted the ministry here for one year certain, and, if my field of labor is not very large, still I hope to be useful, and to accomplish some good to the God of Israel."[94]

Henry Jacobs did not write then about the hours he had spent searching through the smoking ruins of the Columbia synagogue, hoping that some of the eight Torah scrolls and other religious objects might have escaped damage, and how at last he found one partially burned Torah and a single Torah bell, which were returned to Charleston "as Sacred Relic[s]."[95] Nor did he write of his sorrow that he himself could not return to Charleston, before the war the most distinguished Jewish community of the South, where two virile congregations had vied with each other for the spiritual leadership. Now there were so few Jews left in Charleston, and they so poor and broken in spirit, that even the single congregation which resulted from the amalgamation of Beth Elohim and Shearith Israel was not able to maintain a rabbi.[96]

On Thanksgiving Day, 1865, this rabbi, who had suffered fear and flight and personal danger and loss, delivered one of the most touching Jewish sermons of the war.[97] "What cause have the people of the South for thanksgiving on an occasion like this, which celebrates the conclusion of a war which has been one of disaster to them?" he asked. Here they were, nursing their wounds, mourning their dead, rebuilding broken homes and lives, enduring the trials of life under a military government, witnessing the upheaval of old social customs and conventions—should they, indeed, offer thanks to God?

He found at least one reason for thanksgiving:

> that after four years of bloody strife the sword at length is sheathed; the canon's deafening roar no longer vibrates on the ear; the desolating march of armies no more spreads misery, wane, and ruin through the land.

Peace had come, forestalling yet greater misery. Were the people unconvinced that peace was a blessing, even if coupled with defeat, let them look around them at the effects of war:

> A soil returned almost to primal wilderness, and charred, blackened, and prostrate homesteads . . . troops of childless mothers, widowed wives, and orphaned children, whose poverty forbids the "customary suits of solemn black" . . . the robust man, the support of many dear ones who looked up to him for bread, the tenderly nurtured stripling the hope and pride of the parental home . . . alike sunk before the leaden messengers of death . . .

He reminded his listeners that *all* had not been taken away. There were many loved ones who yet survived and they still had life and health, food and clothing, and the future stretching before them with its infinite possibilities for achievement and accomplishment. "Life," he said, "is still before us with its peaceful victories to be achieved by perseverance, energy, and industry."

And even as supporters of the Confederacy, they had cause for gratitude. "With the close of the war, which terminated so disastrously to the South, it might have been expected that, flushed with success, the mailed hand of power would have closed over us with a crushing and resistless grasp; that a merciless tyranny would have consigned us to the worst fate which could be inflicted on a subjugated people." But no—President Johnson had "no thirst for blood, no appetite for plunder." His Reconstruction policies were generous and merciful. "By his adoption of a mild and conciliatory policy, he had achieved the greatest, because the noblest victory of all, in winning the *hearts* of the people lately in open and armed defiance of the Central Government." With their allegiance reaffirmed, through appreciation rather than force, they might now look forward to a future "of safety, of peace and restored prosperity," even "though the bark which was launched a few years ago amid such joyous acclamations, which was freighted with such precious hopes, which was wafted with such earnest prayers, has suffered shipwreck." Yes, the rabbi of Augusta thanked God that the policies of Reconstruction were guided by a friendly, compassionate man. (How poignant it is to read those words and realize that they were spoken too soon, that the "mailed hand of power" was actually to fall upon the Southland.)

And finally the Rev. Jacobs found cause for thanksgiving in the strength which the people of the South had found in religion all during the years of agony.

> How great soever was the anguish of our souls, we rebelled not against our Maker; for even during the times of our gravest trials, even when homeless and helpless, we sought His countenance as the strength of our hearts and our portion forever. Oh! let us be thankful that religion thus supported us, . . . that its spirit revived us, that it became indeed a tree of life to us, under whose umbrageous boughs we found shelter, peace, and security.

From another than Henry S. Jacobs these sentiments might sound like formal, meaningless words, whistling in the dark, unrealistic religiosity. From him they come as the reflection of a deeply pious and spiritual personality, clinging to his faith in God and in himself despite the shattering of his personal fortunes and the disappointment of his hopes for the success of the Confederacy.

* * *

Morais, Wise, Leeser, Gutheim, and Henry S. Jacobs had, during the war, unusual experiences which distinguished them from their colleagues and which have required special narration at this point. As we shall see, however, all of the leading rabbis of the time had something important to say or do in connection with various aspects of the war. They were clergymen who took seriously the responsibility of guiding the thoughts and ideals of their people into constructive channels.

4

A Question of Equality: The Chaplaincy Controversy

I

The American tradition of the military chaplaincy is as old as the United States itself. Clergymen served with the armies of the individual colonies almost from the first battle of the Revolution, and provisions for the payment of chaplains were enacted by the Continental Congress as early as 1775. The first regular army chaplain was commissioned in 1781 immediately following due authorization by Congress in its legislation of a second regiment to supplement the small national military establishment. From then on, post and brigade chaplains were an accepted feature of the army table of organization.

These chaplains were all Protestants, though of varying denominations. The possible service of Roman Catholic chaplains received no official attention until the time of the Mexican War, when President Polk held several conferences on the subject with members of the American church hierarchy. Polk's suggestion that the bishops appoint two priests to serve with the army in a *civilian* capacity was adopted, but he apparently had no intention of recommending them for military appointments. During the 1850s Catholic priests served several military posts in the capacity of chaplain, but their official status is open to question. It was actually not until the Civil War that Catholic priests were explicitly granted the right to serve as army chaplains.[1]

There is no evidence that the legal status of Jewish chaplains was ever discussed prior to the Civil War. But once the conflict had begun, with thousands of Jews enlisting in the Armies of both the Union and Confederacy,[2] it was inevitable that these members of a minority faith would press for their right to be served by clergymen who could truly minister to their spiritual needs. The personal liberties and civil rights of members of all religious minorities had been safeguarded by a Constitution which carefully separated church from nation, although North Carolina and New Hampshire lagged far behind in their application of this principle to their internal politics. The chaplaincy was, however, another realistic test of the equality which the Federal government theoretically accorded to all American citizens.

In the Confederacy, this equality was apparently recognized immediately upon the outbreak of hostilities. The acts providing for the appointment of chaplains in the Confederate military establishment merely stipulated that they should be "clergymen," with no denominational specifications.[3] There was probably not a sufficient number of Jews in any one Confederate regiment to warrant the appointment of a Jewish chaplain, but at least there was no legal barrier to such an appointment.

In this instance the Confederate Congress was more liberal and tolerant than its Washington counterpart, and it was in the North that the storm broke over the right of Jewish soldiers to chaplains of their own faith. The original Volunteer Bill, as reported to the floor of the House, required that regimental chaplains, who were to be "appointed by the regimental commander on the vote of the field officers and company commanders present," be "regularly ordained minister[s] of some Christian denomination."[4] On July 12, 1861, in a discussion of this proviso, an Ohio Congressman moved an amendment which would substitute the phrase "religious society" for the words "Christian denomination." The Congressman was Clement L. Vallandigham who was later to become notorious for his leadership of the Copperhead movement and who was eventually arrested by military order and exiled across the Confederate border. Apparently on his own initiative and without any Jewish prompting he spoke out clearly in defense of Jewish rights. "There is a large body of men in this country, and one growing continually, of the Hebrew faith," he said, "whose rabbis and priests are men of great learning and piety, and whose adherents are as good citizens and as true patriots as any in this country." He denounced the underlying implication of the bill that the United States is a Christian country, in the political sense, and branded the law as entirely unjust and completely "without constitutional warrant."[5] Vallandigham's appeal failed to move his fellow members of the House, or perhaps they paid no attention to his comments. At any rate, they rejected his amendment and passed the bill with its discriminatory clause intact.

This brief episode attracted very little notice. But perhaps because he also was an Ohioan and a member of the Democratic Party, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise did grasp its significance. He labeled the qualification clause an "unjust violation of our constitutional rights" and applauded Mr. Vallandigham for his staunch advocacy of the American conception of equality. But Wise was more furious than imaginative and had no constructive suggestion to offer to remedy the situation. His fear of dictatorship and of militarism ran away with his confidence in democratic action, and he could only urge his readers to remember this deliberate act of injustice and to hold their indignation in check until the end of the war, when surely they would be free to "square accounts."[6]

For all that Vallandigham, Wise and the few others who were interested, knew, the question of the Jewish chaplaincy would remain a theoretical one. Wise himself had no inclination for personal military service, since he was totally antagonistic to the purposes of the war. Fortunately for America and the Jew, however, the question did not remain a theoretical one and was not permitted to die for lack of excitement and interest.

In September 1861, less than three months after the House had refused to sanction the service of Jewish chaplains, a YMCA worker happened to visit the military camp in Virginia where the 65th Regiment of the 5th Pennsylvania Cavalry, popularly known as "Cameron's Dragoons," was temporarily stationed. He was horrified to discover that a Jew, one Michael Allen of Philadelphia, was serving as the regimental chaplain, and promptly began such an agitation in the public press that ultimately the Assistant Adjutant General of the Army, George D. Ruggles, was forced to state in writing his official warning that "any person mustered into service as a chaplain, who is not a regularly ordained clergyman of a Christian denomination, will be at once discharged without pay or allowance."[7] Allen felt so humiliated that he resigned his commission on the excuse of ill health rather than suffer the dishonor of dismissal from the service; but the clamor raised by the zealous YMCA worker brought the issue before the public once again.[8]

Obviously, Allen had been elected without any deliberate intention on the part of his regiment's colonel and officers to disobey the law. They were probably ignorant of the Congressional bill which forbade them to designate a Jewish chaplain for their regiment even though the Commanding Officer, Colonel Max Friedman, and a large proportion of his officers and 1,200 men were Jewish.[9] Allen, moreover, had been a very fitting choice for the office. Born in Philadelphia on November 24, 1830, he was, from childhood, a pupil of the Rev. Isaac Leeser, and for a time he undertook to follow, under his rabbi's guidance, a regular course of study for the Jewish ministry. In 1850–1, he took a formal course of study in *Shulhan Aruch* with Rabbi Max Lilienthal in New York, and was granted a certificate as *Haber* (Fellow in Jewish Studies) by him on March 22, 1851.[10] Even after he abandoned this ambition, he remained close to Jewish affairs and preserved his relationship with Leeser. He taught classes for the Philadelphia Hebrew Education Society, and substituted for Leeser as *Hazan* (Cantor) in the conduct of services, when that frequent traveler was out of town. The Rev. Samuel M. Isaacs, editor of *The Jewish Messenger*, wrote a few years later that Allen was "the only gentleman not actually a minister, accustomed and able to read the entire ritual according to the *Portugese minhag* [rite]. He really deserves credit for the alacrity with which he has always responded to . . . calls [to act as *Hazan*], having frequently officiated at the *Franklin* street and *Seventh* street Synagogues of Philadelphia, and occasionally at the 19th street Synagogue of N.Y."[11] As a layman, Allen took a further leading role in Jewish communal affairs, and served as secretary to both the United Hebrew Beneficial Society and the Hebrew Education Society.[12]

Surely there was no one in the entire regiment better equipped by training as well as inclination to serve as its chaplain. During the two months of his service, Allen was not a Jewish chaplain, but the regimental chaplain for men of all faiths. On the New Year, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles, as well as on the Jewish Sabbath, he went to Washington or Philadelphia to attend services. But on Sundays, he held non-denominational services, consisting of brief Scriptural readings and a hymn or two, as well as a sermon. An entry in his diary for Sunday, September 8, 1861, reads:

> Arose at 5½ am. Very cool, pleasant and invigorating. "Fast of Gedaliah." Did not fast, not feeling able to do so. Had service at 8 o'clock. Lectured on "Peace and Harmony." All the officers and companies were present under command of Lieut. Col. Becker, and they all in their uniform looked very well.[13]

On that Jewish holiday, filled with remembrances of the pain of exile and the destruction of Jewish statehood, the chaplain preached a message about friendship and consideration to his men, without a single indication of the meaning of the day in his own religious thinking!

Indeed, one who reads the manuscript copies of his sermons, preserved by his family, would never know they were written by a devout Jew. Of course, there is no reference to Christianity or its central figure, but neither is there any reference to the most pivotal of Jewish concepts. Theologically, his sermons approached the various aspects of religion—immortality, ethics, faith—from a general and common Judaeo-Christian background. They were realistic, practical, down-to-earth talks, designed to touch the most basic problems of men stationed only a few miles from the battle-front: fear, restlessness, doubt, and homesickness. Chaplain Allen spoke of faith in God, "our shield and our buckler . . . in the hour of battle, of danger, and of tribulation." He urged them to prepare for the strife by learning the arts of the soldier as conscientiously as they could, because theirs was a "good and just cause . . . to save our country from the hands of the spoiler;" but he also pleaded for a spiritual preparation for the death that surely faced some of them. Never discussing political issues as such, he nevertheless took care that they came to have some understanding of his conviction that the Union was in danger, that the Confederacy was a rebellion against the Constitution, and that their erstwhile fellow-Americans were now their deadly foes. He never avoided the most difficult subjects: desertion, sex, obedience to superiors, the evils of camp life; but he tried as best he could to impart a reasonable, loyal, and high ethical attitude to his men. Reverence for the Deity and love of Scripture infused every sermon with a warmth and humanity which must truly have "endeared him to all." Those were words used by his friend, Alfred T. Jones, who gave an address when the regimental colors were presented to Col. Friedman by a group of Philadelphia Jews in a formal ceremony on September 10. Jones said further, in the ornate fashion of his day, that

Allen "taught the Word of God with pure unadulterated piety; he breathed into the ears of his hearers no sectarian hatred toward others, but labored zealously for their moral and spiritual welfare."[14]

In a passage of one sermon, Allen presented his own conception of some of the duties of the chaplain:

> I [must be] as one of you . . . I must share with you, the pleasures and privations of a soldier's life, and I trust that I shall be able to gain the esteem and confidence of each and every one of you . . . [Since] there are many of you who are good and loyal *adopted* citizens of this our country, and as there are amongst you those not very well conversant with the English language, I wish you to consider me as your Teacher, and during your leisure hours in camp, should you wish to perfect yourself in the vernacular language of this country, I will be glad and willing to impart all the necessary information which my time and abilities will permit.

To teach, to inspire, in his own humble way—this was Allen's purpose in serving as substitute rabbi, and as military chaplain. The "Cameron's Dragoons" were deprived of a sincere and superior religious mentor when Michael Mitchell Allen was forced to resign his office.

On the other hand, we must not overlook the fact that Allen was disqualified from serving as chaplain for two reasons: he was not a Christian, it is true, but neither was he a "regularly ordained clergyman." Even under the revised provisions of the following year which permitted rabbis to enter the military service, Allen would still have been ineligible. An unknown Philadelphian, writing a "letter to the editor" in an effort to clarify the issue which he felt had been unjustly confounded by accusations of intolerance, insisted that Allen's appointment had been called into question not because of his faith but because he was "a liquor dealer . . . doubtless a very worthy man, but no clergyman."[15]

This editorial correspondent was not attempting to whitewash the War Department. Great as their excitement about Allen had been, the original letter from the YMCA had not complained about him but about "a number of Chaplains in our Pennsylvania regiments [who] are entirely disqualified . . . for the high and important position to which they have been raised;"[16] and Ruggles' letter nowhere specified the Allen case, although it undoubtedly included it. Indeed, the election of non-clergymen to the office of chaplain plagued War Department officials and thoughtful

Protestant leaders all during the war. It was a subject which obtained recognition and reference in many investigation reports and exposés. The Paymaster General of the Army, for instance, wrote to Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts on December 5, 1861, that:

> I regret to say that very many holding this position [of chaplain] are utterly unworthy . . . I think none should be appointed who did not come recommended by the highest ecclesiastical authority . . . It is said one regiment employs a French cook, and musters him as chaplain to meet the expense. . .[17]

It was probably not the same cook, but Henry Blake told the story of a colonel who threatened his regimental cook-chaplain with the strongest kind of punishment:

> "If you don't cook a better dinner than this tomorrow, I will have you tied to the flagstaff next Sunday, and make you preach two hours to the regiment . . ."[18]

Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise took great delight in quoting the assertion of a Presbyterian journal that "two thirds of the chaplains in the army are unfit for their place,"[19] and offered his own personal testimony that at least two professed atheists of his acquaintance were serving as chaplains.[20] One of Lincoln's private secretaries, W. O. Stoddard, charged that military chaplains were, for the most part, "broken down 'reverends', long since out of the ministry for incompetency or other causes, men who could not induce any respectable church to place itself under their charge," and quoted Lincoln's angry comment that "I do believe that our army chaplains, take them as a class, are the worst men we have in the service."[21]

Colonel Friedman and his officers were undoubtedly distressed by this valid legal objection which complicated their determination to be served by a Jewish chaplain. They now realized that Allen would have had no right to serve as chaplain even if the law could be stretched to permit Jews to be elected to that position. So they resolved to try again. This time they would elect an ordained rabbi, but they would also take the precaution of electing a civilian who would not so easily be frightened into resigning and who would have to apply directly to the Secretary of War for a commission. This would indeed be a test case which would determine whether discriminatory legislation against the Jews was to be enforced with the full knowledge and consent of the government and the people! Colonel Friedman lost no time in selecting the Rev. Arnold Fischel, the Dutch-born lecturer at Shearith Israel Synagogue of New York and one of the earliest students of American Jewish history,[22] as the regiment's chaplain-designate. This was Fischel's introduction to the cause célèbre in which he participated for many months. His service in the Potomac area as a civilian chaplain, and his lobbying activities in the nation's capital as the representative of the Board of Delegates of American Israelites, have been known for a long time, but the motivation behind his application for a commission has never been fully understood.[23]

The simple truth is that he sought the commission, after his election by the officers of the regiment, in order to test the law and to secure a public statement about Jewish rights in the matter. His application was denied, of course, and ironically, the letter of rejection (warm and friendly as it was) was signed by the very same Simon Cameron, Secretary of War, in whose honor the "Cameron's Dragoons" was recruited and named.[24] To be fair to Cameron, we must understand that he had not dictated the law and that he had no choice about obeying it—but now there was no possible doubt of the interpretation of the law, and American Jewry had to recognize it.

These, then, were the circumstances which led up to the Jewish chaplaincy protest movement: the illegal election of Allen; the exposé by the YMCA; Allen's chagrined resignation; the election of Fischel as a test case; and, finally, the rejection of his application on the basis of the discriminatory clause. This was the chain of events which confronted American Jewry in late 1861 with the first instance of outright discrimination and legal inequity in a Congressional enactment. Would the Jewish community of America be able to convince Congressional leadership that the requirements for chaplaincy service should be amended?

II

The release of the Cameron-Fischel correspondence to the press proved to be a stimulant to public notice—a stimulant which had been lacking five months previously when Isaac Mayer Wise had been a solitary voice. Now there began a three-pronged campaign, participated in by all manner of organized Jewish groups, to effect a change in the law.

The first feature of the campaign was publicity. All of the Jewish periodicals recognized the importance of the issue, carried voluminous news and editorial articles on the question, analyzed its legal and ethical aspects, and prompted various courses of action.

Wise, of course, continued to blast away at the Republican Party, blaming it for intentional discrimination against American Jewry. He believed that this was a deliberate effort to penalize rabbis because they had not supported the abolitionist movement as wholeheartedly as the Protestant clergymen had. The entire chaplaincy system was, to his mind, a violation of the American principle of the separation of church and state; no clergyman should be employed and paid by the American government. He charged that the government, moreover, was utilizing the chaplaincy as a means of rewarding those ministers who had helped bring on the war by their agitation against the South and slavery. If there were to be *any* chaplains in the military service, American ideals of democracy required that an opportunity be extended to ministers of all faiths to serve their co-religionists. Jews pay taxes, he said, serve in the military forces, die in battle if such be their destiny; why then should rabbis who might apply for military commissions be discriminated against?[25]

Isaac Leeser shared none of Wise's strongly partisan opinions on political matters, but he was equally outspoken in behalf of the rights of the Jewish minority in America. He said that he had never been one of those who took pride in the election of Jews to public office, nor did he take offense when a Jew was defeated in a fair election. He was not interested in chaplaincy appointments merely because they were government offices, but he was fearful for the future of the American democratic structure if Jews could be excluded, by law, from appointment to any office. Leeser, always sincerely and deeply moved by human need, could not avoid thinking about the suffering of wounded and dying soldiers. A chaplain could comfort such men, and it was the right of a Jew to have a rabbi by his side at such times, just as it was the right of a Christian to have his minister or priest near at hand to offer the consolations of his religion. Leeser was primarily interested in the humanitarian aspect of the question: caring for the needs of "our brothers who expose themselves daily to all the horrors of war."[26]

The father and son editorial team, Samuel M. and Myer S. Isaacs, who directed the policies of *The Jewish Messenger*, was generally inclined to be cautious and conservative in editorial opinions. Sometimes they buried their heads in the sand, albeit with dignity, and ignored the most obvious facts. In the instance of the chaplaincy question they tended to be overindulgent and to excuse Congress of intentional malice. They denied that the discriminatory clause was the result of a deliberate decision to exclude rabbis, and predicted that as soon as Congress recognized the error a revision would be voted—almost as though Vallandigham had never spoken of the matter of Jewish rights, had never offered his corrective amendment, and as though the House had never voted it down. The *Messenger*, nevertheless, favored a forthright and united campaign on the part of American Jewry to bring their case to the attention of the politicians in Washington—for, as the Isaacs' editorials correctly pointed out, the chaplaincy provision had far-reaching implications: it made Christianity the only officially recognized American religion, and reduced Judaism to the status of a second-class, inferior faith. Repudiating Wise's "partisan considerations" at a time when the future of the nation was at stake, the *Messenger* advised a supra-political approach, eschewing any reference to political party or principle, but concentrating on constitutional arguments.[27]

The Jewish editors, in this publicity phase of the Jewish protest movement, agreed on several points. Firstly, they did not feel that they were asking the government to grant them a special favor; it was equal treatment before the law which they sought, neither more nor less than was accorded to all other citizens. Secondly, they realized that a principle was at stake—the treatment of minorities. It was the Jews now, but the discrimination against Judaism might provide a precedent for the "oppression of other religious societies" at some later date. And thirdly, they were aware that the Cameron's Dragoons was an exceptional case and that there would be few, if any, regiments which would elect Jewish chaplains. It was not the commissions they were interested in, but the right to apply for such commissions. If any religion was to receive official recognition, they were determined that Judaism should have equal status with all others.[28]

It was exactly this point which aroused the opposition of some fundamentalist Protestant groups—the recognition of the equality of the Jewish religion before the law. *The Presbyter*, published in Cincinnati, expressed its misgivings on this subject in very outspoken terms:

> ... Our government has already gone a great length in this respect in appointing Roman Catholic and Universalist Chaplains to the army; but

> here is a proposal immeasurably beyond anything it has yet done. These denominations at least call themselves Christians, and profess to honor the Lord Jesus, however much they may really dishonor Him, (and of this the Government may, with show of reason, be unwilling to judge). But Jews regard Jesus of Nazareth as an impostor, a deceiver, and one worthy of every term of reproach. And yet, (should this bill become a law, which God forbid that it should,) the government would, in effect, say that one might despise and reject the Savior of men, and thus trample under foot the son of God; and this, too, not inferentially or by implication, but formally and professedly, and yet be a fit minister of religion!

The author of the article said he had a profound interest in the spiritual welfare of the Jews, but he saw no reason why the government itself should "foster their prejudices" and "harden them in unbelief." The principle that all religious groups in America are equal before the law was "as broad and universal, as it is wicked and pernicious," to *The Presbyter*. Imagine the effect of granting the privilege of chaplaincy service to "Jewish rabbis, Mormon debauchees, Chinese priests, and Indian conjurors!" Democracy had its limits—and to permit non-Christian clergymen to serve the military in the office of chaplain overstepped those limits, said *The Presbyter*.[29]

Various Christian religious groups, in concert with the YMCA, were meeting in Washington in December 1861 to discuss the imperfections of the chaplaincy system. They were worried about the inferior caliber of many clergymen who had received chaplaincy appointments, about the spiritual welfare of regiments which had gone for months without any religious services whatever, and about the low state of morality in the army as a whole. They were asked by certain Congressmen for their reaction to a change in the law regarding chaplaincy appointments. These congressmen quoted them as saying that they would protest even if 100% of Jewish regiments were organized were this to be used as an excuse to appoint rabbis as chaplains. They would not consent, under any circumstances, to the commissioning of rabbis as army chaplains.[30]

This narrow, sectarian view was not characteristic of the American secular press, however; the metropolitan dailies gave significant assistance to the Jews in their publicity campaign. A *New York Tribune* editorial reprinted Cameron's letter to Fischel, expressed the belief that it was altogether proper that Jews in uniform should be granted the right to be served by ministers of their own faith, and demanded that "the unconstitutional and unwise provisions" of the act be rescinded immediately.[31] The *New York Journal of Commerce* admitted that it would be a shock to some Christians to think of non-Christian chaplains, but argued that since Jews had volunteered for military service "with alacrity," and there had been no objection to their joining the army, no one had a logical right to object to their request for the ministrations of rabbis.[32] The *Philadelphia Sunday Dispatch*, in which a great deal of the public discussion about Chaplain Allen had taken place, went deeply into the constitutional and legal background of the matter and concluded that "so soon as it becomes a settled point that a *native born American* is disqualified, by his peculiar religious belief, from filling any position under government, we need boast no longer of our vaunted liberty, freedom, and equality."[33] The *Baltimore Clipper* took a strongly pro-Jewish position, and urged all Christians, in the name of democracy, to participate in the protest movement against the offending legal clause. Its editor reminded his readers that Congress itself, but a year and a half previously, had invited a rabbi to open a House session with prayer. Was it logical for Congress to deny Jewish soldiers the right to share the prayers of a clergyman of that faith?[34]

The next phase of the protest movement was first suggested by Rabbi Wise in *The Israelite* and eagerly adopted by the other Jewish editors, as well as by the editor of the *Baltimore Clipper*. Wise believed that no technique could be used so effectively as the petition, and he urged his readers to flood Washington with petitions:

> Petition that body from all parts of the United States. Wherever Israelites live draw up a petition to abolish that unconstitutional law, have it signed by every neighbor you find disposed to do so, and send it to your representative or senator in congress. Let the petition be written by one who understands the business, have it printed and circulate it as much as possible, do not spare your time or save a few cents, it is your duty to protect your rights. This is the only way to remedy the evil; do not neglect it . . . [35]

Six times, in one issue of *The Israelite* alone, he printed the line, "Forget not to attend to the petition to the Congress of the United States."[36] His energetic editorial prodding was the backbone of the petition phase of the campaign.

There is no record of the exact number of petitions which were received in Washington. Some senators and congressmen took formal action, presented the petitions on the floor of the House they served, and saw that they were referred to the proper committees. Others merely acknowledged their receipt and regarded them as informal guides for the formulation of their own position. The *Congressional Globe* registered seven such petitions which were presented by senators and representatives from Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and Illinois.[37] The Jewish periodicals recorded dozens more, dispatched from every section of the country and, in most cases, signed by Christians as well as Jews.

The largest petition on record was prepared by F. Friedenreich of Baltimore, who secured the signatures of seven hundred Christians. A Mr. Warner, member of the Maryland legislature from Baltimore, was joined by thirty-seven of his fellow representatives in a memorial to Congressman C.L. Leary.[38] Although there were only three Jewish residents in Bangor, Me., Leopold Kind obtained two hundred endorsements for a petition which he passed around the town.[39] In such small towns as Columbus, Iowa,[40] and Edinburgh, Ind.,[41] Jews were assisted by sizable numbers of their fellow citizens. Almost no record was kept of the petitions sent in from the metropolitan areas, New York, Philadelphia, and Cincinnati, where individuals as well as congregations and other Jewish organizations were active in the movement; but judging by letters of acknowledgment from senators and other indirect references we may safely say that they were very numerous.[42]

The moderate tone and cautious wording of these petitions are typified by one which was directed to Washington by the Board of Delegates:[43]

> MEMORIAL
>
> To the Honorable, the Senate and House of Representatives, of the United States of America.
>
> The Subscribers, your memorailists [sic], respectfully show: That they are the President and Secretary of the "Board of Delegates of American Israelites," and that they are duly empowered to submit to your honorable body the facts therein set forth, and to crave at your hands, that attention to the subject, which its importance to American citizens professing the Jewish religion, demands.
>
> Your Memorailists respectfully show, that by the 9th Section of the Act of Congress, approved July 22, 1861, is provided that "the Chaplain

appointed by the vote of the field officers and company commanders, must be a regular ordained minister of the Christian denomination," and that, as appears by the following letter from the War Department, to which your memorailists beg to refer, the said Sections have been interpreted to exclude from the office of Chaplain in the service of the United States, "regular ordained Ministers" of the *Jewish* faith:—

War Department
October 23, 1861.

"Rev. A. Fischel, Rabbi, Jewish Synagogue, New York.

"Sir,—Your communication of the 17th inst . . . has been received.

"In reply, you are respectfully informed that by the 9th Section of the Act of Congress, approved July 22, 1861, it is provided that the Chaplains appointed by 'the vote of the field officers and company commanders, must be a regular ordained minister of some Christian denomination.' A like provision, also, is made in the 7th Section of the Act of Congress, approved August 3, 1861. Were it not for the impediments thus directly created by the provisions of these two Acts, the Department would have taken your application into its favorable consideration.

I have the honor to be,
Very Respectfully,
SIMEON CAMERON,
Secretary of War."

Your memorialists respectfully submit that the body of citizens of the United States, whom your memorailists represent, numbering not less than two hundred thousand, are unexcelled by any other class of citizens in loyalty and devotion to the Union; that thousands of them have volunteered into the Army of the United States, and are, by the provision of the Acts hereinbefore mentioned, excluded from the advantages of spiritual advice and Consolation provided by Congress for their fellow citizens professing Christianity:—

That the said Acts are oppressive, inasmuch as they establish a prejudicial discrimination against a particular class of citizens, on account of their religious belief, and further

That the said Acts, inasmuch as they establish "a religious test as a qualification for an office under the United States," are manifestly in contravention of Section 3, Article VI of the Constitution and Article I of Amendments thereto.

Your memorailists, therefore, respectfully pray that your honorable body will take this, their memorial into favorable consideration, and

> that you will in your wisdom cause the acts of Congress approved July 22nd and August 3d, 1861, respectively, to be formally amended, so that there shall be no discrimination as against professors of the Jewish faith, in the several laws affecting the appointment of Chaplains in the service of the United States.
>
> And your memorailists will ever pray, &c.
>
> (Signed)
> HENRY I. HART, President
>
> MYER S. ISAACS, Secretary.
> New York, December 6th, 1861
> Tabeth 3d, 5622.

Many thoughts were omitted from the petitions, many sentiments were unexpressed: the shock, the pain, the fear, of the average American Jew who had always believed that his rights were secure in the hands of the people's representatives, and who was now subjected to the sharp realization that civil liberties are not always secure, but must be defended and safeguarded in every generation.

The petitions were undoubtedly an effective weapon. They attracted the attention of the national legislators to an inexcusable breach of the principle of democratic equality, and forced them to reconsider an action which might ultimately have been declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. The pressure of lists of constituents' names, Jewish and non-Jewish, is not to be discounted, either, in evaluating the worth of the petition phase of the campaign.

The Board of Delegates of American Israelites was responsible for the third phase of the campaign for redress. Not content to limit its activities to documents and petitions, the Board resolved to send an envoy to Washington, a representative who would be empowered to press the issue in personal interviews with political leaders in the nation's capital. Anything might happen to deter Congress from amending the law, and much time might be consumed if matters were permitted to take their course. A lobbyist on the spot would be in a position to shepherd the Jewish case through the confusion and bickering of representative government in a nation at war.

On December 4, therefore, the Board invited the Rev. Arnold Fischel to assume this challenging mission, and also to act as a civilian chaplain in the Washington area until such time as the successful accomplishment of his task would make possible the official appointment of a Jewish Army chaplain.[44] Fischel immediately accepted the invitation—he regarded it as a privilege of inestimable worth to be selected to render such a service in behalf of American Jewry. It was understood that his expenses were to be paid by the Board, but he would receive no salary. He was to report to headquarters in New York by letter as often as developments required, but he was to have a free hand in determining upon a course of action. To assist him in his task the Board provided him with personal credentials and with letters of introduction to important political figures in Washington.

The next day Fischel set out for Washington,[45] taking time off only to stop over in Philadelphia to confer with the Rev. Leeser and other local dignitaries. They provided him with additional letters of introduction, made various suggestions about political tactics, and assured him that they would redouble their efforts to supplement his work with as many petitions as they could possibly assemble. Arrived in Washington, Fischel immediately set about securing an interview with the President. Although he was assured by many prominent persons, including John Nicolay, one of the White House secretaries, that Mr. Lincoln would not even have the time to read his documents, let alone to discuss the matter with him, Fischel was confident that his contacts would obtain a hearing for his case.

He had been furnished with a letter from Moses Grinnell, the millionaire merchant-prince of New York, a powerful supporter of the Republican Party, who wrote the President that this was important enough a matter to disturb the Presidential routine, and that "Dr. Fischel is of high literary abilities and greatly esteemed by distinguished men of all religious denominations." Another letter of introduction which Fischel used to good advantage had been given him by the U.S. District Attorney for New York, E. Delafield Smith, who explained the legal nature of Fischel's mission, and praised the rabbi as "a gentleman of great worth and intelligence."[46]

Fischel never actually explained who transmitted these letters to Lincoln and thereby arranged for an appointment at the White House, but he had obviously learned some of the secrets of political handicraft at Washington—secrets which were to be useful in his work in Washington during the coming months.

On December 11, Fischel appeared at the White House, armed with his credentials and documents. He wrote later of the "hundreds of people

[who] were anxiously waiting for admission, some of whom told me that they had been for three days waiting their turn." The President received him with a cordial smile and his usual quizzical look, invited him to take a seat, and then listened to his explanation that he did not come as an office-seeker, but to "contend for the principle of religious liberty, for the constitutional rights of the Jewish community and for the welfare of the Jewish volunteers." The President examined his documents, read them thoroughly, and then "questioned me on various matters connected with this subject." Lincoln "fully admitted the justice of my remarks, [told me] that he believed the exclusion of Jewish chaplains to have been altogether unintentional on the part of Congress, and agreed that something ought to be done to meet this case." Fischel suggested that the President might well appoint some Jewish chaplains on his own initiative, as he had done previously in the case of hospital chaplains, and then ask Congress to confirm the appointments. But Mr. Lincoln demurred, explaining that the action in connection with hospital chaplains had been taken at a time when Congress was adjourned, but that he did not feel he could take the responsibility upon himself while Congress was in session, as was then the case. At all accounts, something would be done—"he told me that it was the first time this subject had been brought under his notice, that it was altogether new to him, that he would take the subject into serious consideration, that I should call again tomorrow morning and if he has five minutes to spare he would receive me and let me know his views."[47]

December of '61: the Trent affair was raising the image of a possible war with Britain; McClellan's army was still growing, but going nowhere; the Union was still in the doldrums over previous military defeats. Would Lincoln have time, any time, to consider the infinitesimally small matter of a few Jewish chaplains—or did he understand that democracy was also at stake in the Rev. Fischel's cause? Next day the President was too busy with Cabinet meetings to see the rabbi, but sent him a note that "he is not forgetting my case and will lay it before the Cabinet today."[48] There is no record of the discussions. We have no idea of what Seward, Bates, Chase, Welles, Cameron, Smith, Blair, had to say, if anything. Were they interested, impressed? Did Lincoln spend much time on the question? Did he joke? Or did he merely tell them what he wrote the Rev. Fischel the following day, that he would bring the question before the proper Congressional committee:[49]

Executive Mansion
Dec. 13, 1861

Rev. Dr. A. Fischel
My dear Sir:

I find there are several particulars in which the present law in regard to Chaplains is supposed to be deficient, all which I now design presenting to the appropriate Committee of Congress. I shall try to have a new law broad enough to cover what is desired by you in behalf of the Israelites.

Yours truly,
A. Lincoln

According to Fischel's subsequent reports to New York, the President fulfilled his pledge and submitted to the Committee on Military Affairs of the House of Representatives a long list of suggestions covering a wide gamut of military matters, including various aspects of the chaplaincy law. Meanwhile, Fischel had been interviewing Congressmen and Senators, particularly those who were members of the Military Committees of either house.

So there was no element of surprise when on December 20, Congressman Holman of Indiana, who had already received several petitions from his constituents, introduced a resolution in the House instructing the Committee on Military Affairs "to report a bill so amending the act of the last session of Congress authorizing the appointment of chaplains in the Army as not to exclude from appointment as chaplain a minister, regularly ordained, of any religious society in the United States. . . ." Holman explained that his resolution was specifically designed to include rabbis. "Whether they be appointed or not," he said, was not the question, for he had been told by Fischel that it was unlikely that there could be many Jewish chaplains, but "it is certainly proper . . . that they should not be excluded by law." Congressman Vallandigham could not resist this opportunity of reminding his Republican colleagues that at the last session his resolution on the same subject had been defeated by an overwhelming majority. But the Jewish petition campaign, and Fischel's representations in Washington, had since corrected the situation; the Holman resolution was passed with only minor disagreements about its wording, none about its substance.[50]

This was, however, not the end of Fischel's lobbying activities. There now began an interminable series of committee meetings, at which he had to present his proposals and suggestions for the exact wording of the clause in the new bill, and discuss the various aspects of the question with committee members. There were no objections voiced to the principle of equalizing the status of Judaism before the law, but the Congressmen and Senators were acutely conscious of a dilemma which they had set up for themselves. Once having provided for "Christian" chaplains, it was impossible to repeal the provision, for that would appear to be a repudiation of Christianity. Their constituents would never stand for that! The YMCA delegates had already indicated as much. Even the Congressional chaplains were mentioning the "sacrilege" in the prayers with which they opened the daily sessions. It was an extremely delicate matter.

When Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts first introduced his Bill S.139 on January 8, 1862, as Chairman of the Senate Military Committee, the question of wording had still not been resolved. The paragraph provided:

> That so much of section nine, approved July twenty-two, eighteen hundred and sixty-one and of section seven, chapter forty-two, approved August three, eighteen hundred and sixty-one, as requires Army chaplains to be of some 'Christian denomination,' be, and they are hereby repealed . . . [51]

It was apparent, however, that this language would never pass the Senate or House, and a compromise was reached whereby the original clause would be interpreted away, rather than be repealed outright. This revised wording did not mention Christianity and thereby avoided the pitfall of attracting too much attention from fundamentalist Protestants:

> That so much of Section ix. of the Act approved July 22d, 1861, and of Section vii. of the 'Act providing,' &c., &c., approved August 3d, 1861, as defines the qualifications of chaplains in the army and volunteers, shall hereafter be construed to read as follows: 'That no person shall be appointed a chaplain in the United States Army that is not a regularly ordained minister of some religious denomination.'[52]

Shades of talmudic dialectics! The Senate "construed" "some *Christian* denomination" to mean "some *religious* denomination."

But even after the matter had been settled, it took more time before the Bill finally became law. There were so many other details of the Bill to be argued about that the Senate did not pass it until March 12, 1862. It took even longer in the House. On January 20, Philip Johnson, Representative from Pennsylvania, introduced a resolution to instruct the Committee on Military Affairs "to inquire into the expediency of changing the existing law as to the employment of chaplains in the Army so as to authorize the appointment of brigade chaplains, one or more of which shall be of the Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish religions. . . ."[53] A Bill embodying the revision was finally presented to the House in March, and it became law on July 17. One addition had been made to the chaplaincy section by then—the further stipulation:

> . . . and who does not present testimonials of his present good standing as such minister, with a recommendation for his appointment as an army chaplain from some authorized ecclesiastical body, with not less than five accredited ministers belonging to said religious denomination.[54]

And so, on July 17, 1862, just over a year after Vallandigham had first broached the subject, rabbis might, with the proper recommendations and qualifications, seek appointments as chaplains in the United States Army. A Dutch immigrant, the Rev. Arnold Fischel, had represented American Jewry in the negotiations which successfully achieved this change. His patience and persistence, his unselfishness and consecration, had accomplished the mission for which he was sent to Washington—he won for American Jewry the first major victory of a specifically Jewish nature, to the writer's knowledge, in a matter touching the Federal government. But, actually, it was more than a Jewish question, as Fischel recognized, and certainly more than the acknowledgment of a Congressional blunder and the erasure of a mistake. Because there were Jews in the land who cherished the equality granted them in the Constitution, the practice of that equality was assured, not only for Jews, but for all minority religious groups.

III

The successful completion of Fischel's political mission was in no wise due to the united support of American Jewry. Antagonism and indifference on the part of large sectors of American Jewry, and especially the Reform rabbis and congregations, hampered his representations in Washington. *The Israelite* and *Sinai* both carried editorials deriding his mission. More serious was a protest which six rabbis, five of whom were Reform leaders, issued to the public press in early January 1862. Published in newspapers in Washington, Philadelphia, and New York, the protest denied the representative character of the Board of Delegates and thus aimed to render its activities ineffectual:

> PROTEST[55]
>
> The undersigned, Rabbis of various Congregations have learned that several gentlemen of the city of New York and elsewhere, styling themselves a "Board of Delegates of American Israelites," and claiming to represent all the Israelites in the United States have in the name and in behalf of all citizens of the United States professing Judaism, petitioned Congress for the repeal of a clause concerning Chaplains.
>
> While the undersigned, in behalf of their congregations and themselves, and in the name of freedom of conscience, pray Congress to repeal the clause (or clauses) of a bill (or bills) by which regularly ordained ministers of our persuasion are denied their constitutional right to officiate as Chaplains in the Army or Navy of the United States, they consider it their duty in behalf of truth to protest against the assumption of titles and functions by the so-called "Board of Delegates," and to state that, to the best of their knowledge, neither their congregations, nor any of those presided over by regularly ordained Rabbis, have ever delegated men or powers to that body, or otherwise recognized it. Justice to the Hebrew community demands the announcement that, as a religious organization, it is represented by no particular body of men in this country or elsewhere.
>
> Dr. M. Lilienthal, Rabbi
> Cong. Bene Israel, Cincinnati
> Dr. Isaac M. Wise, Rabbi
> Cong. Bene Jeschurun, Editor
> of the Israelite, Cin.
> Dr. S. Adler, Rabbi
> Cong. Emanu-El, New York
> Henry Hochheimer, Rabbi
> Cong. Oheb Israel, Baltimore
> B. Felsenthal, Rabbi
> Cong. Sinai, Chicago
> Dr. David Einhorn, Rabbi
> Cong. Kneseth Israel, Phila.

It was not news that these rabbis refused to cooperate in the efforts of the Board of Delegates to create a democratically elected and effectively operative American Jewish organization, or that they objected to its maintenance. Anyone who knew anything at all about American Jewish life knew that the Board represented only those congregations which desired to participate in it, and that those were mainly of a conservative religious character. The protest was not issued to inform Jews of the opposition of the six rabbis; it was a deliberate attempt to sabotage the campaign being waged in Washington by Fischel for the revision of the chaplaincy clause, and was published with an eye to the national lawmakers. Fischel was relieved to be informed by a member of the Military Affairs Committee "that it made no impression on them, that it excited ridicule rather than otherwise and that they had resolved to adopt my suggestion."[56] But if any Congressmen had been looking for an excuse to withdraw their support from Fischel's proposals, the "Protest Rabbis" had handed them an excellent one. No possible benefit could have accrued from the publication of the protest; much harm might have come to the cause which the "Protest Rabbis" admitted was a valid and just one. But so bitter was their hostility to the leaders of the New York and Philadelphia Jewish communities that they were willing to air their grievances in the public press in order to bring shame upon the Board and the Rev. Fischel.

It would have been eminently more fitting and constructive if these rabbis had, for the time being, shelved their personal and religious differences with the leaders of the Board, and had aided in the support of Fischel's devoted labors in Washington. Their lack of support had an important bearing upon the outcome of the second phase of the Board's assignment to their Washington representative.

The second task which had been entrusted to Fischel by the Board of Delegates, it will be remembered, was the fulfillment of the duties of a civilian chaplain in the Potomac area. He undertook this religious phase of his mission with as much enthusiasm and efficiency as he did the political phase, and rendered a service which could not have been more admirable even if he had been in uniform.

Almost immediately upon his arrival in Washington, he secured passes of admission, as a religious worker, into the various camps and hospitals in the Department of the Potomac and began a systematic series of trips which eventually included every military establishment in the Department.

Needless to say, being the first rabbi to seek out the Jewish soldiers, he was heartily welcomed wherever he went—sometimes he spent many hours on trains or on horseback traveling to the distant encampments in Maryland and Virginia. New York men, in particular, some of whom were members of his last congregation, were delighted to see his familiar face. They plied him with questions; asked him to write letters home for them; complained that they had no idea which of their comrades were Jewish until he gathered them all together; and requested copies of the Jewish prayer book, and of the Book of Psalms. He always left his address so that, in case of emergency, he could be notified, and invited the men to visit him if duty or furlough should bring them through Washington.

Soldiers confined in the hospitals were especially grateful for his visits. His prayers at their bedside and his conversation were a relief, they said, after the "torture of religious controversy" to which Christian chaplains were wont to subject them. Whether their cases were critical or not, they begged him to promise that they would be buried in Jewish cemeteries—they seemed to have a horror of resting among strangers. When one of his patients died, a young Pennsylvania boy named Marcus Dreyfus, Fischel kept his promise, telegraphed the soldier's family, and arranged for the body to be held pending their arrival to take their son home again.[57] After he had visited all the camps and hospitals, the Rev. Fischel realized that he would never be able to cover the entire area as thoroughly as he might like, and that he had spread his visits to the hospitals so far apart that he was unlikely to fulfill his duty to the sick and wounded men who, after all, were his first responsibility. So he made the unavoidable choice, notified the men in camps that he could not visit them except in cases of emergency, and, for the duration of his stay in Washington, limited his further pastoral work to patients in the hospitals. The only exception to this general rule was a long trip into Virginia which he undertook in March. He hoped to be with the army when it captured Richmond:

> I am off, where to I don't know, but I am with the left wing. Altho' the army left this morning, yet as they march slowly, I shall be able to overtake them on horseback with greatest ease. They have bridges to build and roads to cut, and as there will be no fight this week, I don't lose anything. I will send Mr. Hart a brief report from Richmond . . .[58]

In one of his reports, Fischel recorded a group of suggestions for the guidance of his successor, if a Jewish chaplain should eventually be assigned to the Potomac area. This advice is especially interesting because it foreshadowed the activities of Jewish chaplains in World Wars I and II, many of whom were assigned to areas, rather than to specific units:

> I would advise the following "modus operandi": [First] that he be required to visit the Hospitals daily. [Secondly] that he visit each division of the army once a week, and [thirdly] that a card be extensively circulated in the camps to the effect that Jewish soldiers in camps and hospitals who are in need of personal assistance send in a written request to Dr. —— , ———— St., etc. Every Jewish soldier would then have the opportunity of enjoying the Chaplain's services at any time he may wish.[59]

When Dr. Fischel undertook his mission in December, the Board of Delegates had promised to defray his expenses at the rate of $20 a week. For this purpose, the sum of $250 was borrowed from a fund for the relief of the Jews of Morocco which had been raised by the Board. An appeal was then composed and circulated among congregations and individuals all over the country, informing them of Dr. Fischel's tasks and soliciting their financial contributions for the support of his work.[60] In addition to the printed circular, personal letters were also sent to leaders in various communities, asking for their help, and suggesting that other rabbis might well be appointed to perform civilian chaplaincy duties in areas other than Washington.[61]

Meanwhile, Dr. Fischel came to the realization that $20 would not suffice to meet his expenses. He had to pay $35 for a hotel room his first two weeks, and his first trip to Frederick, Md., cost $20. At this rate, he was spending as much of his own money as the Board's. But he was nevertheless willing to abide by his agreement, although he was profoundly disturbed by the Board's apparent inability to raise the necessary funds. He even suggested the names of wealthy men who might be interested in contributing funds for what he felt was a laudable purpose. Fischel would have been even more disturbed if he had known, in December, how few responses would be received by April. A total of four congregations forwarded their contributions: B'nai Jeshurun, Providence, R.I.; the congregation in New Bedford, Mass.; B'nai Jeshurun and Shaaray Tefila, New York.[62]

A token donation of $5 was also received from the children of the Pittsburgh Hebrew School.[63] Editorials designed to stimulate the campaign for funds were published in the *Messenger* and *The Occident*, but they proved to be even less successful than the Board's solicitation. At the end of the guaranteed period, Dr. Fischel was recalled from Washington, despite the fact that there was still no legal provision for the appointment of a Jewish chaplain, for the simple reason that the money had run out and there was no indication that more would ever be forthcoming. So poorly rewarded were the patriotic efforts of this unselfish rabbi that American Jewry did not even defray his complete expenses, let alone offer him any remuneration for the time which he had devoted to a significant cause.[64]

No wonder that one of the anonymous contributors to the columns of the *Messenger* bewailed what he called "A National Disgrace:"

> . . . I cannot avoid a pang of humiliation and sorrow at the disgrace I conceive to have been inflicted on the Jewish national name by the lethargic indifference with which American Israelites have contemplated the spiritual interests of their co-religionists now fighting under the "stars and stripes." . . . poor fellows—they have risked all—even their lives, to assist in restoring peace and concord to our distracted country. They have displayed bravery worthy of the Maccabaeans, endurance and courage befitting heroes—but their brethren have forgotten them, have neglected their silent but powerful appeal—and they are left to die among strangers, their last moments agonized by the attention of ministers and "Sisters of Mercy" . . . They are left to be buried near the field of battle, "unwept, unhallowed and unsung," their graves unmarked—whereas, they should be interred in consecrated ground, where rest the bones of their ancestors, and co-religionists should be with them when on their beds of sickness, to administer consolation, and soothe their dying moments . . .
>
> It is all very well to say "Congress should provide for Jewish soldiers as well as Christian." I admit it; but because Congress is dilatory and slow to do justice, is that any reason why *we* should fail in our duty to our brethren? The action of Congress is not to be palliated—but shall the Jewish soldiers therefore be debarred of all religious consolation? . . .
>
> I . . . know of a young man killed at the recent battle at Williamsburgh—whose parents, in England, are looking forward to the day when their sight may be blessed by his return to the home of his childhood—who can picture their grief, their agony, when it shall be told

> to them, that their boy died on the field of battle—no one near him to say the *Shemang*, no preparation made to have his body interred in holy ground—when it shall be told to them, that the Israelites of America felt no interest in the spiritual welfare of Jewish soldiers? . . .[65]

This was no idle exhortation, nor mere exhibition of eloquence. As the *Messenger* correctly stated, one thousand dollars would have sufficed to see Dr. Fischel's mission through to the end, but the antagonism of the Reform group and the indifference of the large masses of the Jewish population to any causes but their own synagogues and local charitable organizations militated against the Board's endeavors.[66] This was a tragic and disillusioning conclusion to the notable and noble service which the Board of Delegates and Dr. Fischel had rendered to American Jewry and to America.

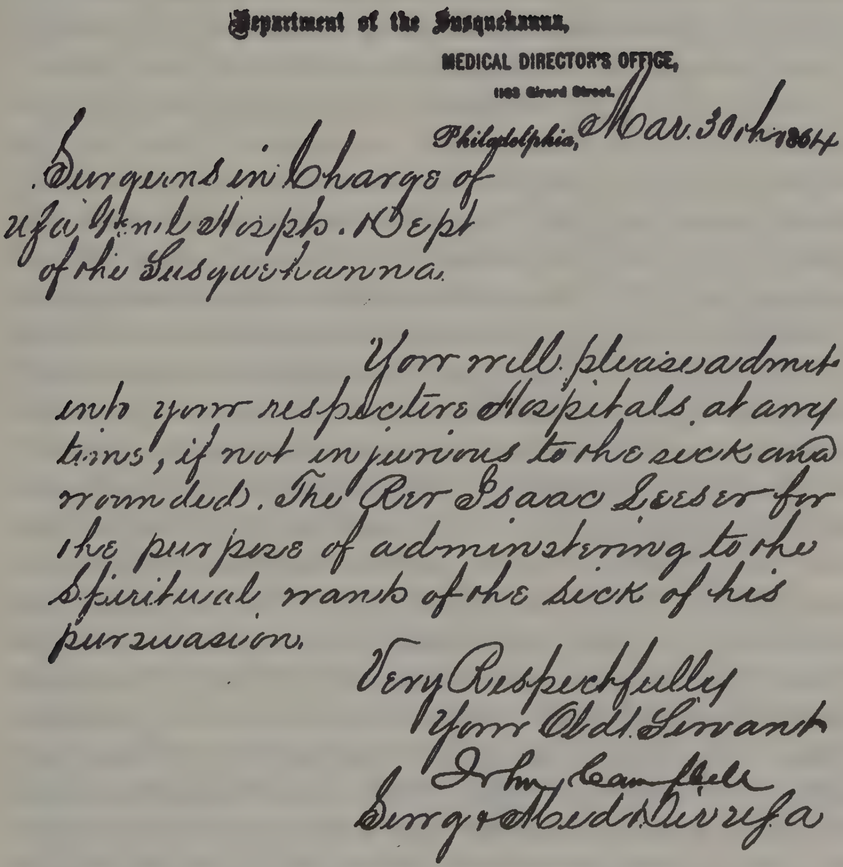
IV

In July of 1862, then, it was permissible for rabbis to apply for commissions in either of two categories: as regimental chaplains, or as members of the newly-organized hospital chaplaincy. And, as might be predicted, it was not long before President Lincoln received a communication in this regard—a month later, to be explicit. It was a petition from the Board of Ministers of the Hebrew Congregations of Philadelphia requesting the appointment of a Jewish hospital chaplain for the Philadelphia area. This representative body had met on August 19, the letter said, and discussed the hospital problem. Two soldiers of the Jewish faith had already died without the consolation of prayers by a Jewish clergyman, and, since Philadelphia was increasingly becoming "a central depository for sick and wounded soldiers," more and more Jewish men would be sent to those hospitals. Although the Board had been in touch with the hospital officials and were assured that their Secretary, the Rev. Isaac Leeser, would be notified of the admission of Jewish wounded, they nevertheless believed it advisable that a Jewish chaplain be officially appointed, and they suggested further that he be assigned not only to the Philadelphia hospitals but also to those located in "York, Harrisburg, Chester, and other towns at not too great a distance."[67]

John Hay, Secretary to Mr. Lincoln, wrote Leeser, on September 6, that the President "recognizes the propriety of your suggestion, and will appoint a chaplain of your faith if the Board will designate a proper person for the purpose." The Board of Ministers was called to conference again, and after deliberating on the relative merits of their membership, selected the Rev. Jacob Frankel, minister of Rodeph Shalom Congregation of Philadelphia, then fifty-four years old, as their nominee for the commission. The President was informed of this action, and Frankel's commission arrived a few days later, duly signed by the President, together with all the requisite papers and directions.[68] Thus, on September 18, 1862, Jacob Frankel became the first American rabbi to be appointed a military chaplain.

The Rev. Frankel was a native of Grünstadt, Bavaria, where he was born on July 5, 1808. His family was one with a long musical tradition, and, at an early age, he set out on his first concert tour, through the Alsace-Lorraine district, with two brothers. His first position as cantor was in his native town. He next went to Mainz, where he remained for a number of years. In 1848, he applied for, and was elected to, the position of Minister of Rodeph Shalom Congregation of Philadelphia. A pleasant and popular man, blessed with a stirring voice and a kindly disposition, the Rev. Frankel was greatly beloved by his congregation and served it well until his retirement from the active ministry a year before his death on January 12, 1887. Contemporary descriptions of his gentle character and mild manner render it easy to understand why his fellow rabbis selected him from among their number to be honored with the chaplaincy assignment. Further evidence of his popularity can be discovered in the results of a good-humored election, in 1866, for the most popular rabbi in Philadelphia, incidental to a raffle to raise money for the new Jewish hospital. The Rev. Frankel's friends bought so many tickets that he had more votes than all the other ministers combined.[69]

Frankel's service as chaplain continued for almost three years, until July 1, 1865, when the war had ended.[70] It was, of course, only a part-time activity, and his fellow rabbis assisted him in visiting the various military hospitals.[71] A small fund was placed at his disposal for purchasing inexpensive gifts and necessities for the men he visited; but the men were most grateful for the gift of his voice. Frequent were the occasions when they asked him to sing during his rounds in the hospitals; and many were the men, wounded and well, who came to his synagogue whenever they could to hear his inspired chanting of the service. Chaplain Frankel



Department of the Susquehanna,
MEDICAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE,
1103 Girard Street.
Philadelphia, Mar. 30th 1864

Surgeons in Charge of
U.S.A. Genl Hosps. Dept
of the Susquehanna.

You will please admit into your respective Hospitals at any time, if not injurious to the sick and wounded. The Rev Isaac Leeser for the purpose of administering to the Spiritual wants of the sick of his pursuasion.

Very Respectfully
Your Obdt. Servant
John Campbell
Surg & Med. Dir U.S.A.

Facsimile of the Rev. Isaac Leeser's pass for visiting military hospitals.

arranged, as best he could, for religious furloughs for ambulatory cases during the High Holy Days and at the Passover. In his typical summarizing style, Leeser wrote, after Frankel was mustered out, that the latter had "faithfully discharged the duties incident to the office, and the Jewish soldiers in the hospitals in this vicinity were properly cared for under his supervision."[72] Frankel so cherished this war-time experience that he framed his commission, signed by Lincoln and Stanton, and had it hung on the wall of his home, where it remained until his death. It has been a treasured possession of his family ever since.

Frankel and the other Jewish hospital chaplains who served during the Civil War have been all but ignored by writers who have somehow assumed that, because it was different, the hospital chaplaincy was inferior to the regimental chaplaincy. This is an historical error completely un warranted by the facts. Both hospital and field chaplains were enrolled in the volunteer army and were appointed to office on temporary commissions. Indeed, all hospital chaplains were commissioned by the President and the War Department, whereas many regimental chaplains were appointed by governors and other state officials. Equal remuneration was provided for both types of service by Congressional law—the pay of a cavalry captain—but neither was responsible for the military duties of that rank. The same uniform regulations were applied to the chaplain in the field and the chaplain in the hospital: neither wore a military uniform; they were both instructed to wear their customary civilian garb.[73] Hospital chaplains were subject to the same type of military discipline as regimental chaplains, and were equally responsible to their military superiors. For purposes of centralized efficiency, all hospital chaplains were subordinate to the Surgeon General of the Army and assigned by him to hospitals in the cities of their residence, where, in turn, they were supervised by the surgeons in charge.[74] Regimental chaplains, on the other hand, were subject to the orders of their colonels. It was a fortunate decision to place all hospital chaplains under a single authority, for they could never have successfully fulfilled their essential role within the complicated and often contradictory structure of state and national military authority.

Much of the confusion regarding the two types of appointment has resulted from the history of the hospital chaplaincy itself: it was new for the entire country as well as for the American-Jewish community. No such office had existed prior to the Civil War, and Congress alone might never have created it even then. The urging of various Protestant ministers and of Archbishop John Hughes of New York[75] was necessary to convince President Lincoln of the desirability of such a new departure. When convinced, he did not wait for Congressional action; instead he requested certain clergymen to act as hospital chaplains and pledged that at the first opportunity he would press Congress to legalize their appointments. He fulfilled his promise in his Annual Message to Congress on December 3, 1861, and such a bill was finally enacted in May 1862 (without any denominational provisions), a short time before the bill was passed which revised the regimental chaplaincy qualifications.[76]

V

In his report to the readers of *The Occident* informing them of the steps taken to secure a commission for the Rev. Frankel, Isaac Leeser had urged his colleagues in New York, Baltimore, St. Louis, and Cincinnati, to organize themselves as the Philadelphia rabbis had, and to apply in a similar fashion for Jewish chaplaincy appointments for the benefit of the Jewish soldiers in their areas.[77] This suggestion was never adopted, but the Board of Delegates of American Israelites, through its president, Henry I. Hart, petitioned the President on October 6, 1862, for an appointment as hospital chaplain for the Rev. Fischel, who richly deserved such official recognition for his noteworthy and unique activities. His work had come to a halt only because the member congregations of the Board failed to contribute adequate funds to pay his expenses. But now that chaplaincy appointments were obtainable due to his own personal activities in Washington more than any other factor, it was more than fitting that the Board should recommend him to Mr. Lincoln and ask that he be assigned to the hospitals in Washington and vicinity with which he was already so familiar. This letter of application was endorsed by John Hay, Lincoln's secretary, in these words:

> The President directs me to refer the enclosed to the notice of the Surgeon General and to inquire whether a Jewish chaplain is needed here.[78]

The Surgeon General's Office did, indeed, investigate the matter. According to a report addressed personally to the President, on October 27 by the Medical Inspector General of the Army and countersigned by the Surgeon General, a survey was made of the hospitals in the Washington area: 13 hospitals with a total bed capacity of over 5,000 reported the presence of only seven Jewish patients. "I have therefore no hesitation," concluded the communication, "in expressing an opinion that it is inexpedient to appoint a chaplain of that faith. There would not be over 25 soldiers, to whom he could administer and they so scattered, that it would be impracticable for a clergyman to find and attend to them."

It is not possible to determine the relative accuracy of the Surgeon General's survey; we do know that hospital records carried no listing of a soldier's faith and that "dog-tags" had not yet been invented; we also know from the testimony of Leeser and other rabbis that some Jewish men in uniform were reluctant to identify themselves as Jews out of fear of anti-Semitism. Nevertheless, Fischel must have known approximately how many Jewish men would be patients in the hospitals in and around Washington; if the number was small it was certainly an unwise tactic to have the Board request appointment for him as a hospital chaplain. Perhaps an application for a commission as chaplain for camps and forts as well as hospitals in the area would have had a better chance of success.

At any rate, Fischel never received a commission and never served as a military chaplain. The noteworthy service he performed was as a civilian. Our knowledge of his later career is extremely hazy, but it is reported that he returned to Holland shortly after this episode, although the date is uncertain.[79] This was a disappointing conclusion to the war career of a rabbi who, by virtue of his interest in, and efforts in behalf of, the Jewish soldiers of the Union Army, should have been privileged ultimately to serve as an officer of that Army.

Still another chaplaincy application was rejected—that of the Rev. Isidore Kalisch of Indianapolis, who was sponsored by Adolph Dessar, a close friend of John P. Usher, Secretary of the Interior. Usher wrote Dessar on October 16, 1863, that he had spoken to Lincoln in Kalisch's behalf, but that no further commissions as post chaplains were being issued, and that Kalisch's name would be held on file, however, in the event of future need. It is quite strange that Kalisch should have applied for an appointment as post chaplain, rather than as hospital chaplain; there was probably no army post in the country whose personnel contained more than a handful of Jews.[80]

There were not enough rabbis in Louisville, Ky., to form a Board of Ministers, but the entire Jewish community of Louisville was conscious enough of the Jewish war wounded in Kentucky hospitals to initiate a public movement to secure the appointment of a Jewish chaplain for that area. Prominent non-Jewish citizens joined with Jews, and urged Robert Mallory, a Kentucky member of the House of Representatives from 1859 to 1865, to seek a commission for the Rev. Bernhard Henry Gotthelf, the rabbi of Adath Israel Congregation of Louisville. This public movement coincided with the furor over General Grant's anti-Jewish General Order No. 11, which had so many repercussions in the state of Kentucky—indirect evidence that the majority of non-Jews in this area where Jews were accused of disloyalty did not share the suspicions of Grant's staff officers. The petition met with success and the Rev. Gotthelf received his appointment on May 6, 1863, although the commission dated his rank from February 16.[81]

The Rev. Gotthelf, born in Bavaria on February 5, 1819, had come to the United States at the age of twenty-one, and served several congregations in the East, including Keneseth Israel of Philadelphia, of which he was the first cantor and preacher, prior to his call to Louisville in 1851. After the Civil War he moved to Vicksburg, Miss., where he ministered to Anshe Chesed Congregation until his death in 1878, a victim of the yellow fever epidemic which swept the whole Southland that year. The inscription on his tombstone records his life and character in these laudatory terms: "a wise teacher, a faithful minister, a tender husband, a devoted father, a good man."[82]

So successful had been the campaign to convince the American public of the right of rabbis to serve as military chaplains, that the news of Mr. Gotthelf's appointment was noted in the public press, although chaplaincy appointments (for Christians, at least) were by that date quite commonplace. The editor of the Louisville Journal celebrated the occasion in these words:[83]

> *An Excellent Appointment.*—We are gratified to announce that President Lincoln has appointed the Rev. B. Gotthelf, the minister of the German Jewish Congregation of this city, as Hospital Chaplain, to be stationed here. The fact that a very respectable number of Jewish soldiers have been and still are receiving medical treatment at our hospitals having been brought to the notice of the Hon. Robert Mallory, he made an application for the appointment of Mr. Gotthelf, which we took pleasure, with other citizens, in endorsing. These invalids can now enjoy the instruction

> and consolation of a minister of their own faith, and we are, therefore, convinced that the appointment was as timely as it is well merited.

A careful search for family papers and examination of contemporary periodicals has disclosed only one interesting detail of the Rev. Gotthelf's twenty-eight months of chaplaincy service (he was mustered out of the Army on August 26, 1865). Since the responsibility of the Civil War chaplain to his men included the provision of various items of comfort and entertainment, the Rev. Gotthelf was eager to obtain reading matter for his men, most of whom were German-Jewish immigrants. During January and February of the final year of the war, he made a tour of the larger Jewish communities of the midwest to secure donations in cash, and in books, to establish German language libraries in the various military hospitals under his jurisdiction. An editorial in *The Israelite* endorsing the purposes of this trip conveyed the information that "there are almost always from 2,000 to 3,000 sick and wounded German soldiers in [the Louisville] hospitals, among them from 200 to 300 Israelites."[84] Undoubtedly the libraries were to be assembled for the use of all German-speaking patients, non-Jews as well as Jews. This was perhaps the first example of that type of non-denominational service which Jewish chaplains and war service agencies rendered so frequently during the subsequent wars of the United States.

In Cincinnati, at least, Rabbi Wise's assurance that "Mr. G., well known to our readers, will find the encouragement this matter deserves," was not disappointed. Beth El Lodge of B'nai B'rith appointed a special committee to assist Mr. Gotthelf in the project, as did other Jewish lodges in the community. There is no record of the other cities which Gotthelf visited, or of the general success of his tour,[85] but the whispered word of criticism, which seems to make the lives of so many rabbis miserable, pursued even this meritorious mission of beneficence. A certain William Kriegshaber of Louisville was compelled later to send a public letter of retraction to *The Israelite*, apologizing for some bitter reflections on the character of the Rev. Gotthelf and of his mission which he had written to friends in Cincinnati.[86] This episode marks the sum total of the information available concerning Gotthelf's military career. It was unfortunately typical of Jewish interests during the Civil War that once Jewish chaplains were appointed, their work was all but ignored by the Jewish press, and the more glamorous military exploits of individual Jews received the greater amount of publicity.

VI

So incomplete has been our knowledge of the Civil War chaplaincy that no notice has been taken of the one rabbi who did serve as a regimental chaplain. On April 10, 1863, the Rev. Ferdinand Sarner enlisted in the army at Brooks Station, Va., for three years, and was immediately elected chaplain of the 54th New York Volunteer Infantry.[87] On the same day, he sent notes to the editors of *The Israelite* and *The Occident* telling them of his appointment and change of address. They lost no time in passing on the news to their readers.[88]

Who was Ferdinand Leopold Sarner—this rabbi who achieved, without any great influence, that appointment over which all American Jewry had been aroused only a year before? Mrs. Martha Sarner Levy of Bradford, Pa., his daughter, has generously contributed various documents and reminiscences which help to outline the course of his life.

Ferdinand Sarner was born in Lissa, Posen, on February 8, 1820,[89] the son of a humble tanner. Bent on securing a modern academic training, he first studied at the *Gymnasium* in Hamburg. In July 1851, he entered the Royal Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin. There he remained for three years, undertaking a difficult course of studies, particularly in the field of philosophy. In 1854 he went on to the University of Hesse where he studied for four more years, finally passing the examinations in 1858 and achieving the coveted Doctor of Philosophy degree. Meanwhile, in 1856, he had been elected rabbi of the congregation of Battenfeld, and was therefore concurrently student and spiritual leader for two years. He retained this position for a very short time thereafter, and was ready to leave for America by January 1859, with the blessings of the mayor of the town inscribed on his travel permit in formal documentary language, and his diplomas and certificates packed securely in his luggage. This was, however, not the first time he had planned a trip to the United States. In 1850, he had secured a passport marked for Pittsburgh, Pa., but evidently changed his mind and decided to remain in Europe until he had taken advantage of German academic opportunities.

Almost immediately upon his arrival in the United States, he secured the position as rabbi of Brith Kodesh Congregation in Rochester, N.Y., where he served ably for about a year. Upon his resignation from that post in July 1860, two formal resolutions were presented to him: one by the officers and members of the congregation, the other by the Board of Trustees. Both paid high tribute to his ministrations. He had conducted himself "in the most virtuous and exemplary fashion," the congregation testified, adding that "his beautiful lectures have been full of instruction and never failed to inspire his hearers with a true sense of our holy religion." No doubt in order to preclude any suspicion that he had been dismissed by the congregation, it was explicitly stated that he had "voluntarily resigned his office as our Rabbi, thereby causing his numerous friends and admirers great sorrow." The Trustees' resolutions recorded these same sentiments in other words, but they also added their recommendation of Dr. Sarner "to every Congregation in this Country," expressing their belief that he was "an excellent scholar, an eloquent lecturer, and a good, truly religious man, for whom we shall ever bear the kindest feelings."

Virtually nothing is known of Sarner's activities between 1860 and 1863, beyond the fact that his application for the position of rabbi of the Anshi Chesed Congregation of New York City was tabled by its Board of Trustees on June 2, 1861.[90] But perhaps he had taken to haunting the government agencies in Washington, for a traveler's report to *The Israelite* mentioned a meeting with him in mid-1861 in the Capitol building. The reporter commented that Sarner was not only a "learned" man, but that he was also "the author of several plays."[91]

At any rate, Sarner was elected to the chaplaincy of the 54th N.Y. Volunteer Regiment, also known as the "Hiram Barney Rifles" and the "Schwarze Yaeger," on April 10, 1863. The meeting of regimental officers required by law was held on that day, and the assembled officers certified his election.[92] Strangely enough, of the thirteen officers who signed the document, only three could possibly have been Jewish. An examination of the muster-rolls of enlisted men, company by company, reveals the fact that Jews were a small minority in the entire regiment.[93] Why they should have preferred a Jewish chaplain is a question which it is impossible to answer with any categorical certainty. Perhaps, since the regiment was composed almost exclusively of German immigrants, the officers deemed the language their chaplain used in his sermons, and his educational background, more important than the faith he professed. Indeed, one of the documents which he had presented when first interviewed by the officers was a letter from the Prussian Ambassador in Washington, certifying to his German academic attainments; and when he was examined by a board of chaplains on May 15, his colleagues seem to have been impressed by the evidence he presented that he was a graduate of "two of the German Universities."[94] This emphasis might indicate that the regimental officers were more concerned to secure the services of a cultured German than of a chaplain of a particular denomination.

The 54th Infantry had an active combat career. During the year and a half of Sarner's service, the regiment saw action at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, and in the invasion of South Carolina. Of all the details of his chaplaincy experience during days of battle and weeks of rest and then intensified preparation, we know only that he himself was wounded at Gettysburg. A single line to that effect was printed in *The Jewish Record* of New York on January 15, 1864, with the hypothetical guess that "Dr. Sarner is probably the first Rabbi who voluntarily took a part in a fight since Rabbi Akiba." A more elaborate report of the incident appeared in the French-Jewish monthly, *Archives Israelites*,[95] stating that during the battle, Sarner's "horse was killed under him, and he himself received a dangerous wound, from which he subsequently recovered; this was the result of the very courageous manner in which he conducted himself during that terrible battle." Although he would undoubtedly have served out his period of enlistment, or at least have seen the end of the war with his regiment, the wound apparently did not heal for a long time, and he was ultimately discharged on October 3, 1864, to date from July 31, for physical disability.[96] But we have not yet finished with the wound, although it is the only single shred of detail which has been ascertained about Sarner's military career.

After his discharge, the ex-chaplain returned to New York City and delivered guest lectures in various pulpits. It was not long, however, before he was engaged in a new venture. Jointly with the Rev. Jacob Levi, rabbi of the Adath Jeshurun Congregation of Syracuse, he undertook to edit and publish a new German-Jewish monthly, *The Rebecca*, and to travel in its behalf for funds and subscriptions. Leeser, in his review of the first number of this periodical, noted that part of a drama was included in its contents, that it was obviously more of a literary journal than a religious one, and that what there was of a religious nature smacked too much of religious liberalism to suit his taste.[97] Another contemporary went into the more practical details of its publication, affording us a valuable insight into its problems which we would otherwise not possess, since no copy of *The Rebecca* has survived the neglect of the intervening years:

> . . . Notwithstanding the attractive features of the paper, however, and the ability with which it seems to be edited, still there seems to be some difficulty in the way of its continuation. For, in the second number the publisher informs us that the appearance of the third number of "The Rebecca" is postponed until Dr. Sarner returns from a journey, which he is about to make in search of subscribers. He says that each number of the paper costs the sum of $92, and that it will be useless to continue its publication unless the subscription lists are increased. This is but another example of the difficulties that await those who attempt to publish Jewish periodicals in America. For it is an undeniable fact that, however generous the Israelites may be in other matters, they always seem loth to encourage the establishment of Jewish newspapers.[98]

It was during this trip which might mean life or death for *The Rebecca* (and which did mean its demise, since no further issues are recorded), that Dr. Sarner's war-wound became the subject of a scandalous accusation. In Cleveland, where he attempted to secure new subscribers, he apparently secured a few especially vicious enemies instead. One of them, B. Dettelbach, Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Anshe Chesed Congregation, wrote an open letter to *The Israelite*, denouncing the traveling rabbi-editor as a liar and a slanderer. Part of the evidence concerned the Gettysburg wound:

> On his last visit to our city, being requested to state the cause of his lameness, he [Sarner] very piously remarked, to have been wounded in a battle in the service of the United States. Unseen by him, though, he has been observed walking as erect as an arrow! Why this deception? Why this denial of truth? . . . Does he think that such malicious expressions of falsehood will either benefit him or his sheet? [99]

Undoubtedly Dettelbach's comments were the malicious, slanderous ones; a few weeks later another Anshe Chesed Trustee, Abraham Bloch, wrote that the meeting out of which the letter (signed "by order of the Trustees") had proceeded was an illegal one, and that, if there was any quarrel, it was only between Rabbi G. M. Cohen (of the congregation), Mr. Dettelbach, and Sarner, and, furthermore, purely of a private nature.[100]

The further details of Sarner's post-war career are not altogether in order. His daughter remembers that he taught languages at various schools in New York, and there are indications that he continued preaching from time to time in various synagogues.[101] He became rabbi of the Beth-El Emeth Congregation in Memphis, Tenn., sometime late in 1872, and ministered there until his death on August 18, 1878, when he fell victim to the same yellow fever epidemic which took the life of B. H. Gotthelf.

Little remains of Rabbi Sarner's career: some faded documents; the memories of a loving daughter; typical rabbinical souvenirs of the period: a silver butter dish, a gold-headed cane and a large water service, presented to him on special occasions and engraved in his honor. But the hundreds of rabbis who served with United States combat units during World War II may remember with pride their predecessor—the first of a long and honorable line who have served their nation and their faith with courage and blood—Chaplain Ferdinand Leopold Sarner.

VII

Although none of the explicit details of the Rev. Sarner's chaplaincy service have been preserved, he probably followed the same procedure as Chaplain Allen: non-denominational worship and ministrations with, perhaps, occasional Jewish services. Sarner served only one regiment; what of the thousands of Jewish men scattered throughout the other regiments and stationed in the widely separated areas over which the fury of war swept? Did they resign themselves to a moratorium on Judaism "for the duration," or did they create distinctive religious patterns of their own, without benefit of clergy?

Judaism, as a religion, is so constructed as to permit of emergency adjustments and readjustments. Services may be held anywhere, in a synagogue or in a home or in a field; any layman who is well acquainted with the ritual may conduct a service; ritual paraphernalia are altogether dispensible. Although the age-old emphasis of the Jewish tradition upon the education of laymen in Hebrew liturgy and literature was not successfully transplanted to the American scene, at least some American Jewish laymen were equipped to lead their brethren in prayer. The obligation of working out their religious problems, therefore, rested securely upon the soldiers themselves—the character of Judaism made it possible for them to be independent of rabbinical guidance.

They accepted the responsibility. It was not unusual for Jewish men to seek out each other and to gather together in formal religious worship. One soldier who wrote a number of highly interesting sketches on the military life for *The Jewish Messenger* told his readers, with obvious pleasure, that it was customary for the Jewish men in his outfit to meet regularly for Sabbath worship in some secluded spot on the outskirts of the camp. To walk through the Virginia forests and hear the echoes of the chanted Hebrew prayers was a rare and thrilling experience, he said. He was reminded of Joshua's army, and the men who followed the young David; of the Hebrew soldiers who fought against Assyria and Babylonia and Egypt; of the Maccabees. There was an historic quality about Jews in the uniform of the Union, away from home to defend the principles of American democracy, gathering together to say the prayers of the Hebrew liturgy. And, he said, the religious life of his comrades was quite characteristic of Jewish soldiers in many other outfits.[102]

The men of the 13th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry Regiment organized themselves along more formal lines. They held meetings and discussed their mutual problems. When any of their comrades was killed in battle they arranged for a traditional Jewish burial, attempting to carry out as many of the minute prescriptions of Jewish law as possible, and read the Hebrew funeral services themselves. They visited their fellow Jews in the hospitals and gave them all the attention they could. Farrier Henry M. Auerbach, their chairman, told all this to Isaac M. Wise in a letter requesting assistance in obtaining a supply of prayer-books, phylacteries, and ritual prayer-shawls. He also asked that *The Israelite* be sent regularly to their camp near Petersburg, Va.; they were "tired," said Auerbach, "of reading the Evangelist and others."[103]

Meanwhile, in the Confederacy, where there was not even one Jewish chaplain, the Rev. M. J. Michelbacher, rabbi of Beth Ahabah Congregation in Richmond, had been giving much thought to the religious needs of the isolated Jewish soldier and came upon an idea which seems not to have occurred to any rabbi in the North. He composed a prayer for Confederate soldiers, had it printed, and distributed it to as many men as he could reach. Reading this prayer, he believed, would give Jewish soldiers a feeling of closeness to their people and help bridge the long periods when they were unable to attend Jewish worship services:[104]

> *Shemang Yisroel, Adonoy Elohainoo, Adonoy Achod!*
>
> O God of the Universe! Although unworthy through my manifesto of transgressions, I approach the seat of thy mercy, to crave thy favor, and to seek thy protection. I supplicate thy forgiveness, O most merciful Father, for the many transgressions and the oft repeated disobedience, which cause Thee to command destruction over me. Behold me now, O my Father, supplicating Thy protection! Thou who art near when all other aid faileth! O spare me, guard me from the evil that is impending!
>
> This once happy country is inflamed by the fury of war; a menacing enemy is arrayed against the rights, liberties and freedom of this, our Confederacy; the ambition of this enemy has dissolved fraternal love, and the hand of fraternity has been broken asunder by the hands of those, who sit now in council and meditate our chastisement, with the chastisement of scorpions. Our firesides are threatened; the foe is before us, with the declared intention to desecrate our soil, to murder our people, and to deprive us of the glorious inheritance which was left to us by the immortal fathers of this once great Republic.
>
> Here I stand now with many thousands of the sons of the sunny South, to face the foe, to drive him back, and to defend our natural rights. O Lord, God of Israel, be with me in the hot season of the contending strife; protect and bless me with health and courage to bear cheerfully the hardships of war.
>
> O Lord, Ruler of Nations, destroy the power of our enemies! "Grant not the longings of the wicked; suffer not his wicked device to succeed, lest they exalt themselves. Selah. As for the heads of those that encompass me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them. Let burning coals be cast upon them; let them be thrown into the fire, into deep pits, that they rise not up again" (Psalm 140). Be unto the Army of this Confederacy, as thou were of old, unto us, thy chosen people. Inspire them with patriotism! Give them when marching to meet, or, overtake the enemy, the wings of the eagle—in the camp be Thou their watch and ward—and in the battle, strike for them, O Almighty God of Israel, as thou didst strike for thy people on the plains of Canaan—guide them O Lord of Battles, into the paths of victory, guard them from the shaft and missile of the enemy. Grant that they may ever advance to wage battle, and battle in thy name to win! Grant that not a standard be ever lowered among them! O Lord, God, Father, be thou with us!

> Give unto the officers of the Army and of the Navy of the Confederate States, enterprise, fortitude and undaunted courage; teach them the ways of war and the winning of victory. Guard and preserve, O Lord, the President of the Confederate States and all officers, who have the welfare of the country truly at heart. Bless all my fellow-citizens, and guard them against sickness and famine! May they prosper and increase!
>
> Hear me further, O Lord, when I pray to Thee for those on earth, dearest to my heart. O bless my father, mother, brothers and sisters. (if married: my wife and children.) O bless them all with earthly and heavenly good! May they always look up to Thee, and may they find in Thee their trust and strength.
>
> O Lord, be with me always. Show me the way I have to go, to be prepared to meet Thee here and hereafter.
>
> My hope, my faith, my strength are in Thee, O Lord, my God, forever—in Thee is my trust. "For thy salvation do I hope, O Lord! I hope for Thy salvation, O Lord! O Lord, for Thy salvation do I hope!" Amen! Amen!
>
> *Shemang Yisroel, Adonoy Elohainoo, Adonoy Achod!*

Satisfactory though it might be for soldiers to meet in the woods for the reading of prayers on the Sabbath, or to meditate over words written in their behalf by the rabbi of Richmond, when the important festivals and holy day seasons approached, they longed to be home again. There must have been hundreds who felt like Edwin Kursheedt, when he wrote to his sweetheart:

> . . . I have not been able to see the Chanucka lights this year. Last year I was with my aunt and officiated in reading the service as I always did at home, for in addition to lighting the lamps in Synagogue we always did so at home. That was our Christmas, as children and we always rec'd presents & enjoyed ourselves—but those times have passed and I only expect to see them again when I shall have a family of my own to hand down these ceremonies to. Don't you say so too my Pet? . . . After I shall have been with you in February not many weeks will elapse ere Pesach . . .[105]

Some were not so prone as Kursheedt to postpone more complete observance of the holidays of the Jewish year until the return of peace; they attempted to find the best available substitute for being at home.

In 1862, J. A. Joel and twenty of his Jewish comrades in the 23rd Ohio Volunteer Regiment found themselves in winter headquarters at Fayette, W.Va., with Passover near at hand. After talking the matter over among themselves, they presented a request to their commanding officer for permission to absent themselves from duty for several days in order to observe the holiday. Their request granted, they set about organizing a *Seder* (Passover ritual dinner). The camp sutler, a Jew who was going back home to celebrate the festival with his family in Cincinnati, readily agreed to send some *Matzot* to them as soon as he reached his destination. The day before Passover, therefore, a supply train unloaded seven barrels of *Matzot* at the camp. Although they had not thought of asking for Passover prayer-books, the sutler had sent some of those along, too.

> We were now able to keep the *Seder* nights [wrote Joel in his lively narrative of the experience] if we could only obtain the other requisites for that occasion. We held a consultation and decided to send parties to forage in the country while a party stayed to build a log hut for the services. About the middle of the afternoon the foragers arrived, having been quite successful. We obtained two kegs of cider, a lamb, several chickens and some eggs. Horse radish or parsley we could not obtain, but in lieu we found a weed, whose bitterness, I apprehend, exceeded anything our forefathers "enjoyed." We were still in a great quandary; we were like the men who drew the elephant in the lottery. We had the lamb, but did not know what part was to represent it at the table; but Yankee ingenuity prevailed, and it was decided to cook the whole and put it on the table, then we could dine off it, and be sure we had the right part. The necessaries for the *choroutzes* we could not obtain, so we got a brick which, rather hard to digest, reminded us, by looking at it, for what purpose it was intended.

So the make-shift *Seder* was prepared, with the assistance of "Yankee ingenuity!" Substitutes and symbols-upon-symbols were contrived to fulfill the elaborate Passover prescriptions. It was as though the Passover tradition were being recast in a new mould. Cider served as the symbol of rejoicing, instead of wine; a whole lamb replaced a lamb-bone as the representation of the Paschal sacrifice; the agony of the servitude in Egypt was recalled by bitter weeds instead of the usual horse-radish; in lieu of the delicious *haroset* (an edible mortar concocted of chopped apple, nuts, and wine) a brick symbolized the brick-building of the Hebrew in Egypt. *Matzot*, eggs, and chicken were the only conventional items. But still it was a *Seder*, and the very originality of the religious symbols was an index to the devotion and piety with which these soldiers, far away from home, were determined to commemorate the exodus from Egypt.

Joel himself took the role of the leader of the service, and chanted the blessings ordained by centuries-old practice. It must have been quite a sight: these twenty men gathered together in a crude and hastily-built log hut, their weapons at their side, prepared as in Egypt-land for all manner of danger, singing the words of praise and faith in the ancient language of Israel.

Everything was solemn and decorous (Passover dinners always are at the outset, until the wine stimulates some fun). But let Mr. Joel continue with his version of an unexpected development:

> The ceremonies were passing off very nicely, until we arrived at the part where the bitter herb was to be taken. We all had a large portion of the herb ready to eat at the moment I said the blessing; each [ate] his portion, when horrors! what a scene ensued in our little congregation, it is impossible for my pen to describe. The herb was very bitter and very fiery like Cayenne pepper, and excited our thirst to such a degree, that we forgot the law authorizing us to drink only four cups, and the consequence was we drank up all the cider. Those that drank the more freely became excited and one thought he was Moses, another Aaron, and one had the audacity to call himself a Pharaoh. The consequence was a skirmish, with nobody hurt, only Moses, Aaron, and Pharaoh, had to be carried to the camp, and there left in the arms of Morpheus.

After this debacle, the survivors nonchalantly continued with the prayers, then partook of their dinner, and completed the service with the traditional blessings and hymns.

> There [wrote Joel] in the wild woods of West Virginia, away from home and friends, we consecrated and offered up to the ever-loving God of Israel our prayers and sacrifice . . . there is no occasion in my life that gives me more pleasure and satisfaction than when I remember the celebration of Passover of 1862.[106]

Other soldiers were closer to large cities where, at the very least, if they could not obtain furlough from military duties, they were able to purchase the necessary unleavened bread. But there must have been many cases where the soldiers were unaware of the exact dates of holidays, as in Isaac J. Levy's account of his Passover celebration at Adam's Run, S.C., narrated in a letter to his sister Leonora:

> No doubt you were much surprised on receiving a letter from me addressed to our dear parents dated on the 21st inst. [of April, 1864] which was the first day of [Passover]. We were all under the impression in camp that the first day of the festival was the 22d and if my memory serves me right I think that Ma wrote me that [Passover] was on the 22d inst. Zeke was somewhat astonished on arriving in Charleston on Wednesday afternoon, to learn that that was the first [*Seder*] night. He purchased [*Matzot*] sufficient to last us for the week. The cost is somewhat less than in Richmond, being but two dollars per pound. We are observing the festival in a truly orthodox style. On the first day we had a fine vegetable soup. It was made of a bunch of vegetables which Zeke brought from Charleston containing new onions, parsley, carrots, turnips and a young cauliflower, also a pound and a half of fresh beef, the latter article sells for four dollars per pound in Charleston. Zeke did not bring us any meat from home. He brought some of his own smoked meat, which he is having with us, he says that he supposes that Pa forgot to deliver it to him. . .[107]

So Isaac J. Levy and his friends and many others like him celebrated the holidays as best they could. More fortunate, however, were those soldiers who were stationed in cities or at camps so close to them that they could celebrate holidays with their civilian co-religionists. After the capture of Memphis, for instance, Jewish men with the Union army were delighted to learn that there were two synagogues in the city, where they could attend services on the Sabbath and on festivals.[108]

When his parents heard that Lieutenant Simon S. Brucker of the 39th Illinois Volunteer Regiment was to supervise the building of fortifications near Suffolk, Va., during the High Holy Days of 1862, they wrote and suggested that he try to get time off to attend services in Norfolk where, they remembered, there had been an active Jewish community before the war. He took their advice, made the short trip, and found the synagogue without much trouble. Services for the New Year had already begun, but he no sooner heard the familiar chanting of the minister than—"Oh! it made me feel as though I were at home among friends once more." They were not exactly friends, of course: "All the Yehudin in Norfolk are embittered against the northern soldiers. I had several little arguments with some of them and find most of them pretty reasonable excepting the young *ladies*, *they* can outargue the smartest statesman in the world according to their own way." But, despite the bitterness, they all treated him with courtesy, and he mentioned that the Nathan Baums, the Barney Kaytons, and the Samuel Franks had been particularly friendly to him. But those young ladies![109]

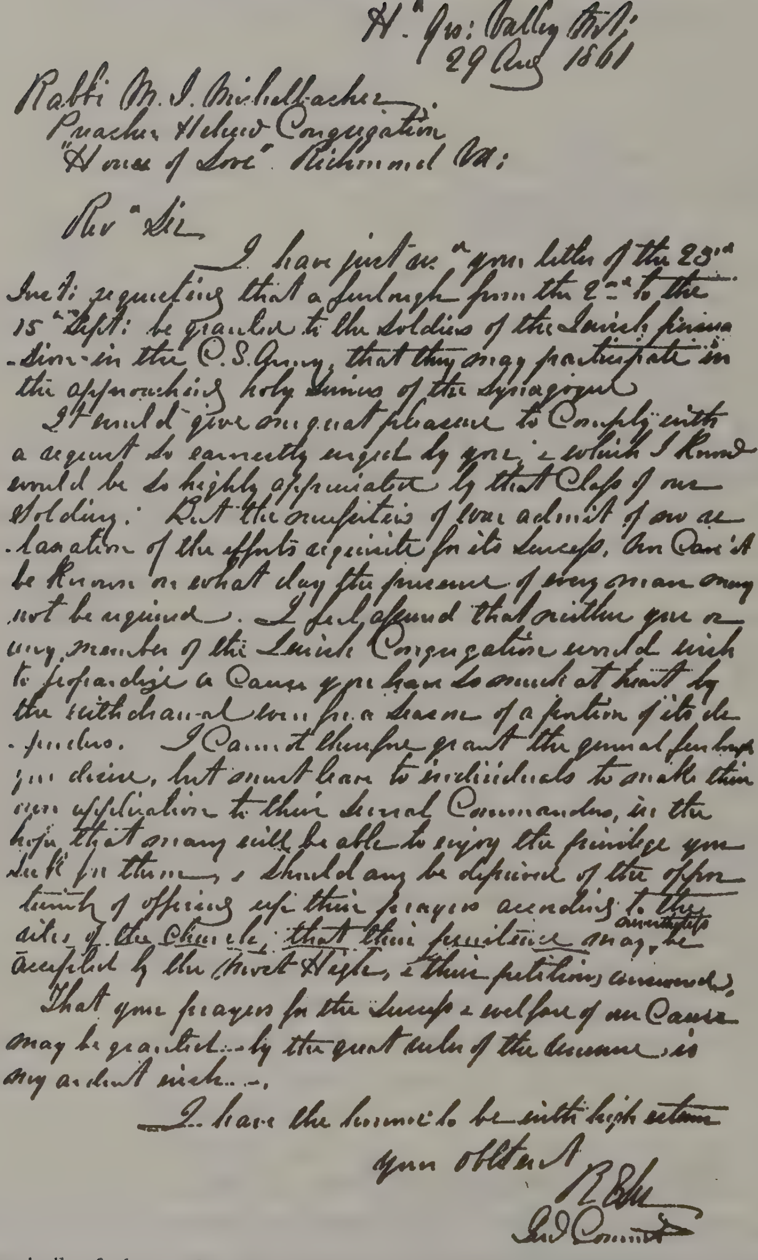
Another Union soldier, Myer Levy of Philadelphia, had an even more humorous experience. Around Passover time, one year, he was strolling through the streets of a Virginia town captured by the Federals, and noticed a little boy sitting on the steps of a house, eating *Matza*. When he asked the boy for a piece, the child fled indoors, shouting at the top of his lungs, "Mother! There's a 'damnyankee' Jew outside!" The boy's mother came out immediately and invited him to return for a Passover dinner that night. One presumes that the family's heir became friendlier at dinner time.[110]

It was close to the New Year when Henry Frank and Isaac Lowenberg, two soldiers with the commissary department of the invading Union army, happened to drop into John Mayer's store in Vicksburg, Miss. They identified themselves as Jews and inquired about religious services. They had come to the right man. Mayer was the president of the small Vicksburg congregation, Anshe Chesed, which was not then large enough to afford its own synagogue building or to hold regular services. But *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* were holidays which the congregation would not neglect to celebrate; so Mayer invited Frank and Lowenberg to attend services with the local folk on the second floor of the engine house on North Union Street. The boys came to the Mayer home frequently thereafter and friendship ripened into something more. By the end of the war Isaac Lowenberg had convinced Mayer's daughter, Ophelia, to marry him despite her strong prejudices against the Yankee *Yehudim*.[111]

The Rev. Michelbacher was not content with sending his prayer to the Confederate Jewish soldiers; in anticipation of the Passover Festival and the High Holy Days, year after year, he asked the commanding generals to grant furloughs to Jewish men in the Virginia area in order to enable them to attend services in Richmond. Generals Lee and Beauregard answered, reluctantly, that military movements were always imminent, and that a whole class of soldiers could not therefore be spared from duty at one time.[112] General Lee's first letter is typical of the others:

> Hd Qrs: Valley Mt:
> 29 Aug 1861
>
> Rabbi M. J. Michelbacher,
> Preacher Hebrew Congregation,
> "House of Love" Richmond, Va:
> Revd Sir
>
> I have just re[ceive]d your letter of the 23d inst: requesting that a furlough from the 2nd to the 15th Sept. be granted to the soldiers of the Jewish persuasion in the C.S. Army, that they may participate in the approaching holy services of the Synagogue.
>
> It would give me great pleasure to comply with a request so earnestly urged by you, & which I know would be so highly appreciated by that class of our soldiers. But the necessities of war admit of no relaxation of the efforts requisite for its success, nor can it be known on what day the presence of every man may be required. I feel assured that neither you or any member of the Jewish congregation would wish to jeopardize a cause you have so much at heart by the withdrawal even for a season of a portion of its defenders. I cannot therefore grant the general furlough you desire, but must leave to individuals to make their own applications to their Several Commanders, in the hope that many will be able to enjoy the privilege you seek for them. Should any be deprived of the opportunity of offering up their prayers according to the rites of their Church [I trust] their penitence may nevertheless be accepted by the Most High, & their petitions answered.
>
> That your prayers for the success & welfare of our Cause may be granted by the Great Ruler of the universe is my ardent wish.
>
> I have the honor to be, with high esteem,
>
> Your obt' Servt.
> R. E. LEE,
> Gen'l Commd.

Jewish men attached to units in the Baltimore area were more fortunate than their enemies down in Virginia. Rabbi Szold requested furloughs for them from General Tyler and his request was granted. According to a report in *The Israelite*, "all Hebrew soldiers in [the] department . . .



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That your prayers for the success & welfare of our cause may be granted by the great ruler of the universe is my ardent wish.

I have the honour to be with high esteem
your obdt servt
R E Lee
Genl Comdg

Facsimile of a letter of General Robert E. Lee to the Rev. Michelbacher of Richmond.

received furloughs for the holidays." The men were taken home for festive dinners on *Rosh Hashanah* and after the *Yom Kippur* fast by members of the various Baltimore congregations.[113]

Undoubtedly, however, many soldiers both North and South were unlucky enough to be on duty or in battle on the High Holy Days. One pious young man was on the line of battle near Harper's Ferry on *Yom Kippur* of '61. Fight he must, but he did not have to violate the commandment to fast from sundown to sundown; and so he observed the Holy Day by fasting while fighting; and when the enemy retreated in the late afternoon, he betook himself to the woods, where he remained reading his prayers until the sunset signalized the end of the Day of Atonement.[114]

Holiday or no holiday, contacts between Jewish soldiers and civilians were eagerly sought after. When Dr. D. Mayer, Assistant Surgeon of the 5th Virginia Regiment, found himself in Cincinnati for a few days, he and his companions took advantage of the opportunity to pay calls on the local rabbis. Both Isaac M. Wise and Max Lilienthal showed them the finest hospitality, and Lilienthal urged the military surgeon to write him if the sick and wounded men in his regiment should be in need of the little comforts and luxuries which make hospitalization bearable. The rabbi promised that he would do his utmost to collect a shipment of such articles.[115]

Dr. Mayer's men were well off in comparison with the Jewish wounded who were sent to the Baptist College Hospital in Washington. One of the physicians at that hospital was a proselyte to Christianity who devoted himself to conversionist activities among the Jewish men placed under his care. It was a continual source of annoyance to be pestered with proselytizing books and pamphlets and exhortations, while one was trying to recover from painful wounds sustained at the Battle of Manassas. So wrote the brother of a soldier hospitalized there, in a letter of complaint to *The Israelite*.[116]

One soldier thought it better for Jews, wounded or well, to be circumspect about mentioning their religious background, because

> it would at once involve them in an intricate controversial disquisition with the Christian Chaplains, for which they do not always feel themselves qualified, and which, of course, can, under no circumstances, afford them any thing but annoyance.[117]

Isaac Leeser, who did volunteer chaplaincy work in the military hopitals in Philadelphia, had something to say on this same problem.

> To some [soldiers] [he said] we were welcome, while others would scarcely confess their Jewish origin. Some even refused prayer-books when tendered to them, and all had to partake of the hospital foods, and only on holy days we could get permits for them to leave, when one or more again refused to come out. There was, on the whole, a hesitancy to confess our religion, in fear of taint or shame, false indeed, yet powerful enough to act as a check on them.[118]

Christian chaplains were not all of the evangelical variety, of course. Many Jewish soldiers who were unable to attend Jewish worship felt that it was better to attend Christian services than none at all, if the particular chaplain was not disposed to utilize the opportunity to attempt to proselytize. Henry Beck, who served with Rode's division of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, attended Christian services practically every week, according to Sunday entries in his diary.[119] Solomon Emanuel of Dalton, Ga., wrote to his mother from the field that his chaplain had "preached a very interesting sermon suitable to the times and the occasion" on the Confederate Fast Day, April 8, 1864. He himself fasted for twenty-four hours, he wrote, "and felt but little inconvenience from the effects."[120]

Writing from Corinth, Miss., a Union soldier commented on the general attitude towards his regimental chaplain. Most of the men were thoroughly dissatisfied with his sermons because they felt he "preached too much nigger." But from a Jewish viewpoint, there was no complaint whatever: "Upon religious questions . . . our chaplain is quite circumspect, taking every care to avoid wounding the feelings of those who are not of the same creed as himself."[121]

August Bondi had nothing to say about the religious aspects of his chaplain's service, but he minced no words in regard to his character. Bondi wrote in his diary that Chaplain Fisher was "the most useless person in the regiment"—"as useless as a wagon's fifth wheel"—so lazy that he "would not attend even to the regimental mail." It was unfortunate that Bondi should have been assigned to a regiment which contained only two other Jews—and that both of them denied their background. After the death of one, a Hungarian named Marcus Wittenberg, Bondi found among his remains some letters from his parents, in Yiddish, reminding him of the dates of the Jewish holidays. It was unfortunate that he had no Jewish companionship because he was such a devout and loyal Jew. A veteran of the bloody Kansas battles with John Brown's men in '55 and '56, Bondi insisted on enlisting in '61 because "as a Jehudi I had a duty to perform, to defend the institutions which gave equal rights to all beliefs." He felt keenly, all during the war, until his discharge for disability in late '64, his separation from Jewish activities and synagogue services. The closest he came to satisfying his intense Jewish loyalties was eating a *Rosh Hashanah* dinner with a Jewish family in Pine Bluff, Ark.[122]

Undoubtedly there were hundreds and hundreds of Jewish men and officers in the Union and Confederate armies who, like Bondi's comrades, thought they would avoid trouble by attempting to hide their background, or whose religious interests were so tenuous that they were undisturbed by the absence of formal and organized Jewish activities in the camps.[123] Like their non-Jewish fellow-soldiers, they were much more concerned about battles and skirmishes, military gossip and gripes, entertainment and comforts, safety and health, than they were about Jewish Holy Days and the requirements of the faith. But there was always the "saving remnant" who overcame the obstacles in the way of religious observance and, in the midst of danger and death, not only retained their faith in God, but practiced that faith in ritual and prayer—despite the absence of a spiritual guide.

5

On the Home Front

I

The Civil War brought immeasurable suffering to the people of America. Few had bethought themselves in April 1861 of battlefields strewn with wounded and dead soldiers, of military and civilian hospitals too small to contain the injured and diseased, of the women who would be widowed, the children orphaned, and the elderly folk whose source of sustenance would be taken away. Those who hastened the "irrepressible conflict" had not paused to consider the pall of tragedy which would hang heavy over millions upon millions of homes in the far stretches of both sections of the sundered nation.

But when death and disease, pain and want, took up a four year abode in America, the nation's great humanitarian heart responded with devout warmth. The stronger the determination of Federals and Confederates to achieve their declared objectives, the more generous was the outpouring of help and assistance to the men who carried the fight to the field, and to their families who remained at home. Few military chapters of the Civil War story can equal in glory and honor the heart-warming narrative of the civilian relief activities which healed the hurts of war, and the spontaneous deeds of mercy performed by millions of individuals in hospitals and in sorrowful homes. From Florida to Maine and from Chicago to New Orleans, church societies and non-sectarian groups alike raised funds for relief measures, collected and produced hospital supplies, distributed clothing, food, and cash to destitute soldiers' families and carried out the hundreds of other tasks for the well-being and consolation of war sufferers which go unnoticed in the military and political histories. Unpaid volunteers worked long and tedious hours to guide these activities and fulfill essential functions. Only a few, notably those determined women who imposed their conception of cursing upon reluctant government officials, received any acclaim, but all achieved that high sense of satisfaction which comes to those who give of themselves to relieve pain.

Certain Northern leaders who early in the war apprehended the immense proportions of the conflict were responsible for a unique and remarkable development in American society: the organization of relief activities on a national scale. The United States Sanitary Commission coordinated and supervised the raising of funds and the distribution of supplies, as an unofficial adjunct to governmental agencies. It raised millions of dollars in mammoth fairs and festivals in the metropolitan areas, conducted under local auspices, but with the advantages of national publicity and universal approval. Supplementing the inevitably limited work of the military medical services in the hospitals and on the battlefields, the Commission distributed fifteen million dollars worth of bedding, sanitation supplies, medicines, food, and clothing. Equally important were the personal ministrations of the Commission's workers who fulfilled the office of nurse in the hospital and corpsman in the field. Red Cross was a new name when its charter was granted by Congress in 1882, but in terms of objectives, scope, and activities, it had been anticipated by the meritorious role played in the Civil War by the United States Sanitary Commission.[1]

As individual American citizens, many Jews participated in these manifold relief activities. August Belmont, for instance, opened his art collections to the public eye and swelled the coffers of the Sanitary Commission with the proceeds from admission fees.[2] Three Jewish firms in San Francisco contributed $1,000 each to the Commission's California campaign.[3] C. W. Starbuck, President of the Cincinnati Relief Union, collected $2,000 from various Jews in a few hours one June day in 1862, even though he had been reluctant to approach them because the local Jewish charitable groups had just completed their own drive for funds. In his report to the Relief Union, Starbuck made particular reference to his "day among the Israelites," as he called it, and said that the Jews had shown "a manliness and sympathy . . . for the objects of the Relief Union that was highly gratifying to my feelings."[4] Nathan Grossmayer of Washington, D.C., contributed ideas as well as money for relief purposes; he was the first to suggest the establishment of a national veterans' hospital and home. In a letter to Lincoln on November 16, 1864, he called the President's attention to the provisions for disabled veterans made by various European governments and urged that the United States could do no less. Lincoln was assassinated before he could carry out the suggestion, but Grossmayer wrote Andrew Johnson about the idea, enclosed $1,000 as his contribution, and suggested that the home be designated a memorial to Lincoln. Congress adopted the proposal in 1866.[5] M. C. Mordecai of Charleston, S.C., was one of the most generous contributors to the "Free Market of Charleston," which was organized for the support of the families of soldiers, and which, in December 1862, maintained over six hundred families at a monthly expense of $6,000.[6]

Jewish women responded as devotedly as did their neighbors to the spoken and unspoken needs of the time. In Columbus, Ga., fourteen-year-old Isabel Adeline Moses became the youngest member of the Soldiers Aid Society and spent long hours in the Columbus hospital nursing the wounded. When her friends, Dr. and Mrs. F. O. Ticknor, took a dying Tennessee soldier into their home, young Isabel helped teach him to read and write, hoping he would forget his pain in the concentration of study.[7] Mrs. Rosanna Osterman of Galveston, Texas, contributed large stores of food to the overcrowded hospital in that city and spent an incredible number of hours at the bedsides of convalescing soldiers. When she died, in 1866, the *Galveston News* paid high tribute to her generosity and prophesied that she would never pass from the memory of those soldiers whose suffering she had eased.[8] The Hausman family of Montgomery, Ala., earned a similar encomium for its attentions to the wounded.[9] The wife of a Confederate General remarked, in her diary, on the devotion with which the Jewish ladies of Columbia, S.C., tended wounded men in the military hospitals.[10] In her reminiscences of the Civil War, Mrs. Philip Phillips wrote many detailed pages about her imprisonment for outspoken support of the Confederacy, and only a few about her knitting and sewing and visits to the hospitals—but those words deserve to be recorded as typical of the feelings of the women who participated in the work of mercy:

> We passed our days in doing what we considered to be our duty—giving our all to the poor soldiers—making their garments—and looking to

> the well being of their poor families—making lint, bandages and as far as in our limited power doing everything to encourage the cause we thought ourselves right in espousing . . . We at last found a home [in La Grange]—devoting our lives and fortunes to the support and clothing of the poor soldiers—nursing the wounded and dying—alleviating in every way the desolation and misery which Civil War surely brings . . .[11]

II

Jewish welfare societies, social organizations, and synagogues, as well as individuals, took an active role in the war relief and patriotic activities. Wherever there were Jewish women's societies, in New York, Philadelphia, Rochester, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Charlotte, Mobile[12]—to name only a few—they met regularly in synagogue vestry rooms and private homes, devoting a major portion of their time to the preparation of bandages and lint, the collection of funds for the relief of soldiers' families, the organization of booths and tables at Sanitary Fairs, and other such activities. Many new women's groups were organized specifically to meet war-time needs.

One of these was the Ladies Hebrew Association for the Relief of Sick and Wounded Soldiers, organized in Philadelphia on May 11, 1863, as the result of an interchange of correspondence between the Rev. Sabato Morais of Mikveh Israel Congregation and Mrs. Mary Rose Smith, head of the women's division of the Sanitary Commission branch in Philadelphia. Mrs. Smith hoped the rabbi would designate some Jewish woman to serve on the executive board of her division; the Rev. Morais hoped for even more.[13] A few days after receiving Mrs. Smith's letter, he preached in his synagogue on the necessity of organizing a woman's war relief society:

> While *we* dwell here securely, in the fruition of God's bounty, thousands of our fellow beings are exposed to dangers and privations. They are the defenders of our Union. But, even on the battlefield, where many lie wounded, and on their couch of sickness, charity—the handmaid of religion—can soften their pangs. More I need not say, in order to strike a sympathetic chord in Jewish hearts. But, as many a generous gift has been wasted, for want of a systematic distribution, I would urge the ladies of my persuasion to join hands with their sisters of a different creed in the discharge of a philanthropic task . . .[14]

The ladies of the congregation met and elected Mrs. Henry M. Cohen as their delegate, then proceeded to organize themselves as a permanent body, with Miss Celia Myers as their presiding officer. Within a month they had obtained two hundred and fifty persons as contributing members—the fee was fifty cents a year. Then they set their hands to their task which, according to the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, was to provide "sick and wounded soldiers, irrespective to religious creed . . . with delicacies and clothing while they lie in the army hospitals."[15] Some idea of their enthusiastic activities may be gathered from the report which Rebecca Moss, their secretary, read at the second annual meeting, on May 8, 1865.[16] Ten crates of supplies, said Miss Moss, had been sent to the Sanitary Commission during the year, and their total contents were as follows:

82 flannel shirts
38 canton flannel shirts
11 white cotton shirts
133 colored cotton shirts
11 old cotton shirts
7 cotton drawers
222 towels
216 pocket handkerchiefs
80 pillow cases
2 feather pillows
63 pairs of woolen socks
13 pairs of slippers
7 pantaloons
2 coats
2 arm slings
24 knitted ear warmers
16 knitted gloves and cuffs
1 chintz coverlet
12 cakes of fancy soap
58 sponges
144 lbs. of smoking tobacco
23 bundles of lint and linen
23 jars of pickles
7 cans of tomatoes
2 lbs. black tea
30 lbs. corn starch
24 lbs. farina
13 lbs. rice flour
6 lbs. cocoa
6 lbs. wheaten grits
16 lbs. barley and oat meal
1 lb. biscuits
1 peck onions
6 reams of note and letter paper
600 envelopes
48 pencils
1 gross steel pens
24 pen holders

and innumerable needle sets, magazines and books! Immediately after the capture of Savannah, an additional shipment was collected and sent, together with $63 in cash, to the 20th Army Corps Hospital. No wonder that Mrs. Cohen, the Society's delegate to the Sanitary Commission, wrote

General Ben Butler an indignant letter in 1864 when he cast public aspersion on the patriotism of Jews![17]

In Pittsburgh, a similar Hebrew Ladies' Soldiers' Aid Society was organized and meetings were held every Thursday during the war to sew garments, wrap bandages, and pack food cartons. On December 9, 1863, the Society held a festive evening for the benefit of the Sanitary Commission. The tables, according to a newspaper report, "literally groaned beneath the weight of luxuries."[18] A band was hired to play for those who wanted to dance, and there were songs by versatile German vocalists for those who preferred to sit. The evening also groaned with speeches by the local rabbis, the mayor, and other dignitaries. Toasts to the nation, to womanhood, and to the President, completed the official program. Professor Josiah Cohen, who had already delivered one speech in praise of Jewish charitableness and generosity, offered this toast:

> The American woman—May the cause which gave rise to the Sanitary Committee be lost amid the more congenial strains of peace; but may the spirit of philanthropy which actuates them, descend to the Daughters of America to unknown generations.[19]

Jacob Affelder was called upon to offer the toast to the Chief Magistrate:

> Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States—The Noble Pilot, called by the voice of the people to the position of danger and responsibility, when traitors' hands had directed the Ship of State toward the breakers of national destruction. Nobly has he buffeted the mad waves of Disunion, until now, with the assistance of Providence and our gallant Army and Navy, he has brought us within sight of our longed for peace. His name will ever be synonymous with Patriotism, Honesty, and Justice.[20]

$700 was cleared from admission fees and the sale of refreshments, and Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, who happened to be in Pittsburgh, said it was altogether "one of the most liberal and pleasant entertainments which it had been our good fortune to attend."[21]

Good fellowship was frequently a part of philanthropic activities. The cause was significant—but fun could not be repressed. After a meeting of Pacific Lodge of B'nai B'rith in San Francisco one night, some fifteen members detoured to Salburg and Levy's "Eureka Saloon" for some liquid refreshments. Spirits induced good spirits and before long one of those present rose to his feet and began auctioning off a few stray weeds (dignified by the title "A Sanitary Bouquet") for the benefit of the Sanitary Commission. Fifty-one dollars was raised at the sale, and the purchaser who parted with $25 for the privilege of taking the weeds home, advertised the next day that he would be happy to sell them again for the same cause.[22]

Nine young Philadelphia ladies organized a club they named "Alert!" for the purpose of preparing embroidery and other needle work for eventual sale at a Sanitary Fair. But the eyes become tired and the fingers clumsy after three hours of work, so they worked only from 7 to 10 in the evening. By coincidence their beaux would appear at the latter hour and there was dancing and merrymaking until midnight. One young gentleman was so loyal an attendant that he began referring to himself as the club's secretary, and even wrote to Germany and asked his cousin there to send on a few examples of her artistry to add to the club's stock of merchandise.[23]

Every possible occasion was utilized to raise funds for relief purposes. At the Purim Balls which were held in many cities to celebrate the Feast of Esther, refreshments were frequently sold for the benefit of the Sanitary Commission.[24] Appeals were made from the pulpit on Passover, Shavuot, and other holidays: $200 was collected for the Volunteer Relief Fund of New York at Anshi Chesed Synagogue on Shavuot of 1861;[25] and Temple Emanu-El of the same city raised $500 for the benefit of wounded soldiers on the first day of Passover, 1862.[26] Shearith Israel Congregation of New York raised what was probably the largest sum collected by any congregation, $2,500, for the Sanitary Commission on Purim, 1864.[27] One of Rabbi David Einhorn's patriotic sermons was printed and sold, with the profits ear-marked for the Sanitary Commission.[28] No estimate can be made of the amount of contributions by Jewish groups and organizations to the Sanitary Commission and other societies because no systematic record was kept, but all indications point to the conclusion that the organized American Jewish community strove to the utmost to fulfill its duty in this time of need.[29]

The great Sanitary Fairs offered an unequaled opportunity for Jewish participation on a large scale. In Cincinnati, four stands were maintained by the Jewish community: one each by the Allemania Club, the Phoenix, a group calling themselves the "Independent Ladies," and the Broadway

Synagogue. Among the four, a total of $5,402.58 was raised, but an observer guessed that, all in all, Jews had contributed about one third of the entire sum collected at the Fair.[30] At the Washington, D.C., Fair, in 1864, the Washington Hebrew Congregation raised $756.95—a total which was surpassed by only one other group, the Treasury Department![31] Similar records were achieved by Jewish organizations which managed booths at Sanitary Fairs in Philadelphia[32] and Pittsburgh.[33]

The 1864 Sanitary Fair in New York was the largest held anywhere in the country; it raised over a million dollars. Representative Jewish citizens were named to various committees in connection with the Fair, undoubtedly to assure the cooperation of all the Jewish organizations. Mrs. Benjamin Nathan and Moses Lazrus were appointed to the Executive Committee, and Lewis May and Moses Schloss were members of the General Committee. There were also Jewish representatives on each of the committees charged with the solicitation of particular trade and business groups. May and Schloss wrote a circular which was addressed to the Jews of New York requesting that contributions to the Fair be sent through them, so that they could "hand over to the Treasurer of the Commission such a contribution from our people as will do honor to our faith and race."[34] Unfortunately, Messrs. May and Schloss published no record of the response, and we have no way of knowing how much the Jews of New York contributed. The periodicals inform us that the congregations were active in soliciting their members,[35] however, and that several benefits for the Fair were held by the young men's organizations. The irrepressible R. J. de Cordova delivered at least three readings and lectures, the proceeds of which went to the Commission,[36] and even Dr. Ridskopf's private school pupils (practically all of whom were Jewish) gave a performance of literary declamations and musical renditions at Niblo's Saloon to aid the Fair.[37]

Jewish institutions and periodicals[38] gave unstinting support to all worthy relief activities, but there was a division of opinion concerning the practice of Jewish *group* participation. The Jewish community of Rochester, N.Y., for instance, rebelled against what it considered to be segregation when Mrs. W. Barron Williams, President of the Ladies' Hospital Association, asked the women of Congregation Brith Kodesh to take part in a benefit Bazaar as a group. S. Stettheimer, President of the Congregation, explained his members' objections in a letter to Mrs. Williams: the Jews have no nationality other than American—"the only national character in which they wish to appear would be under the Star Spangled Banner, the glorious flag of the Union—the banner of civil and *religious* liberty." They would therefore have to decline the invitation as a group, but were offering their services individually. In order to preclude any suspicion that they were unwilling to support the Bazaar financially, Mr. Stettheimer enclosed a check for $400 in the name of the Jewish women of Rochester, with the hope that this contribution might "help to relieve the sufferings of our wounded patriotic soldiers, and soon return them to their brave comrades in the field, to give the final blow to that criminal attempt to destroy this Union, in the maintenance of which none are more interested than our Jewish fellow-citizens."[39]

Although it is possible that particular local conditions in Rochester gave rise to these objections, similar sentiments were voiced by two periodicals in New York at the time of the Sanitary Fair in that city. *The Jewish Record* believed that national relief campaigns offered no excuse for "Ghettoes" or "Judenstrassen." Why should "pretty Jewesses" be separated from other women? Were stands set apart for "pretty Catholics," "demure Quakeresses," or "smiling Presbyterians?" Let the Jewish men and women of New York participate as "*citizens* whose sympathies are with the brave men who are fearlessly doing their duty in the dark hour of peril," and not as Jews segregated from their neighbors. The *Record* approved of the Fair wholeheartedly, but not of the practice of labeling Jewish participation as Jewish.[40]

The *Jewish Messenger's* editors were suspicious of the circular issued by Messrs. May and Schloss.

> Have the several denominations of New York citizens taken measures to be represented by special departments, or are the Israelites to be the only body thus distinguished? . . . We have not noticed in the religious press a disposition to have space set apart in the Fair for denominational "stands" . . . We are disposed to regard as inopportune all attempts to establish a Jewish department while there is no similar arrangement designed, with respect to other religious denominations.

The *Messenger* hoped, however, that the synagogues would be successful in their effort to raise large sums to defray the expenses of the Fair, since churches of many other denominations were engaged in raising funds for this purpose.[41]

These were the only comments made in this connection, however, and neither the *Messenger* nor the *Record* pressed the issue. Perhaps it was better, after all, as Isaac M. Wise felt, that there should be an opportunity for Jews to demonstrate their patriotism, so as to counteract the accusations made against them. If every Jewish criminal brought censure to Jewry, Jewish philanthropists ought also to be identified with their people.[42]

III

By far the most noteworthy non-sectarian relief effort in which Jews participated was the voluntary conversion of several wards of the Jews' Hospital of New York to military purposes. Founded in January 1852, by Sampson Simson, the Rev. S. M. Isaacs, and seven other public-spirited gentlemen, this institution was of first importance in the development of New York Jewry's social service system. The tide of Central European Jewish immigration had reached its peak; incessant appeals were made by the destitute to synagogues and charitable organizations for a hospital in which Jewish practices would be observed and respected, and in which Jews would not be subjected to the conversionist tactics of Christian clergymen. Three years of fund-raising, and a legacy in 1854 from the will of the renowned New Orleans philanthropist, Judah Touro, were required before the Society was able to erect its Hospital on a lot on 28th Street between 7th and 8th Avenues. Many more years were to pass before the Hospital was on a firm financial footing, but now the largest Jewish community in America had its own Hospital, as modern as any other in the country, with a consultative staff of the ablest Jewish and non-Jewish physicians in that city.[43]

Conscious of the acute shortage of hospitals and medical personnel, the Board of Directors of the Hospital lost no time in offering the use of its facilities to the government. On April 20, 1861, a resolution was passed extending this offer in official manner, and forwarded to the governor.[44] Military processes moved at snail's pace, however, and more than a year had passed before Dr. Satterlee, the Army Surgeon in charge of medical operations in the New York area, notified that Board that he was about to assign fifty soldiers for treatment at Jews' Hospital.[45] Forty-eight new beds were ordered immediately, doubling the capacity of the wards, and another twenty-one were purchased four months later. Exact statistics of the number of wounded soldiers cared for in the Hospital throughout the war are not available, but incomplete figures show that military patients outnumbered civilian during many months in late 1862, early 1863, and late 1864.[46] For a six month period in 1862, 117 soldiers were given treatment—no small record for an institution whose original capacity had been limited to forty-eight patients![47]

The Board of Directors had volunteered to provide complete care for these wounded soldiers: beds, medical care, medical supplies, food, and entertainment, and all New York Jewry shared in the fulfillment of this promise. Even the Reform Jews, who had been excluded from membership on the Board of Directors, were now invited to participate: Lewis May and L. M. Morrison were elected to the Board, and Temple Emanu-El contributed a sizable sum for the expenses entailed in the new project.[48] Gifts poured into the Hospital's offices and kitchens: one hundred and thirty-six individuals and ten organizations sent donations of cash and merchandise: bandages and other medical supplies, all manner of clothing, bedding, mattresses, wine, beer, chickens, canned food, ice-cream, eggs, fresh fruit, books.[49] The patients were rarely without visitors: young ladies of the community sat at their bedsides and read to them;[50] the rabbis made regular visitations, and Christian clergymen were invited to pray and converse with non-Jewish patients; wealthy women called for ambulatory cases in their carriages and took them riding through Central Park.[51] A Saturday evening lecture series was organized, with entertainment and patriotic talks by prominent citizens and military officials.[52] No need which the men could possibly have had was overlooked; even new uniforms were presented to them when they were about to return to duty. *The New York Times* commented that the uniforms sewed by the ladies of the community were "far better made than some specimens turned off from the contractors' shelves."[53] No wonder that, as the Rev. Isaacs reported, "the patients . . . express themselves more than gratified with their treatment."[54] There were probably very few hospitals in the country where so much attention was lavished upon so few soldiers.

To be sure, there were motivations for this outpouring of attention beyond the desire to make the patients happy. Only the smallest proportion of the soldiers, one or two out of fifty or more, were Jewish. This was an opportunity to prove to other Americans that Jews were patriotic, generous, and charitable.[55] It was probably also a reflection of New York Jewry's frustrated eagerness to attain full social equality. But whatever the psychological motivations, the war-time service of the six year old Jews' Hospital offered an eloquent index to its value and efficiency.

This experience also had a far-reaching effect on the future of the Hospital. Before the war, the only non-Jewish cases admitted were accident cases; non-emergency cases were directed elsewhere. Now the sectarian policy was permanently shelved. To symbolize this new trend, the name of the institution was changed in 1866 to Mount Sinai Hospital, albeit over the opposition of some who felt that a hospital intended primarily for Jews was still a desideratum.

IV

The support of impoverished families of soldiers away with the army had to be borne by established Jewish communal charitable organizations. Never before had they faced so severe a test. In Baltimore, Chicago, Cincinnati, New York, the relief associations and benevolent societies suddenly found themselves called upon for three and four times the amount of money, food, clothing, and fuel which they had distributed the year before the war.[56]

Typical of the war-time reports of charitable organizations were those of Rebecca Gratz, the acknowledged leader of Jewish women's activities in Philadelphia, and Secretary of the Philadelphia Female Hebrew Benevolent Society. In 1861 she called the Society's attention to the number of "husbands and fathers who have been obliged to seek occupation at a distance, or enlist as soldiers in the service of the country, leaving helpless families unprovided for the coming winter, and wholly dependent on the benevolence of their fellow citizens."[57] In 1862 she cited several heart-rending cases which had been referred to the society: one the mother of a wounded soldier who was literally starving to death, and was kept alive only by the desire to see her son again; the other a soldier's wife who died after the Society obtained admission for her to the Pennsylvania Hospital, leaving behind a young child. "Your committee," said Miss Gratz, "was there, attended to the last offices of humanity, and took charge of the little orphan, now placed in the Jewish Foster Home."[58] These acts of mercy must have been repeated many times all over the country.

Emergency meetings of charitable associations were a continuing feature of the war-time Jewish calendar. When funds were exhausted, there was no other way to replenish them. The Hebrew Relief Association of

Cincinnati, for instance, the only source of support for eight orphans and seventeen widows, found itself unable to meet its commitments in October 1862. A special meeting was summoned, eloquent appeals were made by the rabbis, and a large number of subscriptions were pledged to permit a continuation of the Association's activities.[59] A similar meeting of the Hebrew Relief Association in Philadelphia had been called a year before. The president lost no time in getting to the point; the treasury, he said, had been completely exhausted, and the organization's work would have to cease until further funds were pledged. Over $3,300 had been spent in a few months, and much more would be needed to finish the year. There was an incalculable need, he admitted, but "charity," he said, "is most needed, when suffering is general."[60]

The Jews of Washington, D.C., were utterly unable to support their charges—the families of local men who had enlisted in military companies before the war, and were called to service as soon as hostilities broke out. One of their number wrote an open letter to *The Jewish Messenger*, asking the Jews of New York for assistance:

> . . . The danger to our city was too imminent to be weighed in a scale with mere dollars and cents for the balance, and hence, with pride be it said, they at least were not influenced by any sordid motive. Unlike you in New York, we have no fund to support the families of poor soldiers, and the unhappy consequence is, the wives and the children of these poor men are in *abject want* . . . The men, like true soldiers, say, they willingly undergo every and any deprivation, but they feel it hard, indeed, as only our people *can* feel, to see those they love, and who have a right to look to them for their support suffer for the *necessaries of life*.[61]

Because it was one of the smallest and least affluent Jewish communities in the country, Washington Jewry could not meet most of the demands made upon it during the war. Many Jewish men were patients in the Washington hospitals, but except for the period when the Rev. Fischel had acted as their chaplain, no one had the time to visit them. Rabbi Raphall's son-in-law, Captain C. M. Levy, assigned to the Quartermaster Department in the capital, was willing to undertake the task of distributing clothing and food delicacies to them, he told his friends in New York, but they would have to send them; the local Jews could simply not afford to contribute as much as was needed.[62] One task they did perform regularly. They provided a traditional Jewish burial service for every Jewish man who died in a Washington hospital, and for that they earned the heartfelt appreciation of many a bereaved family.[63]

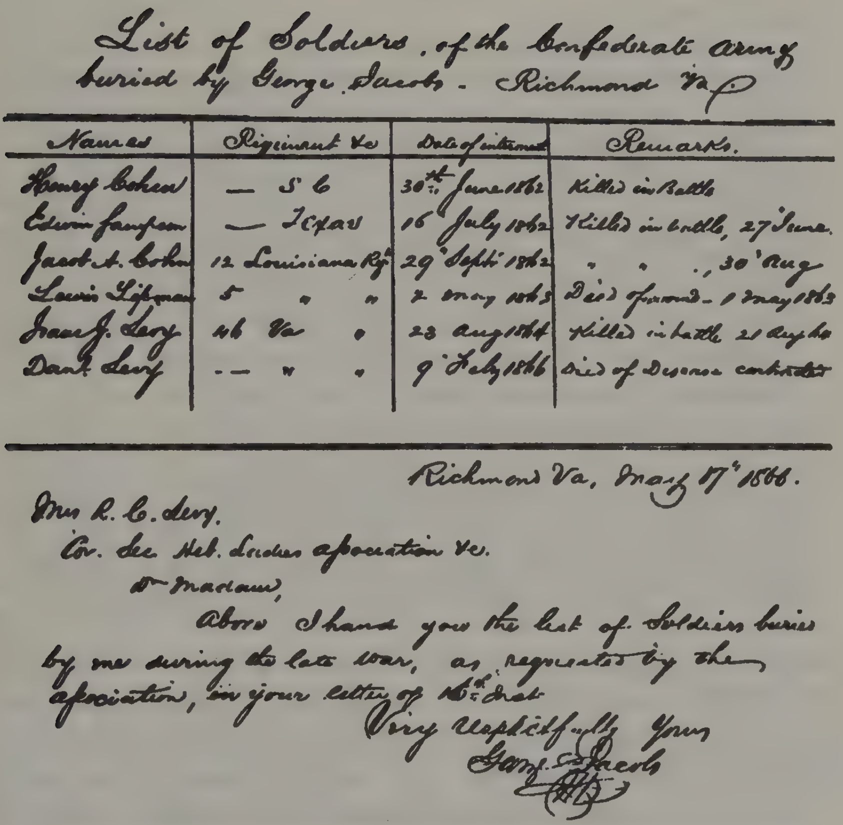
Many other Jewish communities performed this act of faith for Jewish soldiers who died in their midst. There had never been a sufficient number of Jews in Knoxville, Tenn., to warrant the organization of a synagogue; but so many soldiers perished in the area, that the Knoxville Jews founded a Hebrew Benevolent Association in 1864 to maintain a cemetery for the burial of Jewish soldiers.[64] The Jews of Savannah volunteered their services to the German Artillery of Macon, Ga., when Private A. Nordlinger was killed in battle, and for this kindness to "their deceased friend and comrade in arms" the members of the Artillery passed a resolution of thanks which was published in the Savannah papers.[65] In Cincinnati,[66] Philadelphia,[67] and other cities, lots in Jewish cemeteries were set aside for the interment of Jewish soldiers. Sometimes, when the authorities had Jewish men buried in military cemeteries, with Christian rites, rabbis and communal leaders would secure permission to have the bodies disinterred and then would perform the burial services according to the Jewish ritual.[68]

Twenty-two year old Pvt. George Kuhn of the 118th Pennsylvania Volunteers was one of five substitute deserters who were sentenced to be shot on August 29, 1863. Army authorities had ordered the execution in a desperate effort to discourage desertion; thousands of men were taking the easy way out to avoid the hardship and danger of military service. Kuhn insisted on seeing a rabbi before the execution; since there was none in Washington, the army sent for Rabbi Benjamin Szold of Baltimore. After a conversation with the boy, the rabbi was convinced that there were grounds for clemency in the case and he went to the White House to ask the President to grant a pardon. Lincoln had already received petitions on the matter from some New York people and declined to intercede, but he listened patiently to the rabbi and then sent him with a letter of introduction to General Meade. The General, too, listened patiently to his story and to his biblical quotations, but insisted that the execution had to proceed as planned—only such an example, he said, would stem the tide of desertion.[69]

Rabbi Szold had done all he could, but his task was not ended. He returned to Rappahannock Station, where the regiment was located, and told Kuhn of his failure. The boy asked the rabbi to be with him at the execution and to perform the burial ceremony. On Saturday, the 29th, twenty-five thousand people, including the troops of the regiment, were on hand to witness the execution. The regimental chaplain was talking with the three Protestant boys; a Catholic priest from Washington prayed with the one soldier of his faith; and Rabbi Szold stood by the side of George Kuhn. According to the report of an eyewitness, "the condemned man, much agitated, stood up and recited after the Rabbi a portion of Thillim, Yigdal, and Shimas [Psalms and other prayers]. At the close, the minister, much affected, kissed the accused, who convulsively clung to him." At three o'clock the clergymen were asked to conclude their prayers; the five men stood at attention in front of the graves which had already been dug for them; the order to fire was given and thirty-six muskets discharged their bullets. The five bodies were then placed in the graves and the three clergymen side by side, read their burial services. This was probably the first case in American history of an all-denominational funeral.[70]

After the war, monuments in honor of the Jewish war dead were erected in Jewish cemeteries both North and South.[71] The most ambitious project of this nature was that of the Hebrew Ladies' Memorial Association of Richmond, organized in 1866 to care for the Jewish Confederate graves in the Hollywood cemetery on Shockoe Hill. The work of turning the sod was performed by Jewish veterans. A Richmond reporter who went out to the cemetery one day said that "it was a gratifying sight to behold young men of this city, some of them frail of limb, with coats off, wheeling gravel and turf, as the last sad tribute they could pay to departed worth."[72] Because the Richmond Jewish community, impoverished by the war, was unable to defray all the expenses of the plot, a general appeal for financial support was issued by the Association "To the Israelites of the South:"

> While the world yet rings with the narrative of a brave people's struggle for independence, and while the story of the hardships so nobly endured for Liberty's sake is yet a theme but half exhausted, the countless graves of the myriads of heroes who spilled their noble blood in defense of that glorious cause, lie neglected, not alone unmarked by tablet or sculptured urn, but literally vanishing before the relentless finger of Time . . .
>
> In our own cemetery repose, alas! the sacred remains of many a loved brother, son and husband, to whose relatives, in the far sunny South, it



List of Soldiers, of the Confederate army
buried by George Jacobs - Richmond Va.

Names	Regiment &c	Date of interment	Remarks.
Henry Cohen	— S C	30th June 1862	Killed in Battle
Edwin Sampson	— Texas	16 July 1862	Killed in battle, 27 June.
Jacob A. Cohen	12 Louisiana Regt	29 Septr 1862	" " " , 30 Aug
Lewis Lippman	5 " "	7 May 1863	Died of wounds - 1 May 1863
Isaac J. Levy	46 Va "	23 Aug 1864	Killed in battle 21 Aug 64
Danl Levy	-- " "	9 Feby 1866	Died of Disease contracted

Richmond Va, May 17th 1866.

Mrs R. C. Levy.
Cor. Sec. Heb. Ladies Association &c.
Dr Madam,

Above I hand you the list of Soldiers buried by me during the late war, as requested by the Association, in your letter of 16th Inst

Very respectfully Yours
George Jacobs

Facsimile of a list of Confederate soldiers buried by the Rev. George Jacobs.

> would be a solace to know that the pious duty of preserving from decay the last resting place of their lost ones, although denied to them to perform, is yet sacredly fulfilled by the members of the "Hebrew Ladies' Memorial Association."
>
> It is our intention to mound and turf each grave, and to place at the head of each a simple stone, inscribed with the name, State, and time and place of death; subsequently, to rear a monument commemorative of their brave deeds.
>
> In order, however, to successfully accomplish our object, we need some pecuniary assistance. Our scant and somewhat needy community, already so heavily taxed, has done well; but we find "this work is too great for us;" therefore, with a full confidence in the sympathy and co-operation of our people elsewhere, we make this appeal for aid well knowing that as Israelites and true patriots, they will not refuse to assist in rearing a monument which shall serve not only to commemorate the bravery of our dead, but the gratitude and admiration of the living, for those who so nobly perished in what we deemed a just and righteous cause and while as Israelites we mourn the untimely loss of our loved ones, it will be a grateful reflection that they suffered not their country to call in vain.
>
> In time to come, when our grief shall have become, in a measure, silenced, and when the malicious tongue of slander, ever so ready to assail Israel, shall be raised against us, then, with feeling of mournful pride, will we point to this monument and say: "*There* is our reply."[73]

Pride in their people and grief over the fate of the "lost cause" combined to further this loving project. Rebekah Bettelheim, who came to Richmond in 1868, remarked how the entire Jewish population of Richmond would go out to the cemetery every Confederate Memorial Day, setting wreaths on the headstones, and standing before the monument with tears in their eyes.[74]

The Richmond ladies need not have limited their appeal to Southern Jews as though their brethren to the North had lost all feeling for them. Both Isaac Mayer Wise and Isaac Leeser were deeply grieved at the narrow straits of the once wealthy and proud Richmond Jewish community when they visited the city in 1866.[75] But even during the war, Northern Jews had demonstrated their fraternal feelings for Southern Jewry. Rabbi Wise had done all he could in 1863 and 1864 to obtain the release of some

Confederate Jewish prisoners at Fort Delaware who had written to him for assistance. Failing in this effort, he appealed to his readers to send foodstuffs to them, published their names so that Northern relatives, if there were any, might take a special interest in their lot: Henry Mass, Julius Braunschweiger, Max Newgas, A. Waterman, Louis Meyersberg, S. Cohen and H. Brasch.[76] Chicago Jews made more than a few trips to Camp Douglas, to visit with Jewish prisoners of war and to secure their release on parole.[77]

There were numerous other instances in which Jews whose loyalty to the Union was unquestionable tried to be of assistance to Confederate brethren captured by Union forces.[78] But perhaps the outstanding example of Jewish fellowship was the enheartening response of Jewish communities all over the North to appeals for assistance by Southern congregations. In February 1865, Savannah Jewry addressed a request to Isaac Leeser and S. M. Isaacs for Passover *Matzot*. "Many of the inhabitants, formerly wealthy, are now in extremely straitened circumstances; and besides [we] have entirely lost the means of baking for the ensuing Passover." Isaacs pointed out in an editorial that the Jews of Savannah had in previous years been most generous and charitable, and urged that all feelings of hostility be shunned now that the city had fallen to the Union. So prompt was the response from congregations and individuals, who sent their contributions to the *Messenger* and *Occident* offices, that 3,000 pounds of the unleavened bread were shipped from New York, and 2,000 more from Philadelphia.[79] The congregations at Columbia[80] and Charleston, S.C.,[81] both hard hit by the war, also addressed appeals for assistance to congregations and periodicals in the North. In each case they were treated with consideration and affection. *The Jewish Record*, after the surrender of the Southern armies, urged the Jews of New York to form a special benevolent association to meet the crying needs of Southern Jewry.

> This is no time to look back upon petty differences that may have arisen between communities. Nor can any one now allude to political discussions or angry passions, quenched by an all-potent and universal yearning for peace and prosperity. Let all of us join in tendering to our brethren a part of that wealth with which the God of Israel has blessed us. The poorest of all may thus feel that he has practically aided the suffering of his own race, and bound up the wounds of those who are almost his next of kin. Responding to the call made upon us, the Israelites of New York

> should assemble at once and devise means by which to relieve the most pressing wants of our unfortunate Southern brethren . . .[82]

Such an organization was never formed, but for three or four years after the war, ex-Confederate Jews continued to send letters and representatives to the North, seeking financial assistance.[83]

V

The *Record's* proposal of a unified welfare organization to centralize contributions to Southern Jewry at the end of the war was not the first public appeal for a coordination of Jewish relief activities. The earliest battles had no sooner been fought than some Jews were already urging the establishment of a central Jewish Military Hospital in Washington. One of the frequent contributors to the pages of the *Messenger*, writing under the pseudonym "Semi-Occasional," was the first to offer a detailed plan.[84] He had inspected the military hospitals in the national capital and was shocked at the insensitive treatment of wounded men and the unsanitary conditions of the wards. Even if the hospitals were immeasurably improved, he believed, Jewish men who risked their lives for the preservation of the nation's unity should still be nursed in a hospital maintained by their own people, in which the Jewish dietary laws would be observed and a rabbi would minister to their spiritual needs. The cost would not be prohibitive.

He had already consulted Miss Dorothea Dix, who was supervising the organization of hospitals for the War Department. She had not only given her complete approval to the proposal, but had gone to the trouble of preparing detailed directions for the establishment of such a hospital. If the Jewish community would secure the services of competent nurses and physicians, and provide a house which could be converted into a hospital, she would undertake to supply linens, bandages, and clothing. The government, she said, had a plan under consideration whereby military hospitals under private auspices would be permitted to draw upon the Quartermaster for all equipment and rations which were supplied to military hospitals—and if this program were adopted, the cost of maintaining a Jewish Soldiers' Hospital would be very small. But since, for the time being, all such items would have to be obtained from private sources, "Semi-Occasional" presented a complete list of furniture, surgical and medical supplies, clothing, and food which would be required to set such an institution in operation. If the hospital were to be organized, he suggested, the names of all Jewish soldiers should be collected by local congregations and forwarded to a central office, from which circulars would be sent to the men, notifying them of the provision made for their care in case of need. Whatever the defects of his plan, and the writer knew there were many, they could be ironed out as time went on; but "at all events, let a *beginning* be made and if only *one* valuable life be saved, it will amply repay all the trouble and outlay."

The *Messenger's* editors eagerly applauded the scheme:

> We heartily endorse the recommendations of our correspondent, and await, with confidence, the response that they will receive. We shall be happy, likewise, to open a book at our office, for the immediate reception of donations in aid of the object.[85]

The next week, in a long editorial entitled "Our Present Duty," the editors again reviewed the need for the establishment of a Jewish Military Hospital, defended the proposal against those who regarded it as "sectarian and selfish," and saluted Dr. Simon Abrahams and Dr. Levy J. Henry, two New York physicians who had volunteered to serve as house physicians of the hospital at their own expense. Now, said the editorial, nurses and contributions in money were needed. "[We] shall indeed be ashamed of our co-religionists, if six or seven noble hearted Jewesses could not ultimately be found, who would be willing to volunteer their services in attending on the sick and wounded of their people." As to the finances, "probably, before our next number is published, a sufficient amount to establish and maintain the proposed Hospital, will have been subscribed."[86]

But the next week came and went, and the *Messenger* published no list of contributions, only a hopeful note to the effect that, apparently, more time was necessary for the public to accept the reasonableness of the proposal.[87] But those who objected to the idea for its "sectarianism and inexpediency," not to say their own apathy and lack of interest, disappointed all of the *Messenger's* expectations. It was more than a year before the idea was mentioned again.

In September 1862, *The Jewish Record* called for the establishment of a "Jewish Sanitary Commission," in connection with a letter which it had received from a Jewish soldier stationed with Couch's Division:

> Do not forget to send me the "Record" wherever I am to be found, it will no doubt be a welcome visitor to many Jewish soldiers in the army, now almost neglected by the wealthy congregations of your and other cities, who do not even make the least attempt to alleviate the sufferings of their brave co-religionists who are lying in the various U.S. hospitals at the seat of war. It is our fervent prayer, Messrs. Editors, that "The Record" will endeavor to plead our cause in its columns, and forcibly advocate our claims upon those stay-at-home gentlemen who no doubt are always ready to criticize but mighty slow to nurse the wounded and alleviate the sufferings of the dying Jews. Why have we not a committee exclusively Jewish, who will make it their business, like so many other societies are doing, to attend to their wants?[88]

This letter revealed the bitterness of many volunteers who, with or without justification, resented the comfortable life of the men on the home front—but it also revealed the Jewish soldier's yearning for contact with his people, intensified by isolation in a non-Jewish environment. This plea, also, went unanswered.

Several weeks later, "Semi-Occasional" was again championing the soldiers' cause. No grandiose scheme for a hospital this time; he had learned his lesson. All he suggested now was the establishment of a "Jewish Soldiers' Sanitary and Relief Fund," to be administered by the officers of the Jews' Hospital of New York. Its activities, directed by Dr. Fischel or some other rabbi, would include visiting "the sick and wounded Israelites in the hospital, and if necessary, upon the battlefield; supplying them with such necessities and comforts as they may lack; advising and communicating with relatives and friends, and imparting that spiritual comfort which those who may lie ill among strangers know so well how to appreciate." The writer enclosed his own contribution of twenty-five dollars to initiate the drive, and urged that collections be taken up in all the synagogues on the approaching Holy Days. "Semi-Occasional" indicated why he was so interested in the welfare of the wounded soldiers:

> It has been my privilege to pass some time among these co-religionists, both among our own troops and among the rebel prisoners in hospitals, and if my pen enabled me to convey to the reader one tithe of what I have witnessed, I am sure this feeble appeal for assistance [would] be

> responded to with a will and alacrity worthy of the well known instincts of our people and the cause of our common country.[89]

Again the *Messenger* gave its hearty editorial approval to the plan, tracing the history of previous efforts to establish an organization for the benefit of wounded Jewish soldiers. The reasons were as compelling as ever, said the editors; of course the government nursed the men in its hospitals, but what of their spiritual welfare? And there was no intention to impugn the generosity of Jews: "We acknowledge that the Israelites of New York have manifested a commendable liberality in sustaining the Sanitary Commission, in aiding the various recruiting and bounty funds. But something additional is demanded. Besides being Americans, they must not forget that they are Jews." As Jews, they had a special obligation to their brethren. And New York was the leading Jewish community of the country. "If New York does its duty, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore and the other cities . . . will follow its example." Again the *Messenger* volunteered to receive funds for this purpose.[90] Again there was no response.

The New York editors resorted to severe criticism and sarcasm the following year in a desperate attempt to badger the Jewish community into some kind of action. *The Jewish Record* could not contain its indignation when it was informed that only three persons had appeared for a meeting called for the organization of an association for Jewish soldiers' relief. Its editor would not even admit that New York Jews were as charitable as they were said to be. Jewish charitable associations were very numerous, "but is it not very probable that the cause of so many persons belonging to these societies may arise rather from the balls and soirees which they give? . . . [If] it should have been announced that two or three balls would be annually given by the association, instead of three, fifty gentlemen would have gathered together for the *benevolent* purpose."[91]

The *Messenger* wondered if its readers were under the impression that "somewhere on Broadway a handsome *suite* of apartments are fitted up as the headquarters of the 'Central Association for the Relief of Jewish Volunteers,'" that its functions were administered by very able and trustworthy men, for they were never asked to give an accounting of the funds at their disposal, and that they were very modest men, because their names never appeared in print. When would the Jewish community of New York set itself to the task of meeting the needs of the Jewish soldiers?

> Will they arouse themselves to the conviction that a war has been going on nearly two years for the long desired restoration of peace and harmony to our distracted country, and that thousands of Israelites have subjected themselves to the toils, privations and dangers of military life for the glory of assisting in the good work of maintaining the integrity of the national government, and while every other class of citizens has been prompt in ministering to the comforts and religious welfare of the soldier, the American Israelites have done just nothing at all in a cause appealing so strongly to their patriotism and sympathy?[92]

VI

Efforts were made to organize Jewish communities for war service in yet another direction. It was felt in some quarters that Jews should form their own military companies and regiments in order to demonstrate Jewish patriotism, just as various other immigrant groups had banded together for this purpose. A writer who signed himself "Joshua" called for a meeting to raise funds for a New York Jewish regiment in a letter which he wrote to *The Jewish Messenger* in August 1862.[93] No Jew, the writer said, doubted that his brethren were as loyal to the Union as his neighbors, but

> the Israelites of this city have, as a body, done nothing to evince their faith in the justice of our cause, and their desire to perpetuate our beneficent institutions. It is true, many of them have, individually, borne no small share of the common burden; but does it not behoove them collectively to show the country and the world that they appreciate the blessings they have enjoyed in this country? . . . The Israelites of this city can roll up such an amount of money as will give an enormous impulse to volunteering, and will compel the respect and admiration of the community. . . .

The letter was introduced by editorial comment lending full approval to the proposal, but no one appears to have taken action upon it.

The following month, Colonel William Mayer was busy raising a regiment in the Sixth Senatorial District of New York, to be called the "Perkins Rifles." Col. Mayer hoped that enough Jews would enlist to make it predominantly a Jewish regiment. *The Jewish Record* attempted to stimulate enlistment by its readers:

> It only depends now on the Israelites in this city whether this regiment shall be an organization which they may essentially call "their own" or whether Colonel Mayer shall be compelled to seek support of men and means from others but his co-religionists . . . Arise, then, ye men of wealth and power, stir from your comfortable couches, and if you cannot enlist yourself, call a war meeting of Israelites and create a Jewish bounty fund, to promote enlistments in a regiment which you ought to call "your own."[94]

This editorial was the only support which Mayer received from the Jewish community—individuals enlisted, but there was no Jewish war meeting. New Yorkers apparently did not approve of Jewish enclaves within the army.

At the same time, however, the Jewish communities of Syracuse and Chicago were successfully carrying out such a project. A new regiment was being raised in Syracuse and the members of the Society of Concord Congregation volunteered to recruit and equip one company. Three young men of the community offered to serve as its officers: S. Light was appointed Captain, Samuel Bronner, 1st Lieutenant, and W. Harris, 2nd Lieutenant. The campaign was opened with a war meeting at the synagogue on August 24, 1862, under the chairmanship of Edward Manheimer, and continued for a week, with a recruiting office open during the day, and patriotic meetings at the synagogue at night. One evening the rabbi, the Rev. S. Deutsch, gave the main address. It was a rousing, fiery attack on the "accursed sham confederacy . . . that venomous hydra of rebellion." Deutsch appealed to his congregation to demonstrate their love for the Union by meeting the goal; not only would their efforts assist in defeating the enemy, he said, but they would also be a rebuke to the anti-alienism aroused by the Know-Nothing party. At the end of the week, almost three thousand dollars in cash had been contributed to the fund, and enough men had been recruited to organize the first company of the new regiment. Saturday evening, Company A was sworn in by the regimental colonel after it marched down Mulberry Street to the martial strains of a military band, cheered on by the entire Jewish population of Syracuse.[95]

Several weeks previously, the Jews of Chicago had undertaken a campaign to organize and outfit a Jewish company for the new 82nd Illinois Regiment. A mass meeting was held at the Concordia Club on August 13, and resolutions were drafted pledging those in attendance to support the project:

> WHEREAS, The present crisis in the affairs of our nation directly appeals to every citizen enjoying the inestimable blessings of American freedom, to exert himself to his utmost in assisting the government in its effort to maintain the integrity of the Union and the crushing out of the rebellion, which must and shall be done, a number of Israelites of this city, for the first time since their residence here have met together as such, to act upon any public matter whatever, and this time for the purpose of making a united effort in support of a vigorous prosecution of the war. It is hereby
>
> RESOLVED, That as Israelites we disclaim toward each other any and all relations aside from one common religious belief, except as should exist among citizens. In all questions of a political nature the Israelite is untrammelled and free to act for himself, and does exercise his individual judgment and discretion.
>
> RESOLVED, That having contributed individually heretofore, whenever called upon, in support of the war, we are impelled only by the deepest sense of patriotism and a sincere attachment to this land of our choice and love to make an united effort in behalf of our country.
>
> RESOLVED, That we will raise the sum of $10,000, or more, among the Israelites of this city for the purpose of immediately recruiting and organizing a company for active service in the war.
>
> RESOLVED, That an Executive Committee of seven be appointed by the Chairman of the meeting to carry out the object of these resolutions.
>
> RESOLVED, That the Jewish company will join the new Hecker Regiment.

Speeches were made by Major (soon to be Colonel) Edward Solomon and by Henry Greenebaum and Abraham Kohn, two leading Jewish Republicans of Chicago. The sum of $6,200 was subscribed at the meeting and forty-two men volunteered at the recruiting office which was opened the following day. By the end of the week, over $11,000 had been raised in cash and a full complement of ninety-six men had joined the company.[96]

The *Chicago Tribune* paid this tribute after the results of the campaign were announced:

> Our Israelite citizens have gone beyond even their most sanguine expectations. Their princely contribution of itself is a record which must ever redound to their patriotism. The rapidity with which the company was enlisted has not its equal in the history of recruiting . . . Can any town, city or state in the North show an equally good two days' work? The Concordia Guards have our best wishes for their future and hopes that victory may always crown their aims.[97]

No details have been preserved about the activities which resulted in their formation, but two Jewish companies were recruited in the Confederacy: One at West Point, Ga., during the first month of the war,[98] and a second at Macon, in 1862, for the express purpose of sharing in the defense of Savannah.[99]

VII

The raising of Jewish companies in Chicago and Syracuse, Macon and West Point, were effective demonstrations of the capacity of local Jewries for vigorous, united war service. It has been estimated that at least ten thousand Jews served in the Federal and Confederate Armies—4 or 5% of the estimated Jewish population in America.[100] The fact that so few Jewish companies were organized did not stem, then, from any lack of patriotism among Jews, but from a reluctance to form Jewish enclaves in the army. Of course, there were companies like the Light Infantry Blues of Richmond[101] and Company D of the Eighth New York National Guard Regiment[102] in which large numbers of Jews served—but their enlistment in these outfits was on the basis of personal friendship or geographic location, not on the basis of a preference to serve with Jews. In the final analysis, the men who enlisted in the service of the Union and Confederacy exhibited no desire for a segregated minority status.

This also seems to have been the general reaction to the proposals for national Jewish war service organizations. Apathy and indifference were not the only reasons for the failure of American Jewry to respond to the suggestions for the creation of Jewish military hospitals. The majority of American Jews consciously sought to avoid clannish or restrictive actions; the hospital idea undoubtedly struck most of them as unnecessary segregation. Indeed, it would appear that most Jews were quite willing to ignore religious observances, such as the dietary laws which tended to require separate Jewish facilities, rather than create "ghetto" institutions. The entire question was not directly connected with the war but with the adjustment of Jews to the American scene. The manifold charitable and patriotic activities carried on by the synagogues and philanthropic organizations on a local scale, and especially the service of the New York Jews' hospital, were proof that Jews needed no prodding to do their part in the war effort. But even in this regard, the Rochester community and two of the Jewish periodicals evinced a reluctance to assent to Jewish segregation unless other groups were following a similar procedure.

It was the old question of the nature of Jewishness and of the status of the Jew in a democratic environment. To what extent should Jewish life be organized for purposes other than religious? What line of demarcation separates the Jew's activities as an individual from his activities as a member of the Jewish community? What, if any, are the responsibilities of the Jewish community, *qua* community, to America?

Even in a theoretical vacuum, questions like these are unanswerable. The Civil War Jew was no more able to provide the answers than is the Jew of our own time. But such questions are not completely unrealistic; anti-Jewish prejudice vitalizes and complicates them. Prejudice makes his relations to his people a matter of living concern to every Jew, forces him to create a Jewish rationale for his own life. The Civil War Jew was, unfortunately, confronted with the problem of anti-Jewish prejudice; the gravity of his problem will be weighed in the next chapters.

6

Exodus 1862

Until 1864, when the Union armies had smashed the Southern fortress of the Mississippi into submission and the military might of the North was directed eastward towards fateful scenes in Georgia and Virginia a dual war was fought in the West. Fort Henry, Fort Donelson, Shiloh and Corinth were military victories over the Confederacy pounded by the pestle of steel and strategy. They were morale-boosting telegraph dispatches to the Northern newspapers; testing fires for generals and armies in the fury of combat; they were territory captured from the enemy. But there was also a second front: the economic war of greed, exploitation, and treachery, fought by unprincipled individualists who took advantage of the needs of the North and South and battened on the profits.

Northern and trans-Atlantic mills had turned away their workingmen for want of cotton; the Confederacy never possessed, even at the outbreak of war, enough of the stuff of survival: war materiel, medical supplies, manufactured consumer goods, gold and silver specie. And here, at this shifting line of battle through Tennessee and Mississippi, were thousands of bales of King Cotton, for which the South had no use, but which would fetch high premiums in the markets of the factory cities up North. With a frenzy that could only be fathered by greed, speculators, traders, and adventurers descended upon the area like vultures swooping down on carrion. They traded gold and silver, merchandise and arms, quinine and surgical supplies, for cotton and other Southern agricultural products, and found partners in uniform who were eager to share in the profits. Memphis became a notorious center for the trade. (It was charged in

Congress that in a two-year period, between $20,000,000 and $30,000,000 worth of supplies had been funnelled to the Confederacy through Memphis.[1]) But the traffic was carried on throughout the entire area penetrated by the Union Army.

All trading across the lines should have been banned. General Sherman took the initiative with such a policy, but his order was promptly recalled by the Administration.[2] Many factors tended to prevent the adoption of a forthright, consistent policy: the actual need for cotton and other Southern products in the North and in Europe; the hope of winning the adherence of the Confederate population by permitting a return to normal, unregulated commerce; the interests of big business which, all over the nation, was thriving on the profits of war; the natural desire of military leaders not to be embroiled in social and commercial regulation; the pressure of speculators in and out of uniform. Policies were changed so frequently that their enforcement was vitiated by the brief time they remained in force.[3] Added to all the chaos was the hectic variety of authorities who could issue permits for commercial activities in the close-to-battle areas: the White House, the War Department, the Treasury Department, and the various Commands on the scene. From such a pattern of confusion, nothing but anarchy could result. The anarchy became demoralization when "bribery and corruption," to use the words of the general in command of Memphis, seeped "into every branch of service."[4]

Official reports bulged with charges that almost all the people in the area, civilian and military, including the relatives of the latter, and even the treasury agents sent South to investigate, were implicated in the traffic. Rear Admiral Porter minced no words when he spoke about the Treasury agents: "A greater pack of knaves never went unhung!" But the Western gun-boat crews under Porter's command were equally responsible for cotton speculation. A senator charged them with clearing $100,000,000 during the war. Army officers were also involved; in Tuscumbia, Ala., they captured $2,000,000 worth of cotton and pocketed the proceeds.[5] The President told a friend that "the army itself is diverted from fighting the rebels to speculating in cotton."[6] Jesse Grant was generally understood to be deriving a percentage from the profits of certain cotton-buyers who had obtained their trading permits from his son through his recommendation; a member of Mrs. Grant's family had made a tidy fortune by the time he was asked to leave camp.[7] "Every colonel, captain, or quartermaster is in secret partnership with some operator in cotton; every soldier dreams of adding a bale of cotton to his monthly pay," said Charles A. Dana in a letter to the Secretary of War.[8]

It was in the midst of this nightmare of profiteering that the most sweeping anti-Jewish regulation in all American history was issued. It was wired from General Grant's headquarters in Holly Springs, Miss., on December 17, 1862, and provided for the expulsion "within twenty-four hours" of "the Jews, as a class," without trial or hearing, from the Department of the Tennessee:

> General Orders) Hdqrs. 13th A.C., Dept. of the Tenn.,
> No. 11) Holly Springs, December 17, 1862.
>
> The Jews, as a class violating every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Department and also department orders, are hereby expelled from the department within twenty-four hours from the receipt of this order.
>
> Post commanders will see that all of this class of people be furnished passes and required to leave, and any one returning after such notification will be arrested and held in confinement until an opportunity occurs of sending them out as prisoners, unless furnished with permit from headquarters.
>
> No passes will be given these people to visit headquarters for the purpose of making personal application for trade permits.
>
> By order of Maj. Gen. U. S. Grant:
>
> Jno. A. Rawlins,
> Assistant Adjutant General.[9]

They still tell stories of the expulsion in Paducah, Ky.: of the hurried departure by riverboat up the Ohio to Cincinnati; of a baby almost left behind in the haste and confusion and tossed bodily into the boat; of two dying women permitted to remain behind in neighbors' care.[10] Thirty men and their families were expelled from Paducah, and, according to affidavits by some of "the most respectable Union citizens of the city," the deportees "had at no time been engaged in trade within the active lines of General Grant. . . ." Two had already served brief enlistments in the Union Army.[11]

The Order was also carried out in Holly Springs and Oxford, Miss., where, ironically, Jewish soldiers in Grant's forces were stationed.[12] Three Northern men and the fiancée of one had finally been able to leave the Confederacy, where they were caught at the outbreak of the war. They passed across the lines and, of all days, arrived at Oxford on December 18, the day after General Order Number 11 was issued. Placed under immediate arrest by Colonel Marsh, one of the three was bold enough to ask questions:

> JEW: I should like to know the cause of our detention.
> COLONEL: I do not feel inclined to give any—in about half an hour you will leave for Cairo and Alton.
> JEW: Colonel, can I sell my horse and buggy?
> COLONEL: No, sir! You have nothing to sell. You have to leave on the next train under guard.

Their horse and buggy and luggage confiscated, they were taken by train to Holly Springs, then to Bolivar and Jackson, and at last to Cairo, where they were freed and ordered to stay clear of the Department for the duration of the war. For the last time, the reason for all this abuse was requested; finally they received their answer: "Because you are Jews, and are neither a benefit to the Union or Confederacy."[13]

A party of agents for firms in Northern cities, caught in Holly Springs on December 17, were denied rail transportation for their exodus, and had to proceed to Memphis on foot. They still refused to believe that they had really been expelled for being Jews, even though one of their number, a Mr. Silberman from Chicago, had been thrown in prison in Holly Springs for trying to send a telegram to General Grant. In Memphis they were disabused of all doubts: their expulsion had been in accordance with The Order, and their departure had followed the time-table set forth therein.[14]

Since telegrams could not be sent to General Grant, and personal interviews with him were prohibited by The Order, the only recourse was to communicate with the Chief Executive of the nation. So concluded D. Wolff, Cesar Kaskel, and his brother, J. W. Kaskel, of Paducah. They worded a courteous but urgent appeal to the White House, protesting "this inhuman order, the carrying out of which would be the grossest violation of the

Constitution and our rights as citizens under it, [and] which will place us . . . as outlaws before the whole world."[15]

Surely the President, "Honest Abe," would recognize their plight, condemn the inhumanity of The Order, and restore them to their homes and livelihoods. But no answer was received, no action was forthcoming, and the Provost Marshal of Paducah proceeded with the expulsion.

Did the President ever receive the telegram? It *did* reach Washington, because eventually it was included in the massive compilation of the official documents of the war. But perhaps it was intercepted at the War Department. . . . Perhaps Lincoln's secretaries set it aside as a misrepresentation of some local action by the military authorities in Paducah. . . . Perhaps it was shown to Lincoln but he could lend it no credence. . . .

Whatever the reason that the Paducah message was ignored, Cesar Kaskel demonstrated a remarkable capacity for imaginative leadership in this unpredictable emergency. He was not content to place his sole hope for redress in a sixteen-line telegram transmitted through military channels. On the boat from Paducah to Cincinnati, the *Charley Bowens*, he spent his time writing letters and telegrams of alarm to Jewish community leaders, and to the publishers of Jewish and daily newspapers; those letters were instrumental in arousing the storm of protest which struck Washington in a few days.[16] But still Kaskel was not content.

Pausing in Cincinnati only momentarily to confer with community leaders and rabbis, and to apprise them of the principal details of the expulsion, Kaskel hastened on to Washington to assure the revocation of The Order. He spent a few moments consulting with Adolphus S. Solomons, Washington member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Delegates of American Israelites,[17] and then requested Congressman Gurley of Ohio, a friend of Rabbi Wise's, to act as his escort to the White House. Gurley secured immediate admission, and together they went up to the famous office on the second floor.

It was obvious that Lincoln knew little or nothing of the facts of the case. Kaskel took the time to explain everything he knew: the persons affected, their clean reputation with the civil and military authorities in Paducah, the military service of several of the deportees. He had even had the foresight to bring some documents along, signed by leading citizens, Republican party members and military authorities, ample proof that if there were any Jews to blame for conditions in the area under Grant's command, they did not live in Paducah.

Then, according to report, a heart-warming, semihumorous, Biblical flavor was introduced by the President:

> LINCOLN: And so the children of Israel were driven from the happy land of Canaan?
> KASKEL: Yes, and that is why we have come unto Father Abraham's bosom, asking protection.
> LINCOLN: And this protection they shall have at once.

And how much longer would Father Abraham, or Moses, or Jeremiah, have to bear upon his shoulders the burdens, and feel in his heart the pains, of all the oppressed and persecuted and exploited? So long as fate permitted, he would listen to such stories, look quizzically at those who sought his help, decide a man's honesty and integrity by the look in his eye, and then, if matters seemed urgent, he would sit at his big table, as he sat now, to write a note.

The note to General-in-Chief of the Army Henry W. Halleck, written, directing him to telegraph instructions for the cancellation of The Order, Lincoln shook hands with Kaskel, told him he was free to return to his home after seeing Halleck, and wished him well.[18]

General Halleck had to hear the whole story repeated, appeared to be as incredulous as the Jews of Paducah, Holly Springs, and Oxford had been, until Kaskel showed him a copy of The Order, countersigned by Captain Wardell, Provost Marshal of Paducah, and even then was not fully convinced. He knew the conditions in Tennessee and Mississippi well, had been Grant's superior there until a few short months before. Was he shocked that Grant had blundered so? Or was there some other motive, more sinister, behind his reluctance to wire Grant? The telegram was worded so tactfully there can be no doubt that Halleck disliked sending it:

> War Department,
> Washington, January 4, 1863.
>
> Major-General Grant,
> Holly Springs, Miss.:
>
> A paper *purporting* to be General Orders, No. 11, issued by you December 17, has been presented here. By its terms, it expels all Jews

> from your department. *If such an order has been issued,* it will be immediately revoked.
>
> H. W. Halleck,
> General-in-Chief.[19]

Three days later Grant's office transmitted the order of recall, taking pains to state that it was "by Direction of General-in-Chief of the Army, at Washington,"[20] implying that it was sent *only* in accordance with those instructions.

Even when enough time had elapsed for Grant to defend his action, or to apologize, and when he, by failing to do so, took upon himself the complete responsibility for The Order, Halleck still played a mysterious game. He sent a further communication to Grant, not one of censure or warning, but one of explanation with an apologetic tone. Halleck passed the buck for interference onto the President:

> Headquarters of the Army,
> Washington, January 21, 1863.
>
> Major-General Grant, Memphis:
> General: It may be proper to give you some explanation of the revocation of your order expelling all Jews from your department. The President has no objection to your expelling traitors and Jew peddlers, which, I suppose, was the object of your order; but as it in terms proscribed an entire religious class, some of whom are fighting in our ranks, the President deemed it necessary to revoke it.
>
> Very respectfully, your obedient servant,
> H. W. Halleck,
> General-in-Chief.[21]

Another indifferent bureaucrat was Attorney General Edward Bates, who forwarded to the President a resolution of protest adopted by the St. Louis B'nai B'rith Lodge, with this illuminating inscription: "I do but comply with [their] expressed wish, in handing you the papers, myself feeling no particular interest in the subject."[22] Was there no one in Washington who objected to an order which "proscribed an entire religious class" except the President? And what if he had not? Meanwhile, Rabbis Wise and Lilienthal of Cincinnati, Martin Bijur of Louisville, and Moses Strauss of Baltimore had arrived in Washington with delegations of men from their respective cities, and were making the rounds of Senators, Congressmen, Army officials, and the White House. The very evening the Western delegation arrived—January 7—without even changing their clothes dusty from travel, they sought out Congressmen Pendleton and Gurley of Ohio, and insisted on being taken to the Executive Mansion to thank the President for the revocation of The Order. After accepting their formal thanks, Lincoln went on to express his own reactions to The Order in no uncertain terms. He could not understand what could have impelled the General to issue it. As for himself, he had always believed that "to condemn a class is, to say the least, to wrong the good with the bad. I do not like to hear a class or nationality condemned on account of a few sinners." They liked the President for being so outspoken, and they liked the easy cordiality with which he welcomed them. But after a half-hour of amiable talk they felt they had taken up enough of his time, and so said goodbye.[23]

There was another aim in the minds of the Jewish delegates. They hoped that the Senate and House would be eager to go on record against the kind of bigotry and intolerance which The Order exemplified. But they were sorely disappointed. Political considerations were paramount, and damaged ideals were secondary. The only politicians who took an interest in the case were Democrats—they relished the chance to take a poke at the Republican Administration. The Republicans, on the other hand, vulnerable as was their position in shielding Grant, could not afford to permit the Democrats to attack the only general who seemed to be able to win battles. So the proceedings in both houses of Congress were a sorry display of political fencing.

In the House of Representatives, Democratic Congressman Pendleton of Ohio, who was to be McClellan's running mate in the 1864 election, tried in vain for two days to gain the floor for the introduction of a resolution censuring The Order as "illegal and unjust, and its execution tyrannical and cruel." On January 7, he finally obtained permission to place it before the House, but Republican Congressman Elihu B. Washburne of Illinois, Grant's close friend and consistent champion, made short shrift of its consideration. It "censures one of our best generals without a hearing," he argued, demanding that it be tabled. The fact that the Jews had been *banished* without a hearing did not require his attention. Grant was his friend, Pendleton an enemy of the party, so even though the resolution might be fully justified, it had to be tabled. And tabled it was, by the close vote of 56 to 53, with the division based mainly on political affiliation.[24]

The display of political solidarity was even more pronounced in the upper chamber. There, Democratic Senator Powell of Kentucky had to deal with such Republican stalwarts as Hale, Sumner, Clark, and Henry Wilson. After the first reading of Powell's resolution on January 5, Sumner registered his objection to its being considered immediately and thereby postponed discussion for four days.[25] On January 9, when it was to be read again, Hale thought "it [was] not worth while to read it again;" but Powell insisted, and then proceeded to give a lengthy address in favor of its passage, citing his personal knowledge of some of the Paducah people and referring to the documents which Haskel had brought to Washington. After the speech, the Republicans took over. None of them defended The Order itself; they all had Jewish constituents. They paid lip-service to the right of the Jew to legal procedure. But Clark thought it was wrong "to condemn the brave General Grant unheard . . . when he and his soldiers are struggling in the field to put the rebellion down." He did not mention the *Jewish* soldiers in Grant's own army and in other combat areas. Neither did Hale, Wilson or Sumner; they were more interested in coming to an agreement on the best parliamentary method for permanently disposing of the resolution of censure—so that the Democrats would have no further opportunity to bring it to the floor. They finally decided to table it.[26]

For all his ringing defense of the Jews, and for all his genuine interest in the welfare of his Paducah constituents (even though Kaskel was vice-president of the Paducah Union League Club), Powell had other interests in mind. When he had warmed up to the subject, he told his fellow members of the Senate what had really attracted him and the Democratic party to the defense of the Jews:

> In my judgment, it is incumbent on this Senate . . . to pass the resolution, and let General Grant and all other military commanders know that they are not to encroach upon the rights and privileges of the peaceable, loyal citizens of this country. Pass the resolution, and the example will be of the greater importance, particularly at this time, when the constitutional rights of the citizens are being stricken down and trodden under foot throughout the entire country by the executive and the military power. We have submitted already too long and tamely to the encroachments of the military upon the civil rights of the citizens . . .

The order against the Jews was of a piece, to the Democrats, with all the other invasions of civil liberties for which they held the Lincoln Administration responsible: the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, the invoking of martial law in certain areas, and interference with the activities of legally elected city, state and Federal officials. The Jews were being victimized as the whole North had been victimized, in the view of the Democrats.

For Democrats and Republicans alike the resolution censuring Grant for The Order had been transmuted into a symbolic test of party power. It no longer concerned the Jews at all: Powell's speech, the Republican delaying tactics, the vote to table—were concerned with the political issues of January 1863: the administration's conduct of the war, Grant's role as a promising national hero, and the Democrats' frustration at being out of power. The vote to table, 30 to 7, really ignored the violation of Constitutional rights affected by The Order.

With this example of Congressional maneuvering to guide them, the editorial writers of the nation, for the most part, let their bias take them wherever it might. The *Washington Republican* considered Grant infallible. "We believe that in this, as in every other military act, he has consulted his better genius, which has thus far outstripped all the calculations of military science." As to censuring him, the *Republican* figured that Grant was "worth more to the cause than the votes of the whole Jewish nation resident in our midst."[27] No one had threatened to draw Jewish votes away from the party; but a political organ like the *Republican* could only discuss a case of injustice in terms of ballots, elections and offices.

The *Washington Chronicle*, published by John W. Forney, Secretary of the Senate, outdid its contemporary, and featured an editorial which called the Jews "the scavengers . . . of commerce" and gave every shadow of a doubt to Grant.[28] Jews who lived in the capitol would not permit this to pass unnoticed and spent many good hours writing letters which demanded that facts be produced to support the contention of the *Chronicle*. They, too, knew that there were Jews, as there were Christians, who merited punishment, but they insisted that, *as a group*, the Jews were as honest, dependable and patriotic as any other segment of the Northern population.[29]

The Order was "one of the deepest sensations of the war," according to the *New York Times*, usually an administration supporter. The *Times* referred to the reaction of the more excitable Jewish groups of New York City to the

Western delegations which had thanked the President for his prompt revocation of The Order. "They say they have no thanks . . . but grounds for deep and just complaint against the Government, that General Grant has not been dismissed from the service." Then the *Times* spoke for itself:

> . . . We are of [the] opinion that there are degrees of rascality developed by the war that might put the most accomplished Shylocks to the blush. We have native talent that can literally "beat the Jews." Gen. Grant's order has the demerit of stigmatising a class, without signalizing the criminals . . . It is a humiliating reflection that after the progress of liberal ideas even in the most despotic countries has restored the Jews to civil and social rights, as members of a common humanity, it remained for the freest Government on earth to witness a momentary revival of the spirit of the medieval ages . . . We rely on the general principles of republican right and justice for the utter reprobation of Grant's order. Men cannot be condemned and punished as a class, without gross violence to our free institutions.[30]

All in all, the editorial which appeared in the *Times* was probably the most fair and least partisan that was printed anywhere in the country.

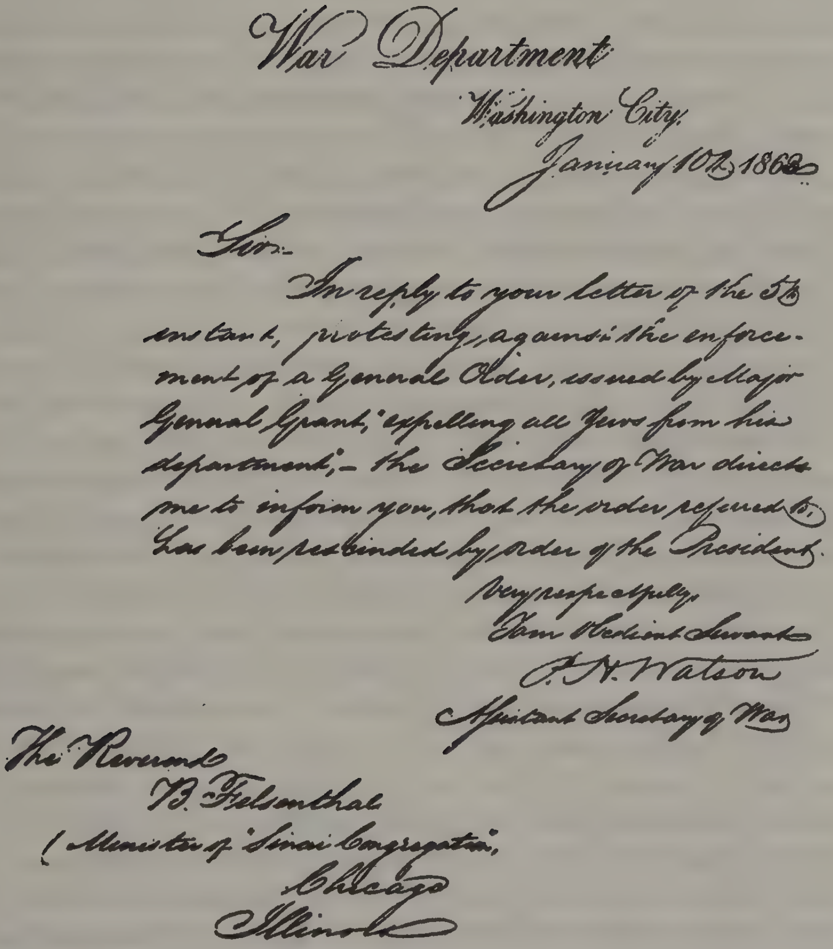
New York produced the one bizarre aberration in the journalistic world. The *Sunday Mercury*, which had opposed the war from the first and was a leading editorial goad in the struggle against the draft, became very militant in the Jews' behalf and reported that they were "arming themselves to resist further interference with their rights." Unable to discover any clue to identify the source of this singular report, *The Jewish Messenger* amused its readers by inviting them to witness a dress parade of the "First Division Jewish Infantry."[31]

In Philadelphia, the *Public Ledger* was reasonably certain that The Order had been issued "thoughtlessly," but nevertheless demanded that it be cancelled at once, "for the honor of the country and of humanity and the nineteenth century," and then proceeded to list for its readers the Jewish contributions to civilization. Jay Cooke's newspaper, the *Philadelphia Enquirer*, acted as though the most satisfactory solution to the whole problem was to ignore it completely. The Rev. Leeser made several trips to the editor's office, armed with letters of protest, before he finally believed what he was told the first time, that the editor would not print anything at all about The Order.[32]

The Republican *Cincinnati Commercial* was rarely reluctant to register an anti-Jewish sentiment or two, and the Grant furore gave it an excellent opportunity. It called the expulsion a "persecution," but proceeded to assure its readers that "... Jew traders have been the most adroit smugglers, and have, by their offensive conduct, brought reproach upon the name of their sect."[33] The Democratic *Enquirer*, on the other hand, sidetracked far enough to castigate its Jewish readers for "the vicious character of their politics," i.e., "they are mostly of the party that has Lincoln for its leader," before pontificating that the expulsion was "a wrong and cruelty which military and civil despotism can alone be guilty of."[34] The Cincinnati Jews could do no right: the Republican paper blamed them for their religion, the Democrats for their Republican politics!

Closer to the scene of the operation of The Order, the *Louisville Journal* surmised that if the episode had been "reported to us from Turkey, Russia, Austria, or Morocco [it] would excite the indignation of every liberal man in this free land." The *Journal* asked "how many thousand patriotic soldiers of Jewish descent have laid down their lives upon the altar of this country? And is this miserable, ungrateful order to be the price of their blood?" The *Louisville Democrat*, naturally, felt that The Order was "certainly the most extraordinary, unwarrantable order we have ever heard of."[35]

If most of the newspapers and politicians had slavishly followed the dictates of party interest in their reaction to The Order, the Jews were not so easily trapped into political commitments.[36] The editors, rabbis, and laymen rejected the language of the political campaign and restricted themselves to considerations of history, the meaning of democracy, and the American spirit. Stunned as they were by the implications of The Order, the comment of the Republican press, and the unwillingness of Republican politicians to come to their defense, they did not attempt to herd the Jews of America into the Democratic camp, as the Democrats undoubtedly expected. Even Isaac Mayer Wise, who despised the Republican party and identified it with war-mongering, anti-alienism, and "black" abolitionism, did not raise the standard for a Jewish exodus to the Democratic party. He, like the others, tried to take a supra-political attitude, and appealed to *all* of America to blot out this mark of shame. None of the editors said anything in defense of Grant: he gave them no opportunity, no thread of a chance; but the cause of the Union, the war, and



War Department

Washington City.
January 10th 1863.

Sir:-

In reply to your letter of the 5th instant, protesting, against the enforcement of a General Order, issued by Major General Grant, "expelling all Jews from his department", – the Secretary of War directs me to inform you, that the order referred to, has been rescinded by order of the President.

Very respectfully,
Your Obedient Servant
P. H. Watson
Assistant Secretary of War

The Reverend
B. Felsenthal
(Minister of "Sinai Congregation",
Chicago
Illinois

Facsimile of a War Department official's answer to the Rev. Bernhard Felsenthal's protest against the Grant Order.

Lincoln continued in the main to receive their support. Wise, the only self-identified Democrat among the editors, was of course an exception.

What, then, was the Jewish reaction? It was one of shock, pain, and anger. The rabbis were burying the bodies of Jewish soldiers who had lost their lives in battle; the charitable organizations were ceaselessly raising funds for the support of war widows and orphans, for the Sanitary Commission, for all kinds of causes; anything that was demanded of any citizen was demanded of the Jews and was forthcoming. And now, in this land of freedom, were they alone to be punished, without a trial, for all the crimes which had been committed in a crime-infested area, and the responsibility for which was clearly to be laid in the lap of the highest authorities in the land? Were they, who had fled, in this generation or an earlier one, from proscription, discrimination, and oppression in lands across the sea, here to be victimized again, here to become the scapegoat again, to bear once again the sins of the nation?

A continual refrain in the stream of editorials and letters was: if there are Jewish law-breakers in the Department of the Tennessee, let them be punished individually for their deeds, but no American law provides for Jewish communal responsibility for the actions of individual members of the community. Let there be a fair trial for every accused individual, Jew and Christian, and, if found guilty, let him pay the penalty prescribed by law.

The editors could not help but reflect on the solicitude of the Republicans for Negro rights, and their apparently illiberal attitude towards the Jews. "Gentlemen," said the pro-Democratic *Jewish Record* in an open letter to Congress, "supposing any general of the United States had issued an order expelling from his command all 'Negroes,' . . . would not 'sympathy for our oppressed brethren, without distinction of color,' have moved you to censure him?"[37] Wise sarcastically remarked that the Jewish deportees were born to the wrong race, if they expected any sympathy from the Republican-dominated Congress;[38] and Leeser believed that The Order had gone unanswered because "the parties threatened with such ill-usage were not Christians, not even Negroes, nothing but Jews!"[39] This was but another indication to them that the humanitarianism which expressed itself in the abolitionist crusade was peculiarly blind to the evil of Jew-hatred.

The Jewish Messenger, cautious and conservative always, was particularly eager to drive home its warning to American Jewry not to permit itself to be caught in a political trap. The Democratic had as little genuine regard for the Jews as the Republican party but would pretend to be their defender to secure their votes. "We warn our co-religionists to beware," said the *Messenger*, "of being *used by designing politicians* for partisan, unpatriotic ends. . . . Shall we, the loyal Israelites of the United States, permit ourselves to be made tools of—we mean what we say—by men who have no love for us, no love for the Union, no respect for constitutional government?" Rather than follow those who posed as their friends, let them prove by their daily lives that "Israelites are among the most valuable, useful and influential members of society."[40]

That warning did not assume its full significance for another five years. Then the election of 1868 made The Order a live political issue once again: the war had been won; Lincoln was dead, and his reconciliation policy buried with him; Grant—the hero of the war—was to be the Republican nominee for the presidency. Jewish memories, always sensitive to threats of oppression, still harbored the pain, anger, and humiliation of January 1863. No matter what party had nominated Grant, no matter what the issues of the campaign, no matter what the name or repute of his opponent—the election would be a critical point in the history of the American Jew. The campaign was bound to reflect the tone of American Jewry's adjustment to American conditions, for it was now confronted with one of the most serious problems a minority ever faces: what influence would or should its own unique experience have on its stand in an election. Could Jews, whatever their previous political beliefs and affiliations, vote for the author of so flagrant an anti-Jewish measure? The election of '68 turned out to be one of the very few American elections in which an issue involving a religious minority assumed major proportions for the entire nation.

The dilemma was not of Jewish making; in every other election Jews had voted as individuals, prompted by their own personal interests, needs, insights, experiences, and loyalties. As we have already discovered, there had been no single Jewish attitude on slavery and abolitionism, war and peace, Democracy and Republicanism. There were only Jews . . . separate entities in a multicolored American society. There were as many different political notions (even anti-alienism)[41] among Jews as there were facets to American political life. The dilemma of '68 was of Grant's making: he had issued The Order; it could not help but be an election issue, not only for Jews, but for all Americans who took part in the electioneering. Newspapers all the way from Corinth, Miss., to Quincy, Ill., published copies of The Order itself, commentaries and letters about it, and even material from the Jewish press. The *Israelite* of Cincinnati was quoted in New York papers, and the *Messenger* of New York was quoted in Chicago papers. Everyone who had an interesting point of information to reveal, or thought he did, took his pen in hand and sent a letter to the press. Democratic papers were publishing appeals to Jews to vote against the traducer of Jewish character; most Republican papers were eagerly publishing pledges by Jewish Republicans to uphold the party; but some, eager to defend the General, accused the Jews of worse crimes than The Order had.[42]

Grant could have dissolved the perplexity of the Jews and dissipated the fog of propaganda. The Jews would have welcomed some forthright statement of apology and explanation. But the General refused to make such a statement, even though, as he told a friend, he had received hundreds of letters begging him to do so. Adam Badeau, Grant's secretary and biographer, General John A. Rawlins, his erstwhile Adjutant, and other intimates wrote letters in his name[43] denying that he was guilty of prejudice against the Jews or any other group, but such letters were manifestly ineffectual. When Grant himself finally did issue a statement,[44] it was not the absolute disavowal that was expected; it could not therefore be the final word on the subject.

Grant's reluctance furnished additional ammunition to Jews who were active in the Democratic party. There was no conflict for them, but they attempted to capitalize on the conflict that might exist in the minds of Jews who were Republicans. In New York, a certain Ph. von Bort published a pamphlet entitled, "General Grant and the Jews," and signed it "in the name of all American Jews." The burden of his open letter was a pledge that "every Jew—no matter of what political party—every Jew, with the votes he can command, will endeavor to defeat, and with God's blessing, *will* defeat you! " An anonymous Jew who signed himself "Max" wrote a letter to the *Boston Post* urging that Jewish self-respect required the defeat of General Grant. In Richmond, M. J. Ezekiel wrote a letter addressed to American Jewry, contending that it was plainly the duty of all Jews "to oppose by every means in their power the efforts that are being made to place a man in power who, by a mere scratch of the pen, can deprive us of all the rights and benefits of a free country." Ezekiel earned for himself a warning to leave Richmond, or face the consequence of his opposition to the Republican party—assassination; the threatening letter was signed by the officers of the Richmond Union League Association.[45]

The Jewish editors opposed the effort to create a Jewish electorate. *The Jewish Messenger* insisted that "there are no 'Jewish votes'" and appealed to Jews to vote as individual Americans, not as members of a Jewish bloc. "If Jews desire to take one side or the other in a campaign that will always be memorable, they can do so as citizens of the Republic. But as Jews they should abstain from bringing religion into politics." These were the sentiments of the editors of *The Hebrew Leader*, who nevertheless announced that they were supporting Seymour. Even Isaac Mayer Wise, inveterate Democrat, did not editorialize as frequently as one would expect, "because," he said, "we feel constrained as far as possible to preserve the character of *The Israelite* as a religious and family journal." Nevertheless, he opposed both Grant's nomination and election because he thought the man was "morally and intellectually unfit through his incapacity to understand the theories and principles of personal liberty which vitalize our Government." None of the editors, including Wise, was willing to make Jewishness the sole issue of the election.[46]

But was it possible? No one knows exactly how many Jews voted for Grant, or how many voted for Seymour; we can, however, evaluate the evidence presented in the periodicals and documents of the period. In only three cases was there an *organized* attempt to use Jewishness as a rallying cry. In Memphis, Tenn., the metropolis closest to the area affected by The Order, an open meeting of the Jewish community was held, attended by the rabbis and other leaders, at which resolutions were adopted castigating Grant as "a man unfit for the high position to which he aspires, and incapable of administering the laws to all classes with impartiality and without prejudice;" pledging those attending to "use every honorable means" to defeat Grant; and urging Jewish communities all over the nation to follow the Memphis example. A similar meeting was held in Nashville.[47] No other community followed suit, but in New York City a group of Jewish Republicans retaliated against Jewish Democrats by forming a "Hebrew Grant and Colfax Club."[48]

Were individual Jews who had identified themselves with the Republican party enticed away from that allegiance by Democratic propaganda? If we may be guided by the public statements of Republican Jewish politicians who announced their position in the marketplace, we are justified in concluding that the great majority of active Jewish Republicans did not change their party affiliation because of The Order.

Adolph Moses, of Quincy, Ill., an ex-Confederate Army officer who had come North, a national officer of the B'nai B'rith Order, and an active politician in the general community, changed his opinions so frequently that the newspapers could not be certain whether he was a Democrat or Republican. Although he was a Republican, early in the campaign he wrote vigorously in condemnation of The Order, pointing it up as a major issue for public consideration. His articles were reproduced in papers all over the country. They were not open appeals for Jewish support of the Democratic candidates; he wanted the Democracy to understand that "the principle would have to be debated and defended in due manly spirit and not with the sole purpose of carrying votes from the Jewish citizens, who, like all others, can draw a correct distinction between the avowal of a manly principle and the hollow lip-service in the interest of party." But he was instrumental, he said later, in convincing certain persons not to vote for Grant.

Moses was not satisfied with his position and eagerly followed developments in the press. When Henry Greenebaum of Chicago, who had known Lincoln and was a devoted Jew, announced his determination to support Grant, Moses felt impelled to reconsider the entire problem. He consulted with Congressman Morris of Illinois, who insisted that he write Grant. This letter, in which he pointed out to Grant the difficult position of Jews who wanted to support him but were deterred by their fear that he was a bearer of prejudice, elicited the only reply which Grant was willing to make to any queries about The Order. It satisfied Moses, and he announced his switch in a long letter tracing the convolutions of his political opinion. He apologized to those to whom he had spoken previously, and said he understood that they might not share his reversal; but for himself, he said, "the burning but just spirit of indignation must give way to the quietly secret feeling of magnanimity which must needs force itself on all intelligent men whose convictions are not debased by the alloy of prejudice, for while it lies in the power of any one to do a wrong act, it requires a higher type of manhood to make a reparation."[49]

Josiah Cohen of Pittsburgh, part-time rabbi, Jewish educator, and able lawyer, who had taken an active role in Republican party politics during the war, wrote a letter to the *Pittsburgh Chronicle* in 1868 in which he expounded his position:

> I have always held political opinions consonant with the Republican platform, and have therefore always been found in the ranks of the Republican party . . . No amount of sophistry can induce me to change my opinions or sacrifice my principles by reason of that unfortunate order of General Grant's in reference to the Jews. That the order was unjust I cannot deny, but it sinks into atomic insignificance when compared with the life of this Government . . . I shall, therefore, vote the Republican ticket . . . however much I may object to the leader of the banner of those principles by virtue of the prejudice shown to the Jews in his peculiar order.[50]

Mr. (later Judge) Cohen, a highly respectable Pittsburgh citizen, the first Jew to be admitted to the Pittsburgh bar, subordinated his Jewish pride to his political loyalty, and risked his reputation on Grant's good faith.

A certain Noah Green, described by the *New York Herald* as "a leading Israelite of Keokuk, Iowa," knew his Jewish prayerbook by heart. The words and sense he used, in speaking for the Republican party, were words and sense out of the ancient ritual:

> Now on what side do we stand? Shall we array ourselves on the side of equal justice, of peace and order, or on the side of war and anarchy? . . . I address myself to the intelligent, patriotic Jews, to whom this country and the cause of justice and liberty are dearer than the gratification of their indignation, however just. I do not ask them to love Grant, but to love their race; to vote for Grant, not for his sake, but for the triumph of the idea of justice. For my part, if a man had spit into my face publicly, if he had kicked me, if I afterwards by voting for him could serve liberty and justice, I would do it. For what am I, what is General Grant, what are all of us? We are but like insects of the moment, soon passing away . . .[51]

The Order was insignificant, in Green's eyes, when compared with the urgency of the struggle for Negro rights, for the maintenance of the Union, and for the supremacy of Republican principles.

Another Jewish Republican went farther than Cohen and Green in supporting Grant: he defended The Order. This was Simon Wolf, a prominent Jewish and Republican politician in Washington. In 1863 he had no words too harsh for "those time-despised prejudices that have disgraced the past" and which, he asserted, had been revived by General Grant. But now, in 1868, in a communication to the *Boston Transcript*, he excused Grant's offense to the Jews as unintentional, and even testified on his own account that "I know how many of our people were indifferent to the cause, and how many cared only for the spoils." Carried away by his desire to whitewash Grant, Wolf went so far as to misrepresent the facts of the case. "The order never harmed me—never harmed anyone," he pleaded in its defense, "not even in thought, except those whom *we as Jews despise and hold in contempt*."[52] Rationalization controlled his thought processes, even clouded his memory: he ignored the innocent victims of The Order, the folk from Paducah, for instance, whom he must have seen in Washington in 1863. Many Jews must have been disillusioned when they read his comments; and even more disillusioned when Grant appointed him Recorder of Deeds for the District of Columbia the very next year.

Still another Jewish political hopeful, who publicly urged Jewish support for Grant on the basis of sympathy for Republican ideas, was David Eckstein of Cincinnati to whom we shall have need to refer again. Eckstein had been a Republican all through the war, and was embarrassed by The Order; but he would not abandon his party without investigation. So, he wrote in a public letter which was widely reprinted just before the election, he had gone to visit General Grant to confer with him. He was fully convinced after nearly two hours' conversation that he could in all honesty support the General's candidacy. Eckstein did not tell the substance of Grant's explanations, but they were, said he, "sufficient to remove and obliterate every vestige of objection against him on the part of every fair-minded and reasonable Israelite, and would impel them to a still more hearty support of the party which put the General in nomination."[53]

Governor John Geary of Pennsylvania credited Eckstein with "bringing about an amicable understanding between the Israelites and General Grant," by the publication of this personal guarantee. Two years later, through Geary's insistent representations to Grant, Eckstein was appointed to the consulate at Victoria, British Columbia, in which capacity he served for seven years.[54]

Whatever may have been the motives which impelled Eckstein and Wolf to lend their personal prestige to the Republican party campaign in the face of Grant's prejudiced order, their support plays havoc with the stereotyped superstitions about Jewish solidarity and the "Jewish vote." Even under so great a provocation as the nomination of a presidential candidate who was, to all intents and purposes, anti-Jewish, these and other Jews appear to have been more concerned about the national political and economic issues of the day than they were about an insult to the Jewish name. They campaigned and voted as individuals, as politicians, not as members of the Jewish group. Whatever the factors which lead men to vote for a particular candidate in a particular election—economic class interest, social pressure, habit, personal relationships, honest thought—these same factors operated upon the minds of the Jews.

What had happened was this: the very nature of American life and growth militated against the development of an organically unified American Jewry. America offered its rewards for individual effort and initiative; challenged a man to test his strength in the race for position, wealth, and achievement; caught him up in an overwhelmingly optimistic, expansive, rapid-paced tempo. America was irresistible. Once a man staked his claim in the nation's gamble for glory, all other impulses became secondary. So, from the very first, the freedom to join the race which America offered to the Jew (a comparative freedom, it is true, but one whose imperfections were insignificant to him, moulded as he was by a heritage of unbelievable terror and suffering), that freedom compelled him to abandon the religio-cultural pattern which made him a Jew, and subjected him increasingly to the primary economic, cultural, political, and psychological factors operative in the environment in which he made his home. The antisemite was and is blind to this fact of adjustment; but the rabbi who has attempted to mould a unified Jewish community for the organization of a congregation, knows it; the proponents of Jewish educational and philanthropic activities, on either a local or a national scale, have daily experience with it. The character of American Jewish life for a whole century has been dominated by this one fact: the American Jew has been captured by the mood and modes of American life. The election of 1868 was an effective demonstration of that.

We shall now have to retrace our steps back through the years to 1862 in Tennessee and Mississippi, back to the confusion, corruption and prejudice, out of which The Order issued, to seek out the circumstances of its origin.

1. Who Was Responsible for The Order?

During the public discussion in 1862–3 and in 1868, one of the frequent assertions made in Grant's defense was that he himself had not composed

The Order, and that he was shielding someone else who was responsible for it. He was too much the gentleman, it was said, to defend himself by casting the blame on its real author.[55]

This explanation was a plausible one. Staff officers more often than not are the authors of orders, reports, and memoranda, to which they sign their commanding officer's name. It was claimed that the name of the officer who did so in this case was known to hundreds of those who served under Grant, and that they considered their chieftain a hero for not revealing that name to the indignant public. This explanation might have received general acceptance had not one of these officers determined to give all of the supposed details to the public in a letter to the *Chicago Evening Journal*, which was widely reprinted throughout the country. He asserted that the responsibility was to be fixed on a Colonel John DuBois who had written The Order without Grant's knowledge, and affixed his superior's name to it. "I was with Grant's army at the time as a staff officer of one of his Corps Commanders," this informant stated, "and many a laugh we had around the camp fires over what was then called 'Johnny DuBois' ' order . . . it was not dictated by General Grant."[56]

These were specific facts, not generalizations. But they were contradicted by DuBois himself, who was at that time stationed at the cavalry fort at Santa Fe. He said he would not sell his good name in order to secure the election for General Grant. He branded the accusation against himself as "untrue in fact, word and inference," and delineated his evidence. He had issued an order dealing with Jews, he admitted, but "this order was revoked by Gen. Grant and I was relieved from command on account of it. I never saw or heard of the notorious 'Jew Order' until it appeared in print. . . . I was never on General Grant's staff, and never signed an order 'by order of Gen. Grant.' "[57]

DuBois did not see the irony of his calling General Order No. 11 "the notorious 'Jew Order' " when his own was equally prejudiced:

> Holly Springs, Miss.,
> December 8, 1862.
>
> General Order.
>
> On account of the scarcity of Provisions all *Cotton Speculators, Jews, and other Vagrants*, having no honest means to support except trading upon the misery of the country, and in general all persons from the North, not connected with the army whatever and having no permission

> from the commanding General to remain in town, *will leave in twenty-four (24) hours or he will be put to duty in the intrenchments.*
>
> By order of Col. Jno. V. DuBois, U.S. Army Com'd'g.
>
> Charles H. Turlu,
> 1st Lieut., A.A.A. Gen'l.[58]

Now came another anonymous letter, addressed to the *Washington Republican*, purporting to give further evidence in the matter:

> [After the publication of The Order] the Jews as a class united throughout the whole country to resent the insult. They immediately sent deputations to Washington to demand the revocation of the order, and the dismissal of Grant, from the service, and nothing less would satisfy their just indignation. Halleck was a friend of Grant and wished to save him, and enclosed to Col. DuBois, who was then at St. Louis, a copy of his own order, together with a copy of Grant's order, asking him if he was the author, and if he had issued the same with or without the knowledge of Grant. This was a plain invitation to shield Grant, and Col. DuBois, after consulting some friends, concluded to accept the invitation, and in his answer ignored the Grant order, which was the question at issue, and referred only to his own order, which he assumed in full, as he had a right to do. This was used to satisfy the demands of the deputation. Grant revoked his order. DuBois who had been nominated for Brigadier General, had his name withdrawn from the Senate and was never afterwards permitted to take a conspicuous part in the war . . . Generosity thy name is Grant.[59]

Dubois himself copied out this letter, by hand, and deposited it among his personal papers. This might indicate that it was what he wished posterity to believe. It is certainly incorrect in one particular: there is no indication that the Jewish delegations were shown any such letter by Halleck; the reports which Wise and others wrote gave so many of the minor details of their conferences in Washington that it is very unlikely they would have omitted mention of the DuBois letter, if Halleck had shown it to them. But even if he did not use it for that purpose, it is entirely possible that Halleck was attempting to find a shield.

A shield to protect Grant, or someone else?

Five widely divergent sources categorically fixed the ultimate responsibility for The Order upon someone in the War Department. One witness who signed himself "Gentile" wrote, in a letter to the *Cincinnati Commercial*, in January 1863, that:

> On the evening of the 17th of December, I was sitting in the General's office at Oxford, Miss., when a telegram was handed in which, he remarked, was instructions from Washington, and read it, as near as I can recollect, as follows: "We are reliably advised that Jews are buying up the gold in the various cities of the Union, for the purpose of investing in cotton in the South. This should be prevented. You will therefore issue an order expelling from your lines *all* Jews who cannot give satisfactory evidence of their honesty of intentions." On this, Gen. Grant issued his order.[60]

This eyewitness deposition is confirmed in an unsigned manuscript found among the papers of David Eckstein, to whom we have already had occasion to refer:

> On the 17th of De. 62, I was at Oxford, Mississippi, and saw Gen. Grant receive and open a large number of letters and dispatches that evening received. On opening one of them he remarked: "Here is instructions from Headquarters which I have been expecting," and read as follows: We are reliably informed that the Jews are in the various cities buying up the gold, to take to the South to invest in Cotton. That will place in the hands of the Rebels additional means to carry on the war. That should be prevented. You will therefore take measures to prevent it in your Department. Upon this instruction the Jew Order No 11 was issued. All Jews then within Gen. Grant's lines, who could give a satisfactory account of the honesty of their intentions were relieved from the effect of that order.
>
> Last week I wrote to a gentleman in Washington, that was present at the time assisting the Gen. in looking over his dispatches, to know if my recollection of that circumstance was correct. In reply the gentleman says I am substantially correct. But that the General does not wish any publication made by any special friend. "This statement you can use as you choose, but not give my name as authority."[61]

That Eckstein had been in Oxford at the time, we know from other papers in his family's possession. The words he quotes are approximately the same as those quoted by the unknown contributor to the *Cincinnati Commercial*. This version of the facts would, then, appear to be authentic.

A third witness, however, disagreed and referred to messages of an entirely different nature:

> . . . on the evening of December 17, 1862 (the date of the order), the mail brought from Washington a large number of complaints, officially referred to [Grant] by the General-in-Chief of the army, against this class of persons for violations of the [trading] orders. The general felt, on reading them, that some immediate action was demanded of him. He realized to its full extent the critical condition of military affairs, and judged, whether wisely or unwisely, that to meet the exigency action must be immediate, thorough and in a form not to be evaded. The order you refer to was the result. It was written and telegraphed to his subordinates without revision, leaving all persons not justly amenable to its terms to be relieved on their individual application.[62]

This witness probably knew more about The Order than anyone but Grant; he was Colonel (later General) John A. Rawlins, who had countersigned the document as Grant's Assistant Adjutant General. The difference between his testimony and that of the other two witnesses may or may not be significant. If anything, it was his own recollection which was hazy; the Cincinnatian wrote immediately after the event; since Eckstein was a Jew he would be more likely to remember the exact circumstances.

A fourth witness offers very brief, but nevertheless convincing testimony. He was Jesse Root Grant, father of the General, who wrote to his friend, Congressman E. B. Washburne from Covington, Ky., on January 20, 1863. At the end of a lengthy report on conditions down South, as observed by him during a visit with his son from December 13 to January 5, he says, "That Jew order so harped on in congress was issued on express instructions from Washington."[63] The father may or may not have been with his son on December 17, the night The Order was issued; but he was there all during that time and must have heard it talked about a good deal.

The fifth witness made no claim to intimate knowledge of the origins of General Order No. 11; he took it as a matter of general knowledge that instructions had come to Grant from Washington. And eight months later, he claimed, Grant was still attempting to achieve the same objective. Writing from Vicksburg on August 7, 1863, an unidentified correspondent for the *New York World* reported:

> . . . It seems to be the policy of the general of this department to effect what he was instructed by the department at Washington to attempt six months ago, namely, the expulsion of the "Jews." It was one of the few righteous orders originating in Washington, but with the usual vacillation of the same quarter was rescinded, and the odium was cast upon the commander. Had he been a political, instead of a patriotic general, there would have been explanations to "go before the people." If trade was opened now there would be ten thousand of the descendants of Shem here, clogging the wheels of war, and, like vultures at the carcass, no other bird dare venture near. War now and trade hereafter, seems to be the motto of General Grant.
>
> Yesterday, when the boat arrived from above, there were seven Jews with articles purporting to be sutlers' goods. They were examined, and proved to be nearly all contraband. In boxes supposed to contain pickles were flasks of the vinous fluids. In neat lead-foil packages that were marked "solace tobacco" were quinine and morphine. Each boat that arrives brings some sharper who has avoided the provost-guard at Helena, and hopes to make something out of the misfortunes of this people. . . .[64]

Since this reporter agreed with the intention of The Order, he felt no need to defend General Grant because of it; his testimony, though probably based on second-hand knowledge, must nevertheless carry a double weight.

In lieu of more convincing evidence to the contrary we are bound to accept the contention of these five[65] witnesses that Grant issued General Order No. 11 on promptings from Washington, even through no such dispatch or messages as were referred to by the witnesses appear in any known collections of war documents.

No positive identification of the Washington authority who sent the message can be made, but two possibilities exist. One is Halleck. His reluctance to believe Kaskel's testimony about the effects of The Order in Paducah; the apologetic tone in which he explained to Grant the reason for the President's interference; his eagerness to secure an affidavit from DuBois accepting the onus of authorship—all these mysteries are cleared up if it was Halleck himself who suggested that something had to be done about the Jews. If it was he who passed a Wall Street rumor on to Grant—then it was he who had brought the house down on the General's head, and he could not very graciously condemn him for it![66]

The other possible author of the dispatch was an Assistant Secretary of War, to whom Grant wrote a long letter the same day he issued The Order:

> Hdqrs. Thirteenth A. C., Dept.
> of the Tenn.,
> Oxford, Miss., December 17, 1862.
>
> Hon. C. P. Wolcott,
> Assistant Secretary of War, Washington, D. C.:
>
> I have long believed that in spite of all the vigilance that can be infused into post commanders, *the specie regulations of the Treasury Department have been violated, and that mostly by Jews and other unprincipled traders. So well satisfied have I been of this that I instructed the commanding officer at Columbus to refuse all permits to Jews to come South, and I have frequently had them expelled from the department*, but they come in with their carpet-sacks in spite of all that can be done to prevent it. *The Jews seem to be a privileged class that can travel everywhere.* They will land at any wool-yard on the river and make their way through the country. If not permitted to buy cotton themselves they will act as agents for some one else, who will be at a military post with a Treasury permit to receive cotton and pay for it in treasury notes which the Jew will buy up at an agreed rate, paying gold.
>
> There is but one way that I know of to reach this case; that is, for Government to buy all the cotton at a fixed rate and send it to Cairo, Saint Louis, or some other point to be sold. Then all traders (they are a curse to the Army) might be expelled.
>
> U. S. Grant,
> Major General.[67]

Grant may have been answering Wolcott's instructions (though no such instructions were located by the army officers who assembled the documents which were printed in *The Official Records*); he may, on the other hand, have merely been writing down for the record the sentiments which prompted him to issue The Order.

But whoever sent the dispatch from Washington, the letter to Wolcott indicates that Grant needed no instructions, that this was not the first discriminatory order which he had signed, and that he was firmly convinced of the Jews' guilt and was eager to use any means of ridding himself of them. Two other documents are ample evidence of this:

> La Grange, Tenn., November 9, 1862.
>
> Major-General Hurlbut, Jackson, Tenn.:
>
> Refuse all permits to come south of Jackson for the present. *The Israelites especially should be kept out.*
>
> U. S. Grant,
> Major-General.[68]

> La Grange, November 10, 1862.
>
> General Webster, Jackson, Tenn.:
>
> Give orders to all the conductors on the road that *no Jews are to be permitted to travel on the railroad southward from any point.* They may go north and be encouraged in it; but they are such an intolerable nuisance that the department must be purged of them.
>
> U. S. Grant,
> Major-General.[69]

For at least a month, then, Grant had been experimenting with techniques for the exclusion of Jews from the area under his command. *General Order No. 11 was the logical capstone to a policy of discrimination against Jews which he had deliberately formulated and pursued. It was no accident.*

Grant wrote a letter during the campaign of 1868, to Congressman I. N. Morris of Illinois, in which he attempted to make it appear that The Order was written in a moment of spontaneous anger, and that it would never have received his sanction if he had taken the time to consider its implications. The letter read, in part:

> At the time of its publication, I was incensed by a reprimand received from Washington for permitting acts which Jews within my lines were engaged in. There were many other persons within my lines equally bad with the worst of them, but the difference was that the Jews could pass with impunity from one army to the other, and gold, in violation of orders, was being smuggled through the lines, at least so it was reported. *The order was issued and sent without any reflection* and without thinking of the Jews as a sect or race to themselves, but simply as persons who had successfully (I say successfully instead of persistently because there were plenty of others within my lines who envied their success) violated an order, which greatly inured to the help of the rebels.
>
> . . . I have no prejudice against sect or race, but want each individual to be judged by his own merit. Order No. 11 does not sustain this statement, I admit, but then I do not sustain that order. *It never would have*

> *been issued if it had not been telegraphed the moment it was penned, and without reflection.*[70]

The two railroad orders and the Wolcott letter utterly disprove Grant's protestations of innocence. *He had a whole month in which to reflect upon these orders, and they were never withdrawn; one is entitled to conclude that Grant himself was the author of General Order No. 11 and that it never would have been withdrawn if Cesar Kaskel had not organized the pressure campaign against it.*

2. Was Grant Anti-Jewish?

In all fairness to the memory of one of the most skillful generals America has ever placed at the head of its armies in time of war, it is essential that we face this second query. Grant was the author of a blatantly anti-Jewish measure, and, contrary to his own assertions, it was the product of a premeditated and deliberate policy. But was Grant himself anti-Jewish?

During the campaign of '68, when the war of words was being waged over The Order, and the newspapers of the country were printing innumerable articles and letters in an effort to exploit or explain it in terms of their own political interests, various informants strove to locate that experience with a Jew in his earlier days which had made Grant a convinced Judaeophobe. One writer said that the General had been swindled by a Jew named Rosenthal in Galena sometime during 1859; another claimed to know that a Jew refused to buy some farm produce from Grant when he was hard-up for money.[71] It was natural that the public should have searched for a certain experience which would turn Grant against all Jews, but it is entirely possible that Grant had not *decided* to dislike Jews. We know that he had been friendly with at least one Jew in his pre-war years. When he had been stationed at Sackett's Harbor as a Lieutenant in 1849, he came to know and respect Jesse Seligman, who was then keeping store in Watertown, N.Y. Seligman said at a public gathering in 1891, "on our acquaintance we immediately became friends, and from that hour until his death I know of no one who was entitled to greater love and respect from not only his immediate friends, but from the people of the entire country." They renewed acquaintance a few years later in California, when Grant was ordered to duty there and found his friend Jesse in business in San Francisco.[72]

Perhaps, then, Grant was not consciously anti-Jewish at all. From the letter which he wrote during the 1868 campaign, it is clear that he believed he was unprejudiced, that he thought he wanted "each individual to be judged by his own merits." How then can we reconcile the man with the action? Only by recognizing the fact that some persons are the victims of unconscious prejudices—that men sometimes assimilate stereotyped images, mythological concepts, bigoted ideas, from their environment, of which they are utterly unaware and which lie dormant in their unconscious minds until called forth by some severe experience. Grant must have been such a man—convinced of his freedom from prejudice and yet completely under its control in a time of stress like the campaigns of Tennessee and Mississippi. So he was willing to believe that all the thievery was due to the presence of Jews—the "bogey-man" of social mythology—and he was willing to banish them from his Department. Then came the unexpected, shocking reaction—forcing him to analyze his own mind, his most secret thoughts. Perhaps, for the first time, he became conscious of the prejudice which he had carried through the years and, also, perhaps he was able by virtue of that consciousness, to root it out from his spirit, although he was too ashamed to admit it.

At any rate, however, he came to bury the prejudice which expressed itself in The Order—Grant never again revealed any antipathy towards Jews. During his presidential terms, he appointed many Jews to minor and major public offices. Among the most significant was his appointment in 1870 of Edward S. Solomon as Governor of the Washington Territory. Solomon had achieved a notable military record during the Civil War, serving as Major in the 24th Illinois Infantry and Colonel of the 82nd. General Carl Schurz commended him for "the highest order of coolness and determination under very trying circumstances at the Battle of Gettysburg;" General J. S. Robinson paid tribute to his "admirable coolness and courage" in the Georgia campaigns. On June 15, 1865, he was brevetted Brigadier-General by Secretary of War Stanton "for distinguished gallantry and meritorious service." Solomon's military record undoubtedly attracted the favor of the General who won the war.[73]

Grant offered a higher appointment to a Jew: the position of Secretary of the Treasury which he tendered to Joseph Seligman, the brother of his old friend and supporter Jesse Seligman. Joseph declined the post, but served the nation in good stead in many financial crises.[74]

Although Simon Wolf's testimony must always be regarded with caution, his pages of pleasant reminiscence about Grant's cordial relations with all manner of Jews cannot be controverted.[75] Wolf undoubtedly was exaggerating when he contended that "President Grant did more on and in behalf of American citizens of Jewish faith, at home and abroad, than all the Presidents of the United States prior thereto or since,"[76] but it is a fact that the State Department took an unusual interest in antisemitic persecutions in Roumania and Russia during the Grant Administration.[77] In 1870, when pogroms broke out in Roumania with renewed violence, Grant performed a major service for the Jews of the world. He appointed the Grand Master of B'nai B'rith, Benjamin Franklin Peixotto, to serve as Consul at Bucharest, without remuneration, in an effort to bring pressure on the Roumanian government for the cessation of attacks on the Jews. The President added to Peixotto's official credentials a note in his own handwriting:

> Executive Mansion
> Washington, D. C.
> December 8, 1870
>
> The bearer of this letter, Mr. Benjamin Peixotto, who has accepted the important though unremunerative position of United States Consul to Rumania, is commended to the good offices of all representatives of this government abroad.
>
> Mr. Peixotto has undertaken the duties of his present office more as a missionary work for the benefit of the people he represents than for any benefit to accrue to himself—a work in which all citizens will wish him the greatest success. The United States, knowing no distinction of her citizens on account of religion or nativity, naturally believes in a civilization the world over which will secure the same universal view.
>
> U. S. Grant[78]

He had come to recognize the inner meaning of the words he used, and the true contours of the concept of democratic equality.

3. What Were the Causes of The Order?

General Grant can in no wise be held responsible, personally and solely, for the anti-Jewish regulations which he dictated and signed. The causes, roots, pressures, and reasons go deep into the nature of the conditions in the Department of the Tennessee.

Grant and Sherman, fast friends and co-strategists, and the officers of their command, were undoubtedly justified in their resentment at the exploitation of the resources of the area, and the conveyance of specie and merchandise to the enemy. It was clearly the responsibility of the Government to regulate all trade on the basis of a well-planned, consistently enforced policy; no need for cotton warranted the accompanying chaos and interference with the strategy of conquest. But if the Government did authorize trading, the Generals should never have been placed in the impossible position of implementing a commercial policy with which they disagreed in principle.

It is essential to recognize the strong opposition which Sherman and Grant voiced against *all* trading and commerce in the area, for it explains much. Sherman swore to "move heaven and earth" to repeal the August 11, 1862, order which instructed him to encourage the trade in cotton even at the risk of permitting gold and silver species to be used as exchange.[79] Grant took an equally blunt position on the entire matter: "I regard a mercenary, pretended Union trader within the lines of our army as more dangerous than the shrewdest spy."[80] He was not referring only to "mercenary, pretended Union traders!" He and Sherman considered all traders rotten to the core; they were all "profiteers," "speculators," and potential "smugglers." It actually became a matter of emotional resistance and hostility to traders, whether or not they abided by Government regulations. The Generals were, of course, entitled to their opinion, and it was their duty to press for the adoption of any policy which they considered conducive to the successful prosecution of the war against the Confederacy; but so long as the administration believed that the industrial and international benefits of a revived trade in the Southland overshadowed all other considerations, Grant and Sherman were duty-bound, in all justice, to carry out the Government's policy. Their reluctance to admit that any of the traders and merchants who came into the area were law-abiding and honest men, performing a service which was essential to the commercial well-being of the area, disqualifies them as objective witnesses for an evaluation of the conditions and factors involved.

Added to this element of conscious opposition to the trading policy was the intangible element of suspicion of Jews. Sherman had been in command of Memphis only nine days before he was dispatching generalized complaints about Jewish traders:

Hdqrs. Fifth Division,
Army of the Tennessee,
Memphis, July 30, 1862

Col. John A. Rawlins,
Headquarters Corinth, Miss.:
Sir: . . .

I have been very busy in answering the innumerable questions of civilians and hope they are now about through. *I found so many Jews and speculators here trading in cotton, and secessionists had become so open in refusing anything but gold, that I have felt myself bound to stop it.* This gold has but one use—the purchase of arms and ammunition, which can always be had for gold, at Nassau, New Providence, or Cincinnati; all the guards we may establish cannot stop it. *Of course, I have respected all permits by yourself or the Secretary of the Treasury, but in these new cases (swarms of Jews) I have stopped it.*

All the boards of trade above are shipping salt south, and I cannot permit it to pass into the interior until you declare a district open to trade. If we permit money and salt to go into the interior, it will not take long for Bragg and Van Dorn to supply their armies with all they need to move . . . We cannot carry on war and trade with a people at the same time.

I am, with great respect, your obedient servant,

W. T. Sherman,
Major-General, Commanding.[81]

Memphis, August 11, 1862.

Hon. S. P. Chase,
Secretary of the Treasury:
Sir:

Your letter just received, at the same time an order from Headquarters of the Army at Washington to encourage the purchase of cotton, even by the payment of gold, silver, and Treasury notes.

I may of course be mistaken, but gold and money are as much contraband of war as arms and ammunition, because they are convertible terms, for you know money will buy any thing for sale at Saint Louis and Cincinnati, and I declare it impossible to keep such articles, be they salt, powder, lead, or anything, from reaching the South. Also, gold will purchase arms and ammunition at Nassau in the Bahamas, and you know that one vessel out of three can run the blockade. *The flock of Jews had disappeared, but will again overrun us.* I had so arranged that cotton could be had for currency, Tennessee and other banknotes good here but not elsewhere. The whole South is now up, and all they want is arms and

> provisions. Salt at Grenada is worth $100 a barrel, and if trade is opened Memphis is better to our enemy than before it was taken.
>
> W. T. Sherman,
> Major-General.[82]

> Headquarters, Fifth Division,
> Memphis, Tenn., August 11, 1862.
>
> Adjutant-General of the Army,
> Washington, D.C.:
>
> Have just received an order to encourage trade in cotton. Gold, silver, and money are as much contraband of war as powder, lead, and guns because they are convertible terms. Cotton is now procured by Tennessee and Southern bank notes which are unconvertible. If the policy of the Government demands cotton order us to seize and procure it by the usual operations of war, but the spending of gold and money will enable our enemy to arm the horde of people that now swarm the entire South. This cotton order is worse to us than a defeat. *The country will swarm with dishonest Jews who will smuggle powder, pistols, percussion-caps, &c., in spite of all the guards and precautions we can give.* Honest men can buy all the cotton accessible to us with the Tennessee bank notes.
>
> W. T. Sherman,
> Major-General, Commanding.
>
> (Copy to General Grant)[83]

Was nine days really time enough for Sherman to ascertain sufficient facts and statistics to prove the generalizations he dictated so glibly? He cited no names or percentages of Jews; he gave no evidence; and what he wrote was in the language of prejudice. Of course there were Jews who entered the area as soon as it had been conquered by the Union armies. It would have been strange if Jewish peddlers and merchants had not taken advantage of the business opportunities which the Government deliberately and consciously extended to the Northern commercial world. The Jews were the business entrepreneurs par excellence; from the peddler with the pack on his back to the proprietor of the incipient department store, they played an indispensable role in the expanding American capitalist economy. One is led to the inevitable conclusion that it was not what they *did*, but what they *were*, that made them so offensive to General Sherman.

Evidence of personal prejudice is difficult to secure, but perhaps General Sherman had long before the War determined the qualities which, for him, the Jews possessed. Witness this excerpt of a letter which he wrote in September 1858:

> . . . Individuals may prosper in a failing community such as San Francisco, but they must be Jews, without pity, soul, heart or bowels of compassion; but in a rising, growing, industrious community like St. Louis, all patient, prudent, honest men can thrive. . .[84]

Such an apparently unprovoked attack, setting up the merciless, unscrupulous Jew in contradistinction to the honest and honorable non-Jew (Sherman was undoubtedly thinking of himself in this connection), appears to brand Sherman as a completely prejudiced person, one who could think nothing good or decent about a Jew.

If Jews were already offensive to Sherman or newspaper reporters, their high visibility made it impossible to overlook them even in the mob. A few Jews, foreign-looking, speaking in European accents, setting up shops or carrying packs and peddling their wares, *would* look like "swarms of Jews" to anyone who objected to their presence. Jews were not the suave purchashing agents who came from Washington with letters of introduction to the commanding officers from important personages, and took rooms in the finest hotels; they were easily within sight, on the streets, at the docks, trudging along the roads, standing in line for permits—visible to anyone who didn't like *any* Jews.

But were they necessarily dishonest because they were Jews? One of the foreign-looking, bearded Jews who spoke with an accent and stood outside his store in Memphis, was named Jacob Peres. He was the part-time cantor as well as president of one of the Memphis synagogues. Undoubtedly he had to apply for cotton-buying permits at the Army headquarters; undoubtedly he was offensive to an officer who disliked foreigners, and especially Jews. But Peres had lived in Memphis before the Union armies captured it, and he was to live there for a long time afterwards. During the final year of the war his fellow-citizens were to demonstrate their profound respect for his learning and administrative ability, despite his accent and origin, by electing him President of the Memphis School Board.[85]

Two brothers, Jules and Jacob Menken, must be added to the "swarms of Jews." They had been in business in Cincinnati before the war, but the slump after the outbreak of hostilities devoured their capital and drove them into bankruptcy. They went to court and made the best settlement they could. Both served in the army but were discharged, one for malaria, the other for a war wound. After Memphis fell to the Union, they moved there and set up shop. During two years of hard work they managed to recoup their losses. In 1864, they journeyed to New York to repay, in full, every debt they owed even though their court settlement had not obligated them to recognize those debts. Their creditors gave them a testimonial dinner in tribute to their high sense of responsibility. Were men of such honor to be spat upon as "dishonest Jews?"[86]

Jews were not all so relatively successful as the Menken brothers. One penniless fellow, named Isaac Meyer, who came to Memphis in 1862, had failed in almost everything he set his hand to do. A German immigrant who arrived in New York in 1854, Meyer had peddled his way across the country to California, engaged in several business ventures, lost his profits and investments by virtue of poor judgment in partners and in fiscal matters, and returned to New York, uncertain as to his next move. A friend told him about the revival of business in Memphis, so he determined to try his luck there. He secured the proper permits, bought a stock of "Dry Goods, Boots, Shoes, Clothing, Hats, Gentlemen's Furnishings and Nursery Goods" on credit and finally arrived in Memphis, after taking oaths of allegiance all along the route. He opened a store, but hard luck seemed to dog his footsteps. First a large part of his stock was stolen, and then:

> On the fifteenth day of March, 1863, my store of goods was seized without process of law by the U.S. Military Authorities and I was sent to a Military prison in the center of the City, called Irving Block, among Confederate and Federal prisoners of War. A very filthy and sickly place, not fit for a good dog.[87]
>
> I remained there for sixteen hours and was pushed backward and forward by our own Union Soldiers who refused me a little filthy place to lay down to rest. The Confederates had sympathy with me and offered me their shelter, as clean as they had it.
>
> I was then taken out by one of our own Federal Officers of the Army, Colonel Kanfrom, [Kahn from?] Iowa, a brother Mason who got two Citizens as bondsmen for $10,000 each for my appearance before the Provost Marshal until the case would be tried . . .

> On the twenty-fifth of the same month, without any trial, my stock of goods was confiscated and sold at auction.
>
> After reporting twice a day in person before the Provost Marshal for nearly ninety days, a half sheet of paper was read to me by the clerk. This was supposed to be a copy of my sentence from a Military Court. There, a suppose sentence [trial?] had been had without my presence or my knowledge. It said that it was ordered that my stock of goods be confiscated for the use of the U.S. Military forces and that I should be transported beyond the line of the City limits of the Department of Tenn.
>
> This sentence was never enforced, but left me penniless and in a very uncomfortable situation. I was convicted on a false practice of aiding deserters, for selling citizens clothing to one of our own Union Soldiers, a paper collar, a silk neck tie and one colored traveling shirt and a pair of blue jeans pants for the amount of $14.00.

Poor Isaac Meyer had to furnish a bribe of $20 to a clerk to secure a copy of his "sentence," and had to run from office to office for months before he was granted permission to reclaim his personal property—a watch, a ring, a pen-knife, and some cash—which had been taken from him at the time of his arrest and had never been returned. Before long he was drafted into the Army, and served in a unit stationed in Memphis until the end of the war.[88]

Quaint as his telling of the story may be, Meyer and his like were the basis for the generalizations in Sherman's reports, and, ultimately, for the Grant Order. So far as the army was concerned, Meyer was another Jew who was arrested, found guilty, and sentenced. But is there any more reason to accept the version of the officer who presided at the military trial than Meyer's? Sherman did not have to furnish evidence for his allegations; Meyer was so convinced of his innocence that he was willing to have his children and grandchildren learn the facts of his arrest when they read the story of his life!

No Jew of the Civil War era, nor of our own, would attempt to excuse or deny criminal actions committed by Jews. Decent, law-abiding Jews were ashamed that any Americans—Jews or non-Jews—should be guilty of disobeying Government laws and regulations at a time of national crisis. Rabbi Simon Tuska of Memphis was so vehement in his denunciation of some of the Northern Jews who came to Memphis as "greedy birds of prey" that the abolitionist crusader, Rabbi David Einhorn, accused him of being a Confederate sympathizer.[89] Jacob Peres, the other Memphis rabbi, who, as we have seen, was himself in business, had to use Hebrew to express his sorrow and chagrin when he spoke of Jewish law-breakers. "Some time ago," he wrote Isaac Leeser in Philadelphia, "over 200 chsuh, [Jews] were in prison for smuggling. It is a great kukj [profanation of the name of God.] But lbtyj vx lbjbt [we—how have we sinned?—referring to the Grant Order]?"[90] And when Leeser began his article on The Order, the longest article he ever wrote for *The Occident*, he spoke with shame of "the crowd of needy [Jewish] adventurers, who travel or glide rather through the highways and byways of the land in quest of gain, often we fear unlawful, who in their material labors are perfectly indifferent to the duties of their religion, and not rarely conceal it by a pretended conformity."[91]

On another occasion, Einhorn urged American Jewry to "make war also upon the Amalek in our own midst! Let us meet them that bring shame and disgrace upon us and our religious faith, with the fulness of our moral indignation." He was referring to Jewish smugglers. He admitted that Jews were no guiltier than others, and that "little rogues are brought to punishment whereas big ones are allowed to escape"—but "the crime," he said, "is far greater when committed by a Jew, because he must know that the whole Jewish community is made accountable for his offense, that his act inflicts shame, disgrace and misfortune upon his fellow believers."[92]

These rabbis did not need to be reminded that the people to whose service they devoted their lives and talents were not all saints. They spoke in a spirit of courageous and sincere rebuke to the erring members of the House of Israel. Their honest sense of shame was a challenge to the spirit of intolerance which labeled all Jews wrong-doers, and neglected to specify the religion and national origin of the hosts of others.

Unfortunately the court-martial and prison records of the Tennessee area for the period under discussion are incomplete, but a sufficient number have been preserved in the National Archives at Washington for the purpose of a survey of Jewish offenders. Since no entry concerning a criminal's religion was made by the authorities, names have to be regarded as an index to possible Jewish origin. A margin of error must therefore be underlined in any consideration of these records. It is possible to determine, however, whether generalizations are valid: was there a high incidence of Jewish smugglers and commercial offenders in the Tennessee area?

In the *Report of Citizen Prisoners in the Custody of the Provost Marshal, Memphis Tennessee,*[93] which covers the period from March 1863 to early 1865, a count was made of individuals listed for smuggling offenses. There were 198 such persons. Of these a possible five names may be identified as Jewish. The percentage is 2.5. In the same volume, a special study was made of all those arrested for *any* offense, whose name began with "L"—a letter of the alphabet with which a large number of Jewish names begin. There were 134 arrestees in all, and a possible seven were Jews, all arrested for minor offenses.

In *District of Middle Tennessee, Jail Records*, a study was made for a control period, December 1862 to April 1863, and in *Records of Courts Martial, Memphis District*, for August 1863 to January 1864. The complete number of white men arrested for non-commercial offenses was 104. Of these, two were possibly Jews. The complete number of white men arrested for smuggling and other commercial offenses was 34; one was possibly a Jew. The percentage for the second count is 2.94.

In *Cases Coming Before Wm. Truesdall, Chief of Army Police in Memphis*, from February to May 1863, apparently a volume of special cases requiring such additional records, 44 persons were involved in 37 cases. In two cases three possible Jews were accused of smuggling, and in an additional case, three Jewish brothers were arrested, but no offense was recorded.[94] The percentage of possible Jews, including the latter case, is 13.63.

The average percentage for the three studies is 6.03. If this figure is accurate, and it can certainly not be far wrong for the volumes studied, a possible six of every 100 men arrested (not necessarily convicted) for commercial offenses were Jewish.[95]

In a volume of *Special Orders, District of Memphis*, containing over 350 orders in regard to business and commercial offenses, as well as ordinary civil suits, two Jews were listed as being fined for violating certain liquor ordinances;[96] one Jew was convicted of selling boots without a permit and his two dozen pairs of boots were confiscated;[97] two Jews were charged by a third with extortion in the guise of U.S. Marshals;[98] and one Jew was banished from the city for smuggling while his two Jewish companions, for no stated reason, were permitted to remain.[99] By far the most interesting case in the volume concerns three Jews who were arrested for smuggling on

January 12, 1863, and sent to prison at Alton. Their goods were confiscated and ordered sold for the benefit of the Government. On January 27, however, they were released on bond and ordered to appear before the Provost Marshal every day. Their trial was held on February 9, and the court decided that certain drugs and medicine which had been found in their stock did not belong to them, but to a certain John Farley (obviously a non-Jew and otherwise unidentified). Those items were to be confiscated. But the three men were found not guilty and all their own property was ordered restored to them. This was not the end of the case, however, for the findings of the court had to be reviewed by General Hurlbut. He rejected them without detailing his reasons. Although he did not declare the defendants guilty, he ordered certain goods confiscated: buttons, pins, tea, coffee, hats. All other merchandise was to be returned to them. But were the Jews guilty or innocent? Hurlbut evidently believed that they could be found not guilty and still deserve to have their property confiscated! Why? Perhaps their guilt was in being Jewish![100]

One other illuminating example of the influence of prejudice upon General Hurlbut's decisions was detailed by Rabbi Wise. On November 30, 1863, General Order No. 162 was issued by his Headquarters of the 16th Army Corps at Memphis, prohibiting fifteen clothing houses, which "are reported to have stocks of military clothing on hand, and not having the necessary authority to trade in the same from these headquarters," from selling those stocks and ordering them to send their goods north of the lines of the Department. All fifteen stores were owned by Jews.[101] One of them wrote and urged Dr. Wise to protest:

> . . . the goods were bought and shipped on legal permits, and five percent duty was paid thereon, which is a clear loss . . . Most wonderful, however, in this matter, is that two non-Jewish houses, of Memphis, Tickner & Co., and Waggner and Cheek, were not included in this order. On the contrary, it is maintained, on good authority, that Tickner and Co. not only knew in advance that such an order was to be issued, but were given permits to bring such military goods to Memphis and monopolize the trade.[102]

It is doubtlessly impossible to locate any conclusive evidence in either direction, but the order *was* issued, and the description of it which was furnished to Dr. Wise is verified by Hurlbut's General Order No. 162, published in the *Official Records*. The fifteen merchants were all Jewish. Unless one finds it logical that fifteen Jewish merchants could be guilty of illegal practices, while two non-Jewish competitors were not, the only conclusion is the one expressed by Wise's informant: prejudice was the controlling factor.

Since prejudice exists in the realm of the emotions, it is hardly possible to identify and isolate its indirect influence. We have no way of discovering the number of cases in which prejudice against the Jews and economic gain combined to produce confiscations, prison terms, or expulsions.[103] This was one of the interpretations given to The Order, however, by contemporary writers who suspected that the expulsion of the Jews had been foisted upon Grant and Sherman by influential cotton buyers and their officer-partners, to pave the way for higher profits for themselves. The *Cincinnati Enquirer* was prepared to assert editorially that Grant

> was imposed upon by malicious misrepresentations of interested parties . . . with whose arrangements for speculating in cotton certain Israelites, engaged in the same business, interfered. It is well-known, that in more than one instance, military officers took to themselves a monopoly of the cotton trade . . . and made fortunes for themselves and relatives . . . It may be that the Israelites at Memphis and other points, have been purchasing cotton without any regard for the nice little percentage which it is expected cotton traders should pay for the protection of Federal bayonets and the use of Government transportation.[104]

Isaac M. Wise thought he had proof of this in the fact that the price of cotton was lowered from 40¢ to 25¢ a pound the day after The Order was issued. The meaning was clear to Wise:

> The Jews bought cotton of planters at 40 cents a pound; the military authorities with their business partners, agents, clerks, portiers, &c., intend to buy that staple at twenty-five cents a pound . . . They could sell it in Eastern cities just as high as the next man—and the Jews must leave, because they interfere with a branch of the military business.[105]

No verification of these suspicions and accusations is possible. *But only Jews, and not all traders were banished; cotton traders as a group were never expelled.* The question, therefore, which was asked by so many Jews and

Christians alike, "Who stood to profit most from the departure of Jews?" was not an unfair or irrelevant question. And the answer, "The other traders and speculators, civilian and military," was in itself the only possible explanation of The Order.

Why stigmatize the Jews? Because for Grant and all the others who paved the way for The Order, the Jews were a scapegoat already prepared and identified, handed down from one age to the next, hounded and hunted from one country to another; the Jews were a myth, a people branded as the purveyor of all manner of wickedness. Few would question the guilt of Jews for any crime or evil; few could doubt that they were capable of anything of which the clichés accused them. The Jews were the natural scapegoat, even in the United States, because they had already been the scapegoat for almost two millenia.

7

American Judaeophobia 1861–1865

Had the Grant Affair been the one unique instance of anti-Jewish prejudice in action during the Civil War period, it would have to be recorded as an inexplicable aberration, an isolated freak of irrationality; but an extensive reading in the daily press and occasional literature of the period demonstrates that The Order was only one example of a series of anti-Jewish libels which were propagated during the War in both the Union and the Confederacy. Anti-Jewish prejudice was actually a characteristic expression of the age, part and parcel of the economic and social upheaval effectuated by the war.

No satisfactory study of the history of anti-Jewish prejudice in America has yet been written. While it is quite true that the almost total absence of legal disabilities and of overt acts of violence indicated an enlightened attitude toward the Jew by the United States as a nation, it is equally true that there was always a subtle undercurrent of prejudice which flowed through the American civilization. There was prejudice in New Amsterdam in 1654 when Peter Stuyvesant battled with his superiors in Holland for the right to expel the first Jewish immigrants to his colony;[1] in Maryland in 1658 when Jacob Lumbrozo was tried for blasphemy;[2] in 1737 when the members of the New York Assembly prohibited Jews from voting;[3] in Maryland and North Carolina, where Jews were forbidden to hold office, long after the ratification of the Constitution.[4]

In periods of social and political crisis, such as the Federalist-Republican strife at the turn of the nineteenth century, this prejudice became a political weapon. Jews and non-Jews who belonged to the Jeffersonian movement were smeared *as Jews* by their opponents. In Philadelphia a Federalist said that "A Jewish Tavern Keeper, with a very Jewish name [Israel Israel—a non-Jew] is chosen one of the Senators of this commonwealth for the city of Philadelphia solely on account of his violent attachment to the French interests."[5] In New York City a Federalist thought he would permanently damn the Democratic-Republican Society by saying that "all seem, like their Vice-President, of the tribe of Shylock."[6] In Pittsburgh, a Federalist broadside played upon the name of John Israel (a non-Jew) in an effort to disarm the effectiveness of his anti-Federalist paper, the *Tree of Liberty*:[7]

Have you heard	of the New Press?
Echo	of the Jew Press.
What, is it published,	and by a Jew?
Echo	and by a Hugh.
Of the Aurora	Another edition?
Echo	a mother of sedition.
Jacobinism imaginary is	or is real
Echo	Israel.

American Jewry was not large enough to warrant the violent passions which were aroused against the Catholic immigrants in the 1820s and 1830s, and later in the 1850s by the Know-Nothing party, but Jewish individuals who were conspicuous in the journalistic, political, or economic world, bore the brunt of prejudice. Mordecai M. Noah, dramatist, politician, journalist, and newspaper editor, was one of those who frequently had his religion thrown into his face. United States Consul to Tunis in 1815, he was recalled by Secretary of State Monroe, apparently on orders from President Madison, in a brief, curt note which began:

> At the time of your appointment, as Consul at Tunis, it was not known that the Religion which you profess would form any obstacle to the exercise of your Consular functions. Recent information, however, on which entire reliance may be placed, proves that it would produce a very unfavorable effect . . .[8]

In 1842, Horace Greeley used Noah's religion as a point in an anti-slavery argument:

> We choose our own company in all times, and that of our own race, but cherish little of that spirit which for eighteen centuries has held the kindred of M. M. Noah accursed of God and man, outlawed and outcast, and unfit to be the associates of Christians and Musselmen, or even self-respecting Pagans. Where there are thousands who would not eat with a Negro, there are (or lately were) tens of thousands who would not eat with a Jew. We leave to such renegades as the Judge of Israel the stirring up of prejudices and the prating of "usages of society," which over half the world make him an abhorrence, as they not long since would have done here . . .[9]

One of the strangest cases in legal history occurred in Philadelphia in 1849–51, when Warder Cresson, U.S. Consul to Jerusalem and an eccentric student of obscure religious sectarian views, went on trial for insanity because he had decided to become a Jew. His wife and children were convinced that anyone who converted to the Old Testament faith must be demented, especially if he was the scion of a proud Quaker family. It required two long trials to free him from the charge, restore his property to him, and permit him to return to Palestine so that he could live out his days in piety and good works.[10]

Uriah P. Levy fought against prejudice all through his years in the regular navy, and had to testify at a special court of inquiry ordered by Congress before he was cleared of charges which he said were trumped up because he was a Jew.[11] Almost every political opponent of Judah P. Benjamin referred to his name and faith. A typical case was that of Nicholas Davis of Alabama who, in the heat of a political campaign, denounced the Louisiana Senator as that "infamous Jew . . . Judas P. Benjamin. . . ."[12] Practically every Jew who rose above the ordinary level had to realize that he would pay for his conspicuous position by suffering attacks on his background and the faith of his folk.

It is the writer's impression, however (and until a thorough research has been made of the entire field, impressions will have to serve), that although specific individuals were abused as Jews by those who opposed, hated, or envied them, it was not a common habit to attack all Jews for whatever anyone found wrong with life in the United States. That remained for the Civil War period.

I. UNION VERSION

An indication of the anti-Jewish tendency of the age was the common practice of Northern newspapers to identify as a "Jew," "Israelite," or, worst yet, a "German Jew," any Jew who was apprehended in or suspected of carrying on disloyal activities. Jews who enlisted in the Army, or whose names were reported in the casualty columns were never identified as such; but a wrong-doer was promptly catalogued for the public mind, whether it was in Dubuque, Iowa, Rochester, N.Y., or Burlington, Vt.[13] A dispatch from St. Albans, Vt., for instance, referred to "Mrs. Meyer, the wife of a German Jew residing in N.Y., who had been acting as a messenger between the rebels who congregate in Montreal and the South."[14] At the other end of the Union, in Cairo, Ill., an AP writer wired a story to the *New York Herald* about "a Jew named Morrison . . . who had been arrested at Memphis as a rebel spy."[15]

This journalistic technique was at one and the same time the product of prejudice and an agency for its dissemination. It fixed ever more strongly in the mind of the reader the myth of the dishonest, law-breaking Jew. But it could never have been used unless there had been an acquaintance with the myth in the first place. As one reporter put it, "How could you expect a Jew quartermaster to be honest?"[16] Omit the word "quartermaster" and the question would be representative of the habit of mind with which some citizens approached the Jewish question.

In the political sphere, the fact that Judah P. Benjamin, high statesman of the Confederacy, was a Jew, provided a convenient slur with which all Jews could be defamed. Crude and insulting references to his religious origins were commonplace at the very beginning of the war and during election campaigns. A catalogue of public figures who attacked him *as a Jew* would include, among others, Senator Andrew Johnson, of Tennessee;[17] General Benjamin F. Butler;[18] Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts;[19] Governor John Brough[20] and Senator Ben Wade of Ohio.[21] At the very outbreak of secession, the *Boston Transcript* directed its criticism of Southern intransigeance at Jewish figures:

> The Children of Israel—It is stated that Mr. Mordecai, a wealthy Jew of Charleston, S. C., has presented to his belligerent state and city $10,000, to aid the purpose of secession, with the offer besides of a large number of negroes to work in the cause. Mr. Benjamin of Louisiana, a

> member of the same faith, is *the* disunion leader in the U. S. Senate, and Mr. Yulee of Florida, whose name has been changed from the more appropriate one of Levy, has always been one of the hottest leaders of the ultra fire-eaters. Can it be possible, that this peculiar race—the old Catholics used to call them "accursed"—having no country of their own, desire that other nations shall be in the same unhappy condition as they are themselves? . . . This "stiffnecked generation," by its principal men, takes a lead in attempting to destroy a Constitution which has been to them an Ark of refuge and safety.[22]

It could only be prejudice and bigotry which would prompt an editor to single out prominent Southern Jews for special treatment.

The same conclusion must be reached in a consideration of those Republican journals and papers which accused all Northern Jews of being enemies of the Union. Articles by the "Lounger" in *Harper's Weekly* said that all Jews were secessionists, copperheads, and rebels.[23] During the 1864 election, the *Newburg* (N.Y.) *Journal* matched the "Lounger" in this wise:

> Show me the descendants of that accursed race who crucified the Savior and who are always opposed to the best interests of the Government in every land in which they roam; who never enter our armies but for the purpose of depleting the pockets of the soldiers, and who hang around the camps to take every advantage of their necessities; and I will show you the men who, ninety-nine out of a hundred, will vote for the Modern Democracy this fall, and would support Vallandigham or the infamous butcher Quantrell in preference to General Butler or Abraham Lincoln.[24]

The *Harrisburg* (Pa.) *Telegraph* published a paragraph about a certain Lazarus Barnhart, a Jewish tavern-keeper of the city, who participated in a Democratic party parade. Then came this appeal to prejudice: "Will Rabbi Barnhart please inform his Christian fellow copperheads who murdered the Savior and who shed the blood of the early Christians? Our Irish friend, Pat Ryan, occupied a seat in this carriage and looked as if he was out of place (which he was) sitting side by side with a Jew copperhead."[25]In Indiana, the *Evansville Journal* swore that "it is a fact that our fellow citizens of the Hebrew persuasion are, with a few honorable exceptions, all afflicted with the Copperhead mania."[26] In California, the *American Flag* of San Francisco announced that "a large majority of the wealthier Jews of

California, and particularly of San Francisco, are copperheads . . . adherents of the last, lingering, horrid despotism of the Dark Ages, which were dismal with the wail of their forefathers."[27] The Jews, apparently, whether there were many or few who preferred the Democratic party's policies, were not to be permitted the choice accorded to other citizens.

August Belmont was a particular target for the Republican press and party spokesmen, even though (or perhaps *because*) he had married into one of America's most distinguished non-Jewish families, was rearing his children as Christians, and maintained no affiliation with Jewish activities or religious life.[28] His participation in national affairs as the Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, not to say his great wealth and contacts with the bankers of Europe, made him extremely vulnerable to those Republicans who disliked Jews. It was he, they said, who paid all the bills for the Democratic party, and he expected to collect handsomely after the Union had been surrendered to the South.[29] In Philadelphia, a Union League speaker made it a point to refer to "the Jew banker of New York;"[30] an orator at the Cooper Institute in New York made some insulting comments about Belmont and his "knot" of German Jewish bankers;[31] the *Weekly Mirror* of Manchester, N.H., said that the "Jew brokers" who gathered around Belmont were doing all they could to help the Confederacy.[32] The *Chicago Tribune*, approaching the election of November '64, wanted to know "how much is McClellan to get from the Rothschilds . . . if he succeeds in betraying his country and handing it over to [the Confederates'] tender mercies? . . . Will we have a dishonorable peace in order to enrich Belmont, the Rothschilds, and the whole tribe of Jews . . . ?"[33] The small *Vincennes* (Ind.) *Weekly Gazette*, as well as the powerful *New York Herald*, spoke as though all the Jewish bankers in the world, with Belmont in the lead, were joined together for the support of the Confederacy.[34]

It was true that the European banking firm of Erlanger had negotiated for a six million dollar loan to the Confederacy, and had sent three of its agents to Richmond,[35] but that the Jews should be attacked on Erlanger's account by the *Harper's Weekly*, the *Cincinnati Gazette*, and other papers,[36] was too much like rubbing salt into a wound. Erlanger had long ago been converted to Christianity! And were the Jews still to be blamed for his actions? *The Jewish Record* asked, "Apropos—does *it pay* to send out missionaries, and convert Jews, if 'Christianity' teaches such things as Mr. Erlanger appears to have learned?"[37] Isaac M. Wise wanted his neighbors to know that "Baron Erlanger is not one of those common Jews and usurers . . . he was baptized many years ago!"[38]

The accusation that the Rothschilds were pro-slavery was printed so often that the American Consul at Frankfort decided to set the American press straight. His letter must have been a shock to the *Harper's Weekly* and other journals:[39]

> In your paper of February 28, you do a great injustice to the eminent firm of Rothschilds here, when you hint that they are like a certain Rabbi [Raphall] who held opinions that some men were born to be slaves. I know not what the other firms—and there are many of the Rothschilds, all related—in Europe, think of slavery, but here the firm of M. A. Von Rothschild & Son are opposed to slavery and in favor of Union. *A converted Jew*, Erlanger, has taken the rebel loan of £3,000,000, and lives in this city, and Baron Rothschild informed me that all Germany condemned this act of lending money to establish a slaveholding government, and that so great was public opinion against it, that Erlanger & Co. dare not offer it on the Frankfort Bourse. I further know that the Jews rejoice to think that none of their sect would be guilty of lending money for the purpose above named; but it was left, they say, for apostate Jews to do it.
>
> I hope you will correct the statement you made about this firm.
>
> Yours truly,
> W. W. Murphy.

The *New York Tribune*,[40] *Herald*,[41] and *Commercial*,[42] the *Patterson Press*,[43] and the *Detroit Commercial Advertiser*[44] were only a few of the papers which alleged that Jews were responsible for the speculation in gold: "all Jews are gold speculators;" "the Jews are engaged in destroying the national credit, in running up the price of gold;" "those hook-nosed wretches speculate on disasters;" "the great majority of those engaged in gold speculation are of the Jewish race." The *New York Dispatch* said that if you walked to the corner of Williams Street and Exchange Place, all you would see were the "descendants of Shylock," and all you would hear would be "Up to shixty-five, up to sheventy-one! Mine God, it vill go up to von hundred!"[45] There was as little truth in this accusation as in any other blanket generalization; the New York Jewish editors dared their secular colleagues to walk to the gold curb and count Jews, so certain were they that a very small proportion of Jews could be found there.[46]

There were Jewish bankers, of course. One Jewish banking firm in New York was Seligman Brothers. Joseph and Jesse Seligman, both Republicans, had made a fortune in clothing manufacture early in the War—at one time the Government owed the firm over one million dollars for merchandise already delivered. Joseph was so eager to be of assistance to the Union cause that he went to Frankfort to sell securities, and succeeded in disposing of $200,000,000 in Union bonds—a feat which W. E. Dodd said was "scarcely less important than the Battle of Gettysburg" because it turned the tide on the financial-diplomatic front.[47] An indication of Seligman's personal opinions is to be found in a letter which he wrote his family in 1863 about the Democratic party and the draft riots:

> Although I know the character of the party and people opposed to our present Government and the country I have yet confidence enough in the wisdom and patriotism of the masses to hope of an early putting down of all "Copperheads!" . . . I am really anxious to see your remarks respecting the late riots in N.Y. That Seymour had telegraphed to Washington to stop the Draft is of a piece with the known Copperheadism of the once "Democratic" party. In place of putting down rebellion at home and at the South, they advise stopping drafting and thereby give Jeff Davis their moral support, and another straw of hope . . .[48]

This was one of the "Jew bankers" who were said to be wrecking the country!

Even Belmont, the completely devoted Democrat, was eager to use his talents and contacts for the benefit of the Union. In 1861 he corresponded with Secretary of the Treasury Chase, advising him on the wisest course to follow in attempting to secure the support of European capital. In July, on his way to Europe, he wrote:

> If by that time [when Belmont would be in Europe] Congress has passed the measures you propose, or that in anticipation of what Congress intends to do, you have made up your mind as regards the disposition of your foreign loan I shall be very happy to devote my best energies toward the furtherance of your views if you deem proper to confide them to me. I mean to act in these promises not as the Banker & Correspondent of foreign Banking firms but as an American citizen,

> anxious to do his share in the crisis which has overcome our dear Country. If you should deem it advisable & conducive to the public interest to empower me with the negotiations of the loan & place me in full possession of your views & limits I shall do my utmost to watch & promote the interests of my Government. . .[49]

This banker-politician so irresponsibly attacked as a Confederate sympathizer and traitor had already recruited and equipped the first German-American regiment in New York.[50]

It was not only the Jewish bankers of New York who were disloyal to the Government, and devising ways of plotting the economic ruin of the country, so the rumors ran—but at every geographic point of contact between the Union and the Confederacy, Jews were supposed to be doing the actual work of supplying the South with goods and the necessities of war. The Grant affair was the capstone of this accusation in the Memphis area, but the accusation was current in other areas as well. In Cincinnati and Louisville, the early centers of trade with the Confederacy, and the geographical, political, and emotional borderline between the two sections, the libel made its appearance even earlier than in Tennessee. A reporter in Covington, Ky., concluded an article on the Jews with the statement that "the people whose ancestors smuggled for eighteen centuries smuggle yet."[51] In Louisville, an anonymous writer told the readers of the *Louisville Journal* that Jewish smugglers were pouring into the city. "It is remarkable what a flight of these birds of passage the contraband business has brought to this city."[52] Dr. Felsenheld, who answered the charge, demanded that the anonymous writer identify the Jews by name; he insisted that to his knowledge "not a single Jew has settled here since the smuggling commenced."[53]

Grant had only banished the Jews from his area; an Associated Press writer in New Orleans would have had them all executed if he had his way. He told the story of three Jews who were caught on Lake Pontchartrain carrying "a large quantity of medicine for the rebels, and also letters from forty or fifty leading citizens of New Orleans to persons high in authority in the Confederate Government." And then this sorry exhibition of prejudice: "The Jews in New Orleans and all the South ought to be exterminated. They run the blockade, and are always to be found at the bottom of every new villainy."[54] Anti-Jewish prejudice was apparently rife in New

Orleans. A few weeks later, a Cincinnati Jew returning north from Louisiana told Isaac M. Wise that "local editors and correspondents of northern papers, residing temporarily in [New Orleans], frequently ventilate their stupid prejudice against our race in revolting newspaper hoaxes and downright lies."[55]

When a Confederate privateer put in at Curaçao in 1861, the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* reported that the Dutch had permitted the ship to touch port with great reluctance, but felt that the dangerous condition of the ship's keel spelled disaster unless it could be repaired. This harmless incident was perverted into an attack on the Jews by the *New York Post*. The Jews of Curaçao had defrauded all the non-Jews of their wealth, and were completely in control of trade in the West Indies, said the *Post*; they are only "too glad to furnish the Confederate pirates with all they need. . . . There is small doubt that these people are favorably inclined toward our insurgents, being, like them, slaveholders and unscrupulous and eager for trade of whatever kind."[56] An anti-Jewish flavor could be injected into any obscure report if the editor was so inclined.

Anti-Jewish accusations during the war ran the gamut from the ridiculous to the tragic:

> All the commissary officers in General Sigel's division were dishonest Jews, making fortunes by fraud.[57]
>
> Jews were buying up commissions and living in luxury in Washington.[58]
>
> If a non-Jew was engaged in disloyal activities, it was only because "he was made a tool of by his friends of the Hebrew faith."[59]
>
> The Jews favored the draft; therefore they suffered more severely than others from the New York draft riots in July, 1863.[60]
>
> The Jews were prepared to "crucify Abraham Lincoln" as they had "crucified the Savior."[61]
>
> Columbia, South Carolina, had been set afire by Jews.[62]

Some of the most prominent persons in the Union were imbued with prejudice against the Jews. One of these was Major General Benjamin F. Butler of Massachusetts, conniving careerist and political opportunist of major proportions, who was given the title of "Beast" by the Confederacy for his severity during the early military occupation of New Orleans. One of his better-known victims in New Orleans was Mrs. Philip Phillips, wife of the Alabama Congressman, a fire-eating secessionist in skirts. Butler ordered her to be imprisoned on Ship Island for months because:

> . . . having been once imprisoned for her traitorous proclivities and acts at Washington, and released by the clemency of the Government, and having been found training her children to spit on officers of the United States, for which act of one of those children both her husband and herself apologized and were again forgiven, [she] is now found on the balcony of her house during the passage of the funeral procession of Lieut. DeKay, laughing and mocking at his remains, and upon being inquired of by the Commanding General if this fact were so, contemptuously replies, "I was in good spirit that day."[63]

The war which Butler waged upon this Jewess and other Southern women made him the Confederacy's "Public Enemy Number One," with a price upon his head.

The Jews found reason to take issue with him in early 1864, when, as the commanding officer at Fortress Monroe, Va., he released a report announcing the capture of "150 rebels, 90 mules, 60 contrabands [Negroes] and 5 Jews."[64] The obviously intentional stratification which evaluated Jews lower than rebels and mules and slaves had a remarkable touch of maliciousness about it. Lincoln laughed at the report, because he though it was a joke.[65] But it was not funny to Jews. One of the Jewish editors, Myer S. Isaacs, curbed his anger and wrote Butler a moderate, patient letter of protest, calling the unfairness to his attention. Isaacs and Butler then engaged in a protracted correspondence. The General revealed the extent to which he had imbibed prejudicial conceptions of the Jews. They were a tightly-knit and highly-organized nation who set themselves apart and defended themselves against others even when one of their group was wrong. They were all "traders, merchants, and bankers." He said that the only Jews he ever knew had "been principally engaged in the occupations [i.e. smuggling] which caused the capture which has occasioned this correspondence."[66] They were supporting the Confederacy with whole heart—"two of them certainly are in the Confederate Cabinet."

Isaacs wondered who the Cabinet officers were . . . the progenitor of "the tribe of Benjamin, the Jewish Secretary of State," as Butler referred to him in another connection;[67] and then a highly inaccurate report: "I refer to Mr. Memminger as the other member of the Confederate Cabinet. I have been informed that Mr. Mallory is also of the Jewish faith or nationality."[68] It was apparent that Butler was one of those who, without further investigation, adopt any rumors which support their prejudices.

Butler ultimately apologized for the dispatch which had provoked the correspondence, and thanked Isaacs for the bird's-eye-view of contemporary Jewish life which he wrote for his information and which has become a classic of its kind.[69] He also apologized to Simon Wolf, who had shown the dispatch to Lincoln and then went to see Butler in person. The General had written Isaacs, in his first letter, that "since my attention has been drawn to it by your comments, and others of the press, I really do not see any reason for changing the phrase." But he apparently gave Wolf another story: "He, like so many other generals who have made mistakes, claimed that he knew nothing of the message, that it had been sent by a subordinate, and that he would have the error corrected at once."[70]

But it was too late to change the references to Jews in the Butler-sanctioned *History of the Administration of the Department of the Gulf in the Year 1862* which James Parton wrote in his behalf. There Butler was quoted as saying that "the most active agents and most effective supporters [of the Confederacy], have been the same quasi-foreign houses, mostly Jews, and other correspondents, principally in Havana and Nassau, who all deserve at the hands of the Government what is due to the Jew Benjamin, Slidell, Mallory, and Floyd." He also had harsh words for J. P. Benjamin's brother-in-law, whom he called "a Jew famed for a bargain."[71] In his diary and reminiscences, published in 1892, Butler made further references to Jews. Curbstone transactions in Confederate money had been legalized in New Orleans because Butler hoped to get reliable information from the variations in price. Those who traded in the paper money, he said, "were principally Jews, and as Benjamin, the Confederate Secretary of State, was a Jew, and his brother-in-law was a broker, I supposed that there were some of the Jew brokers who would get true intelligence from Richmond."[72] In a letter to Secretary of War Stanton, Butler wrote,

> . . . is the profitableness of the investment to be permitted to be alleged as a sufficient apology for aiding the rebellion by money and arms? If so, all their army contractors, principally Jews, should be held blameless, for they have made immense fortunes by the war. Indeed, I

> suppose another Jew—one Judas—thought his investment in the thirty pieces of silver was a profitable one, until the penalty of treachery reached him.[73]

This was in connection with a tax on brokerage firms which he instituted on July 4, 1862. It was always a good argument for a policy to predict that it would prevent Jews from making too much money!

Butler may even have activated his prejudice to the extent of discriminating against those Jews who fell into his hands at Fortress Monroe. *The Jewish Record* of New York thought so, and reported that Butler had said "he could suck the blood of every Jew, and he will detain every Jew as long as he can." The editor of the *Record* said he was afraid to publish details of Butler's mistreatment of Jewish prisoners because it would only give him a chance to "increase his severities" against them.[74] After he was transferred from the post, the *Record* said it hoped that certain Jews who had been confined in prison for over a year, at his orders, would finally have a trial or at least a hearing so that they would discover the reason for their arrest.[75] President Lincoln was convinced that at least one of them, Abraham Samuels, had not been given a fair hearing at Fortress Monroe, and instructed Butler to give him an opportunity to prove that he was not a Confederate agent. Samuels defended himself so ably that Lincoln ordered his unconditional release.[76]

It would be idle to speculate on the reasons for Butler's prejudice against the Jews. Perhaps part of the explanation, however, is to be found in the fact that he himself had an unsavory reputation: he was the one General who was never able to free himself of the suspicion of using his power to amass a fortune for himself, his family, and his intimate friends, while he controlled New Orleans with an iron fist.[77]

It remains only to be recorded that, being a typical politician, when the Jews of Boston asked him to give an address at a huge Hebrew Fair for charity in 1877, General Butler was pleased to accept the invitation, and in his address paid glowing tribute to the noble character of the Jewish people![78]

Fitting company for Benjamin F. Butler in terms of character, temperament, and the number of enemies he made during his lifetime, was another Union leader possessed of a nickname: "Parson" William Ganaway Brownlow of eastern Tennessee. A Methodist circuit-rider in his early years, later a staunchly partisan newspaper editor and publisher, Brownlow was a vociferous propagandist for causes all his life.[79] In 1856, he set the seal to a vigorous Know-Nothing crusade against Catholics and aliens in editorials and speeches with the publication of a book titled at length, in the style of the day, *Americanism Contrasted with Foreignism, Romanism, and Bogus Democracy, in the Light of Reason, History, and Scriptures; in which Certain Demagogues in Tennessee and elsewhere, are Shown up in their true Colors.* It was a revelation of a man goaded to hatred. Less a religious zealot than a fanatic who latched his neurosis on to a religious vehicle, more a demagogue than an orator, more a propagandist than a journalist, Brownlow was a dangerous enemy for anyone to make, whether it was the editors of the opposition, the Baptists and Presbyterians, or Andrew Johnson.

A man like Brownlow whose career was erected on hatreds could not avoid being a Jew-hater. His *Knoxville Whig* demonstrated it when Congress, in February 1860, for the first time invited a rabbi to open a House session with prayer. That a Jew, a member of "the people that killed Christ," should pray for the national welfare was too much for the "Parson" to bear. "It was not until an old *Jewish Rabbi, Father* Raphael, by invitation of the *Democracy*, opened the proceedings of the House with prayer, that they were enabled to organize, by the election of Pennington. [When] they called into their aid one of the *murderers of Christ*, their hearts and minds were prepared for anything . . . Let *Jews* and *Catholics* pray for Democrats, if you want the prayers to have effect," he wrote.[80] The readers of the *Whig* were quite accustomed to the "Parson's" opinions about the Jews,[81] and might almost have predicted that he would take Judah P. Benjamin's high status in the Confederate Government most personally.

When Tennessee seceded from the Union, Brownlow was one of the organizers of anti-Confederate forces in the Tennessee highlands. The resistance movement of which he was a leader was like a thorn in the flesh of the Confederacy, and Benjamin, as Secretary of War, was determined to see it quelled. Confederate troops moved in and Brownlow was one of those captured. Instead of having Brownlow imprisoned or executed as a traitor, Benjamin preferred not to add his name to the Union martyrology, and gave orders to have him sent North.[82] It was an act of clemency as well as statesmanship, but Brownlow counted his arrest and exile a score to settle with Benjamin.[83]

Once he had reached Union territory, he became a national hero and made a triumphal tour of the North. Everywhere he spoke he took a poke at "the little Jew" who had persecuted and oppressed him. The North virtually lionized him and he capitalized on his popularity by writing a book about his experiences. It was known as *Parson Brownlow's Book*, its real title being *Sketches of the Rise, Progress, and Decline of Secession; with a Narrative of Personal Adventures among the Rebels*. In that book he continued his campaign against Benjamin, repeating the tale about his expulsion from Yale for stealing, and denouncing him as the leading enemy of the Union.[84] In another book which he published some time later, he said that he had expected "no more mercy from [Benjamin] than was shown by his illustrious predecessors towards Jesus Christ,"[85] and in one of his speeches he said that Benjamin had "threatened to hang [me] with or without evidence. My only wonder was that he did not threaten to crucify me."[86]

One who was willing to say of Southern clergymen that "a more unmitigated, God-forsaken set of scoundrels do not live than the preachers of the Gospel down South,"[87] could not be expected to use restraint in discussing the Jews. When Grant issued his General Order Number Eleven, Brownlow was one of the few public figures who actually applauded. After a long, tongue-in-the-cheek pretense at being free of prejudice against any group of individuals, in a letter to the *Cincinnati Daily Times*,[88] Brownlow set his justification of Grant on record: "It is useless to disguise the fact that nineteen out of every twenty cases brought to light, of all this smuggling, turns out to be the work of certain *circumcized Hebrews*." Not as content as General Grant with making generalizations, the "Parson" proceeded to enumerate names and cases— but these "facts" were promptly investigated by a Cincinnati Jew who wrote to the *Times* six days later that the two Jews Brownlow mentioned were not doing business in Knoxville, but in Louisville and New York, and "that of the several boxes, marked 'Sanitary Stores', that have been lately seized by our authorities and confiscated, not one is, nor ever has been claimed as the property of certain *circumcized Hebrews*."[89] Brownlow had caught a tartar!

It would be pointless to attempt to accumulate a list of all those persons who expressed unfavorable opinions of the Jews, but it is essential that we understand how widespread and common those expressions were among individuals who were high in authority and influence.

Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts, an abolitionist Republican, had achieved office by way of the Know-Nothing agitation against aliens and Catholics. He later disclaimed any positive allegiance to the prejudiced principles of the party, but the fact remains that when he withdrew, it was on account of the slavery issue, not on account of anti-alienism.[90] This background of political affiliation may explain the ease with which Wilson attacked Judah P. Benjamin, as a Jew, in the Senate, after the Louisiana Senator's famous farewell speech:

> His bearing, the tone of his voice, his words, all gave evidence that the spark of patriotism, if it ever existed, was extinct in his bosom; that his heart was in this foul and wicked plot to dismember the Union, to overthrow the government of his adopted country, which gives equality of rights even to *that race that stoned prophets and crucified the Redeemer of the world.*[91]

Wilson spoke of Jews in derogatory terms again a year later, when he said in a Senatorial debate on fiscal measures that "you will have every curbstone Jew broker . . . and the class of men who fatten upon public calamity . . . using all their influence to depreciate the credit of the government." The entire question of the nation's financial structure was, to him, "a contest between those curbstone brokers, the Jew brokers, the money-changers, and the men who speculate in stocks, and the productive, toiling men of the country."[92] Here again the appeal to prejudice was utilized as a weapon in debate, a diverting tactic to win the opposition.

On the evening of February 28, 1861, Charles Francis Adams, of the distinguished Boston family, was chatting with Senator Andrew Johnson, later to become the seventeenth President of the United States. Johnson discoursed on many subjects, and finally came around to two of his Senatorial colleagues:

> He [writes Adams] was amusingly severe over the secession of Florida. "There's that Yulee," he said, "miserable little cuss! I remember him in the House—the contemptible little Jew—standing there and begging us—yes! begging us to let Florida in as a State. Well! we let her in, and took care of her, and fought her Indians; and now that despicable little beggar stands up in the Senate and talks about *her* rights." Towards Jews, he evidently felt a strong aversion; for, after finishing with Yulee he

> began on Benjamin, exclaiming: "There's another Jew—that miserable Benjamin! He looks on a country and a government as he would on a suit of old clothes. He sold out the old one; and he would sell out the new if he could in so doing make two or three millions!"[93]

Thirteen years later ex-President Johnson was an honored guest at the dedication of the new synagogue in Nashville, Tenn. He rode in a carriage with Rabbi Kalisch of the Nashville congregation, and Rabbi Isaac M. Wise, and was accompanied by them to the pulpit. After the two dedicatory addresses, the chairman introduced him to the assemblage. He said he would not take much of their time, according to the report in the *Nashville Republican Banner*, because they had already heard two very stimulating speeches. "No one felt a deeper interest in the success and prosperity of them and their temple than he did. He hoped that it would ever remain a monument to the industry, prosperity, and welfare of the Jewish citizens of Nashville. He thanked them for their attention and retired amidst applause."[94] The thought never entered Johnson's mind that these people whom he was complimenting and congratulating were the people who had produced Yulee and Benjamin.

One of the most distrusted men in Washington was Colonel LaFayette C. Baker, chief of the Detective Bureau of the War Department, the secret service. Those who knew him pictured him as a cruel and ruthless man. He was notorious for his disregard of civil liberties and was flatly accused of gaining personal profit from the persecution of the innocent and the protection of the guilty.[95]

Jews were surely not alone or unique in suffering hurt at the hands of this man, but his anti-Jewish feelings were apparent in the narratives of Jewish cases in the boastful book he wrote about his war experiences. He tells, for instance, of the capture of three men, one a Jew, who had been running military goods from Baltimore to the Confederacy. He seems to applaud when one of them turns to the Jew and blames him for their capture. "You're a – – – Jew, and it's you who have brought all this trouble on me."[96] And then later, Baker's relish at the Jew's discomfiture is obvious: "The Israelite was so played upon that he is not yet aware of the enemies who ruined him."[97] Prejudice and a touch of sadism . . .

Baker was the man who had Simon Wolf arrested because he was member of the B'nai B'rith, which Baker was convinced was "a disloyal organization, which has its ramifications in the South . . . [and] is helping the traitors." Wolf was acting as attorney for a number of Southern Jews arrested in Washington on the charge of spying for the Confederacy, and his membership in the Jewish fraternal order was the clinching argument against his loyalty, to Baker's way of thinking. It took Secretary Stanton's personal intercession to free Wolf from arrest.[98]

The expression of prejudice against the Jews in so many quarters did not go entirely unchallenged. Some non-Jews had a clear vision of the meaning of democratic equality. Not every statement was answered; there were dozens of inflammatory libels for every editorial in the press which defended the Jews—but more than a few editors and officers in high places set themselves against the anti-Jewish formulas of the day. When the AP writer in New Orleans urged that the Jews of the South be "exterminated," both the *Commercial* and *Daily Times* of Cincinnati called attention to the flagrant prejudice of the writer, insisted that most Jews were loyal and law-abiding, and called for a halt to Jew-baiting. The *Cincinnati Enquirer* went one step further and ventured to suggest that the report must have been "planted" by jealous Yankee traders who had been out-smarted by Jews in New Orleans and took out their resentment in this way.[99]

Butler may have been prejudiced against the Jews; his successor, General N. P. Banks, was not. Rabbi Bernard Illowy of New Orleans established friendly relationships with the General, and was successful in securing a hearing for Jews who did not feel able to speak for themselves. The rabbi's son, Henry, recalls that

> . . . I was kept busy day by day writing applications and recommendations for poor peddlers for relief from the various forms of taxes, state, city and national that were exacted at the time. So numerous were these applications that a collector of one of these taxes wrote to my father to be good enough and not send him any more applications or supplications, but to just indorse his name on the notice and the party would not be troubled any more.

Rabbi Illowy once tried for weeks to see the General in an effort to secure a pardon for a Jew whom Butler had sentenced to six years in prison. When he finally did see the General and told him how long it had taken to do so, "the General turned to his orderly, and directed him to instruct the men at once, that no matter at what time the Rabbi came he was to be admitted immediately and without ceremony." The Jew had been sentenced for receiving stolen property, but still insisted he had not known the nature of the item he bought; he was freed by Banks because of Illowy's intercession. This General did not assume that every Jew was a thief.[100]

Nor did the *Baltimore Clipper* see eye to eye with anti-Jewish propaganda. When "Parson" Brownlow visited that city on his long speaking tour, the editor of the *Clipper* gave him a verbal whipping:

> Parson Brownlow is not generally very choice in his language . . . but it is in extreme bad taste, and obnoxious to the censure [sic] of every right-minded man, thus to identify a great religious and national people with such a consummate rogue and hangman as this Benjamin . . .[101]

It was, obviously, not out of respect for the Confederate Secretary of War that the editor criticized Brownlow!

The "Parson's" prejudice was rejected again some years later by the *Memphis Bulletin* which said that a letter which Brownlow had written against the Jews was "a coarse and vulgar vituperation, narrow-minded, illiberal, unjust and uncalled for, containing misstatements of fact, undignified abuse, and insidious attacks upon the liberty of conscience, and showing a worldly, ungodly ambition in conspiring against the best interest of the State, entered into to advance his own schemes of political ambition and power. . . ."[102] Brownlow was *persona non grata* with the *Bulletin* anyway, but his anti-Jewish prejudice gave the paper another opportunity to subject him to public censure.

When the *American Flag* of San Francisco set out on its campaign to convince the public of the disloyalty of Jews to the Union, various California newspapers threw down the gauntlet to the *Flag*. The *Placerville News* said: "We suggest to the *Flag* that such a course may do in the dominions of King Jeff, but is hardly the thing in a civilized community. The day for unreasoning bigotry has gone by."[103] The *Maysville Appeal* said that the talk about "disloyal Jews, disloyal Catholics, and disloyal Irishmen," "only implies] prejudice and hatred to Jews, Catholics, and Irishmen. . . To cry 'disloyal farmers' or 'traitor boot-blacks' and 'traitor tailors,' would be as intelligible . . . as to use the terms 'disloyal Irishmen' or 'traitor Jews.' "[104] The *San Francisco Morning Call* conveyed good logic in its editorial on "Religion and Patriotism":

> . . . What is there in the faith of the Hebrew to make him a loyalist or a rebel? . . . And how does it happen that some of the most ardent Unionists, both at the South and North, may be found in citizens of Hebrew faith, while Benjamin and others of the same religious creed are aiders of Rebellion? It is locality, and local institutions and teachings, the influence of surroundings, habits and tone of the community, which chiefly govern . . . In this country there can be no classification of patriotism or treason, upon the basis of sectarian creeds. To attempt doing so would be as unjust as unphilosophical and neither likely to aid religion nor the causes of the Union.[105]

The *Alta California* suggested that the anti-Jewish campaign of the *American Flag* was a scheme to sap away the strength of the Union party:

> The only effectual method of reducing the strength of the Union Party in California is by making religious intolerance part of its creed. It is not pretended that there is anything in the Bible, in the writings of the rabbis, or in the proceeding of the synagogues, which renders loyalty to the Government impossible . . . But, throughout the whole proceeding, common sense is repudiated . . . The object is to weaken the Union Party.[106]

The reaction of these California editors was an exception to the general run of newspaper opinion. In no other section of the Union was bigotry so generally condemned.

But isolated papers did object. In Washington, the *Daily Times* ran an editorial on "Assailing Nationalities," identifying anti-Jewish prejudice as a legacy of the old Know-Nothing party, and defending the Jews against the accusations of the rabid bigots.[107] In Springfield, Ill., the *Daily Illinois State Journal* insisted that "the Jews of this country have shown their full share of patriotism since the war began," and cited military statistics in proof of this contention.[108] In Franklin, Ind., the *Herald* criticized the mayor for calling only on Christians to observe the October 1861 Fast Day. "The Israelites here," said the *Herald's* editor, "as well as elsewhere, are industrious and peaceable citizens, their loyalty to this government has never been questioned, and why our Mayor should give them the cold shoulder is more than we can say . . ."[109] On several occasions, editorials of protest in Jewish periodicals were reprinted in the daily press. The *Boston Post* quoted at length from Isaac M. Wise's editorial answer to the *Boston Transcript's* discourse on Yulee, Benjamin, and Mordecai;[110] and the *Times* and *Herald* of New York as well as other papers, reprinted the Butler-Isaacs correspondence.[111] Said the *Times*:

> We admit, as Christians, that too many of us are in the thoughtless habit of alluding, quite as opprobriously as General Butler, to "Jews," as though we were speaking of a nationality, not of a religious denomination, and Mr. Isaacs has therefore given us all a salutary lesson which it would be well for us, as just persons, to remember.[112]

There *were* some editors who were open-minded enough to examine the tenor of the times and find it contrary to the ideals of the nation.

It is entirely possible that the vast majority of Americans, journalists and others, did not share the prejudices against the Jews—but those who registered their protest were in the minority. The Jews, of course, were disappointed that so few rose to their defense. They wanted no praise, no soft-soaping, no honorific tributes; they knew that there were Jews who brought ill repute to the people's name; but they expected the American people to judge them as individuals, and not as a class apart. If the majority of public officials and journalists would not come to their active defense, they would have to defend themselves. This was not an age for ostrich attitudes towards prejudice. The Jews of the 1860s were not so fearful or insecure that they were afraid to defend themselves. Silence in the face of so many libelous attacks could only be interpreted as assent. They, therefore, answered their slanderers vigorously, but with dignity and logic.

The Jewish newspapers led the fight and acted as clearing-houses of information. Jews all over the country sent clippings and documents to the editors; and the editors promptly printed the data and analyzed it. It was important to know who and what and where. In many cases, the editors sent copies of these issues to the guilty ones, or letters of protest. The Butler-Isaacs correspondence is an example of this type of counterattack, where a Jewish editor was not content to write editorials but challenged a bigot to stand before the public with whatever evidence he had at his command.

A similar tactic was employed by Simon Wolf when he conferred with Butler in person, and by the editor of the *Messenger* when he went to see the staff of the *New York World* to discuss a specific case of libel and left with the assurance that the vilification would not continue.[113] When the *Cincinnati Enquirer* reported, on October 20, 1861, that a "combination of Jewish clothing houses in this city" had been organized "to take advantage of the pressing necessity of our Western soldiers for blankets, etc.," the Jews of Cincinnati insisted that a reporter interview the businessmen involved, examine their records, and give an unbiased version of the facts. The *Enquirer* printed a retraction, admitting that its information had been unreliable. It said that one firm "had made contracts at an early period in the war, when prices were down, and were now uncomplainingly living up to them, since prices had materially raised. [The owner's] figures were sufficient assurance of his truthfulness."[114]

Sometimes there were protest meetings, as in New York, Cincinnati, and St. Louis, during the heat of the Grant affair, or in Washington, when the Washington Hebrew Congregation sent a resolution to Senator Wilson condemning his ungenerous statement in the Senate about Jewish brokers.[115]

But Jews could not spend all their time running to newspaper offices, or attending meetings of protest. Moreover, most of the accusations were so general that little or no evidence could be adduced to prove the Jewish contention that they were false. Josiah Cohen of Pittsburgh thought that concrete evidence of patriotism on the part of the Jews might dispel the fog of propaganda. Said Professor Cohen at a meeting of Pittsburgh Jews for the benefit of the Sanitary Commission:

> Let us prove, by our liberality here this evening, that the Jewish heart beats as strongly in favor of the restoration of the Union as any of America's other sons. Let us prove that, in spite of the rumored lethargy on the part of the Israelites, we are invoking every means in our power to advance the cause of our country; and when the veil of prejudice, which hides our true character, shall be torn from the eyes of those who would malign us, then they will find that Israelites, forgetting their creed in their patriotism, unmindful of slander in their loyal efforts, are as anxious and earnest in their efforts in behalf of the Union as those of any other creed . . .[116]

These sentiments were expressed frequently at Jewish organizational meetings and synagogue services; many Jews believed that, if they participated in patriotic activities, the non-Jews would have to recognize their claims to equality.

One idea which was consistently advanced for combatting anti-Jewish propaganda was the collection of statistical data about the service of Jews in the Army. As early as 1862, an Indianapolis Jew wrote a letter to *The Israelite* in favor of such a counter-propaganda move:

> It is only a few days ago, that a gentleman mentioned incidentally to me that he thought that there were very few Jews in the Army, for, said he, "he never heard of none!" I replied that in my opinion, there had not a single regiment left the state of Indiana, but some Israelites can be found in any of them, and to my positive knowledge, there were some six Jewish soldiers in the 11th Indiana Regiment for the three months service. We ought to be able to speak with certainty upon these points, it would be to our credit, and would silence the calumnies . . .

So he offered the suggestion that Jews in various cities send to *The Israelite* as much information as they had about the war service of Jews.[117] All of the Jewish periodicals, particularly *The Jewish Record* of New York, published lists of Jewish soldiers and casualties. But the effort was so desultory and unorganized that it could not be accurate or conclusive. In 1865 the Executive Committee of the Board of Delegates of American Israelites recommended that "a committee of three be appointed to draft a suitable circular to be sent to the President of each congregation throughout the United States requesting him to ascertain the names and history of those who have left their home for the field and their fate."[118] But nothing came of this suggestion, nor of Isaac M. Wise's far-fetched scheme in 1868 for Jewish communities to "have every dead soldier exhumed and buried in our cemeteries, and let the monuments to the deceased Soldiers of our persuasion put to shame all those who slandered the Jews in a dangerous and excitable time." It was not actually until J. M. Rogers wrote a letter to the *North American Review* in 1891, asserting that he had never met a Jew in uniform during the Civil War, or heard of one afterwards, and challenging Jews "to give the names of the regiments they condescended to accept service in,"[119] that Simon Wolf belatedly attempted to gather whatever statistics were still available and published his results in a book which listed the names of 7,038 Jews who had served in the Union and Confederate forces, together with as many particulars as he could unearth.[120]

But all this Jewish defense was beside the point. No matter how much Jews protested, actually, they did not touch the root of the matter. It was all very well for them to plead, as did Isaac Mayer Wise:

> Our sons enlisted in the Army, our daughters sew and knit for the wounded soldiers and their poor families, our capitalists spend freely, our hospitals are thrown open to the sick soldiers of all creeds, our merchants represented at every benevolent association contribute largely to the wealth and prosperity of the cities, give bread and employment to thousands; we keep from politics, gambling houses, public-offices, penitentiaries, and newspaper publications—what else must we do to heal these petty scribblers from their mad prejudice?[121]

And Isaac Leeser:

> During the continuance of the unfortunate war which desolates the South of the Union and brings mourning and distress to almost every household at the North, a spirit of intolerance has gradually been developed which seeks to wreak its spite on our defenseless heads . . . Newspapers have aided some military satraps to spread a spirit of personal dislike against us . . . No doubt some worthless creatures who were born Jews have done unworthy things during the war; they may have smuggled on both sides, been spies for everyone who would pay them, and thus disgraced by their shameful conduct the noble name of Israel. But we venture to assert that in all the dealings which the Government has had with Jews, they have acted on the whole as honorably as the same class of other persuasions. In the ranks, many of our brethren have enlisted, and many have met their death . . . Even since we commenced writing this article a lonely widow with her little orphan boy in her arms, has applied to us for aid, her soldier husband having died in Virginia after serving nearly the full term of his enlistment. Everywhere in the hospitals the maimed and sick of our faith are found . . . Is it therefore fair that political journals should hold us up as a class to public odium? . . .[122]

But they knew deep within their hearts that it would do little or no good. All they could do was to pray for a speedy end of hostilities and a return to a more peaceful life for the nation as a whole. They knew that there had been almost no public vilification of the Jews before the war; they could only hope there would be none after it. Only a removal of the causes of economic, social, and personal tension, it appeared, could deliver the Jews from such irrational prejudices as were directed against them during the tumultuous war years.

II. CONFEDERATE VERSION

There was a certain historical symbolism in the fact that the leading Union general issued his Order No. 11 in Southern territory: the same psychological, social, economic, and political factors which brought latent prejudices against Jews into the open in the North were creating a similar pattern of scapegoatism in the Confederacy. Economic tensions, personal fears and frustrations, and mass passions required an outlet and a victim in the South just as in the North.

Additional social factors peculiar to life in the South tended to strengthen and heighten the reaction to Jews: a general dislike of all aliens and foreigners which, during the War, created the legend that the Union Army was a band of German and Irish hirelings and mercenaries, while the Confederate Army was said to be exclusively native;[123] a wide-spread suspicion of the merchant and storekeeper, typical of a society dominated by the plantation owner and farmer; a deeper commitment than existed in the North to fundamentalist "Bible" Christianity; the intensified emotional depression as the War dragged on from year to year and Confederate chances for victory became more slight with each passing month. Granted an original suspicion and dislike of the Jew before the War, the four-year-long travail of the Confederacy was certain to emphasize it.

Two examples have been preserved of discrimination against Jews in the military forces. Captain R. E. Park tells us that his Colonel was so prejudiced against Jews that he attempted to block the promotion of Captain Adolph Proskauer of Mobile, Ala. Proskauer insisted on taking an examination in military strategy and discipline so that he might be able to demonstrate his qualifications. The Colonel agreed, but, according to Captain Park, instructed the Committee of Examiners to make the test as difficult as they could. Let Captain Park continue his story:

> During the day of the examination there was an unusual interest felt by the officers of the camp, and especially by the Colonel. Late in the afternoon, after an all-day examination had been concluded, one of the officers rode rapidly up to Col. Pickens' headquarters and in reply to an

> anxious inquiry, was told that the Committee had done all they could to defeat Capt. Proskauer, but that after an examination [in] squad drill, in company drill, in regimental drill, in brigade drill, in drill by echelon, and in the army movements as suggested in Jomini's tactics, Captain Proskauer did not fail to answer promptly and accurately every question. The General [chairman of the Examining Board] added, "he knows more about tactics than any of the Examining Committee, and we were forced to recommend his promotion."[124]

When a Jewish Colonel was assigned to a Texas regiment, newly arrived in Virginia, the enlisted men did not attempt to hide their feelings. Two said in voices loud enough for all to hear: "What? What is it? Is it a man, a fish or a bird?" "Of course it is a man, don't you see his legs." The Colonel swallowed his pride. But when he found, the next day, that his horse's tail had been cut off, he threw up his hands at an impossible task and left forthwith. His departure was a signal for a regimental celebration.[125]

If a Jewish officer would have difficulty, what could a Jewish cabinet member expect? Judah P. Benjamin was a popular target all through the war, in the Confederacy as in the North. Those who disliked all Jews took especial pleasure in being able to blame him for all the problems of the Confederacy, its defeats in the military sphere while he was Secretary of War, and its failures in diplomacy while he was Secretary of State.[126] A citizen of North Carolina swore that "all the distresses of the people were owing to a Nero-like despotism, originating in the brain of Benjamin, the Jew."[127] A writer to the *Richmond Enquirer* believed it blasphemous for a Jew to hold so high an office as that of Secretary of State, and thought that the prayers of the Confederacy would have more effect if Benjamin were dismissed from the cabinet.[128] A Confederate Brigadier General and member of the Provisional Congress, Thomas R. R. Cobb of Georgia, said of him: "A grander rascal than this Jew Benjamin does not exist in the Confederacy, and I am not particular in concealing my opinion of him."[129] A Tennessean denounced him as the "Judas Iscariot Benjamin" of the Confederacy.[130] A man from Virginia was heard to assail President Jefferson Davis in violent language, "and the sole offense alleged against him was that he had appointed one Jew a member of his cabinet."[131] These were only a few of the recorded denunciations of Benjamin in which his Jewish origin played a large role. Popular and Congressional disfavor seemed to pursue Benjamin more than any other Confederate official, and it was undoubtedly his Jewishness which made him so vulnerable. But it is to be counted to the everlasting credit of President Davis that he steadfastly refused to sacrifice Benjamin's administrative talent as a sop to prejudice, and that he retained his Jewish friend and confidant as a trusted lieutenant all through his service as the Confederate chief of government. It was inevitable, but nonetheless sad and disheartening, that under the stress of war the public should utterly forget Benjamin's record as a loyal servant of the South in state and national affairs.

Prejudice against Jews was revealed most frequently in connection with the economic life of the Confederacy, and here again Benjamin's Jewish origin was a feature of the attacks. Anti-Jewish mythology had always described the Jew as grasping, thievish, and unscrupulous in business practices; now, in a period of severe economic crisis, the old canard appeared with renewed vigor. A sizable number of references in contemporary diaries and memoirs, as well as in the columns of Confederate newspapers, attests to the widespread belief that Jews were the chief source of the Confederacy's economic troubles.[132] "Extortion" was the word commonly applied by citizens of the Southern states to the high prices charged by merchants and shopkeepers, and it was alleged that Jews were the chief "extortionists."

In the Confederate House of Representatives, during a heated debate on January 14, 1863, concerning the question of drafting foreigners into military service, Congressman Henry S. Foote of Tennessee made a major pronouncement on this subject. The Jews had flooded the country, he said, and controlled at least nine-tenths of the business of the land. They were engaging in all kinds of illegal trade with the enemy without any official hindrance. Why was this permitted to continue? Because, he said mysteriously, the Jews had been invited to come to the Confederacy "by official permission" and were under official protection. Here he was obviously alluding to Judah P. Benjamin, whose appointment to high office always irritated him. He was not yet prepared, he said, to make any specific charges, but would continue gathering evidence, and he hoped eventually to be in a position to expose the powerful influence which was transferring all of Southern commerce to the hands of "foreign Jews." He concluded by quoting a friend of his who had said that "if the present state of things were to continue, the end of the war would probably find nearly all the property of the Confederacy in the hands of Jewish Shylocks."[133]

Foote never made good his threat to expose Benjamin, nor did he ever produce any statistics to bear out his contentions, but three months later he was still calling the attention of his fellow Congressmen and of the public to the deplorable condition of affairs. "Foreign Jews," he stated, "were scattered all over the country, under official protection, engaged in trade to the exclusion of our own citizens, undermining our currency." He predicted that "by the close of the war they would have the control of all the cotton and tobacco."[134]

Foote was not the only Confederate Congressman to speak of the Jews in such terms. On various occasions, Chilton of Alabama,[135] Miles of South Carolina,[136] and Hilton of Florida, voiced similar sentiments. Hilton said that the Jews swarmed all over the country, like locusts, eating up its resources and monopolizing its trade. The only way to control them was to draft them into the army. There was really no shortage of goods; demand had not created the high prices. It was "competition among buyers for the purpose of extortion," which was responsible for the rising cost of living! Hilton gave an example of Jewish persistence: a blockade-runner had landed on the Florida coast and its cargo was confiscated by the authorities, but somehow the Jews had heard about it and "at least one hundred" of them "flocked there, led even to this remote point by the scent of gain, and they had to be driven back actually at the point of the bayonet."[137]

John Beauchamps Jones, a clerk in the Confederate War Department, was another who attributed the inflation to Jewish extortioners and speculators. In his diary, which has become familiar to students of social and economic conditions in war-time Richmond, Jones indulged in almost daily tirades against the Jewish merchants. During a critical military campaign in 1862, for instance, he noted that the people of the capital showed little interest in the course of events. The Jews were, as always, busy speculating on the street corners, he said; every once in a while there would be a loud burst of laughter, "when a Jew is asked what will be the price of his shoes, etc., tomorrow." Jones believed that the Jews did not care "which side gains the day, so they gain the profits."[138] Eight days later, he summarized his feelings about them:

> The illicit trade with the United States has depleted the country of gold and placed us at the feet of the Jew extortioners. It still goes on. Mr. Seddon has granted passports to two agents of a Mr. Baumgarrien—and

> how many others I know not. These Jews have the adroitness to carry their points. They have injured the cause more than the armies of Lincoln. Well, if we gain our independence, instead of being the vassals of the Yankees, we shall find all our wealth in the hands of the Jews.[139]

Foote's allegations against Jewish merchants in the arena of national politics had their counterpart in various local areas. In Thomasville, Ga., for instance, on August 30, 1862, a public meeting was called for the discussion of the "unpatriotic conduct" of Jewish merchants. Resolutions were passed in which "German Jews [were] denounced in unmeasured terms . . . prohibited from visiting the village, and banishing all those now resident in that place."[140] Unfortunately, there were no Jewish periodicals in the South; if there had been, they might have preserved further details of this episode. A Georgia Jew wrote, however, that denunciations of Jewish merchants were frequent in the area, and that the habit had spread from town to town throughout the state.[141] In Talbotton, the seat of Talbot County, a grand jury completed its session with a presentment referring to "the evil and unpatriotic conduct of the representatives of Jewish houses."[142] And in another Georgia town, according to a letter preserved in the Duke University Library, the wives of soldiers away with the army became so desperate that they raided Jewish stores and took whatever they wished at pistol point, accusing the Jewish merchants of speculating on the shortages and making fortunes while the men were fighting for the life of the nation.[143] These examples indicate a trend which was characteristic of many sections of the Confederacy—the Jews being held responsible for the inflation of prices and the shortages of goods—a pattern which bears a remarkable likeness to the background of the Grant Order.

That there was widespread acceptance of the alleged guilt of the Jews cannot be gainsaid. Diarists and letter-writers throughout the South attested to this. One correspondent wrote, "I should despise myself if in this time of our country's need I should do anything to put up the price of a single article of necessity. I leave that to the Jews and extortioners of whom there are unfortunately too many among us."[144] Another charged that cotton was "a favorite article with Jews, and the country swarms with them—and other speculators."[145] Frequent were the accusations that Jews were largely engaged in passing counterfeit money, running the blockade, aiding the inflation by charging outrageous prices, driving well-established

"Anglo-Saxon" firms out of business by unfair competitive methods, and, in general, "batten[ing] and fatten[ing] upon speculation to the misery of the population."[146]

Natives of the South very quickly transmitted these opinions to visitors from other countries, particularly England. One writer, who called himself "An English Combatant," wrote:

> . . . The Israelites, as usual, far surpassed the Gentiles in shrewdness at the auspicious moment, and laid in stocks (procured on credit) which, in almost every instance, were retailed at rates from five hundred to one thousand per cent above ordinary prices; cash being always exacted. Many of these gentry proved unscrupulous knaves during the war; for having husbanded their goods for one or two years, and converted them into coin, if they did not decamp from the Confederacy altogether, they found a thousand and one excuses for not bearing arms . . . This is true of Hollanders generally, and of Dutch Jews almost universally . . .[147]

"An English Merchant," speaking of Charleston as a center for blockade-run goods, marveled that there seemed to be "more Jews in Charleston than . . . in Jerusalem," so thoroughly had he been indoctrinated with prejudice.[148]

That these and other descriptions of the Jews of the South were the result of prejudice, and not of a realistic consideration of the actual facts, was recognized by many who tried to be fair minded. The editor of the *Richmond Sentinel*, for instance, acknowledged the fact that "intolerant and illiberal views and prejudices" against the Jews "prevail to some extent . . . in no wise affecting their [the Jews'] individual and personal merits and character."[149] A Missionary Chaplain to the Army wrote to the *Savannah Daily Morning News* that he was saddened by the "many unfair, and, to my mind, very unjust, as well as injudicious *flings* at this part, no unimportant part, of our fellow citizens."[150] A Jew who wrote a lengthy letter of defense to a Richmond paper began his plea with these words:

> I have marked with sorrow and dismay the growing propensity in the Confederacy to denounce the Jew on all occasions and in all places. The press, the pulpit, and grave legislators, who have the destiny of a nation committed to their charge, all unite in this unholy and unjust denunciation.

Then he continued:

> That a man like Foote should habitually denounce the Jew is to be expected; he denounces everybody and every thing; his mouth is a "well spring" of slander; and I should doubt the beauty of virtue, itself, should he chance to praise it. But that the whole press of your city (your paper excepted) should add fuel to these fires of persecutions, and should seek to direct public opinion in such foul channels, surpasses my comprehension . . .[151]

A year after the war had ended in defeat for the Confederacy, the editor of the *Augusta* (Ga.) *Sentinel*, in commenting on North Carolina's refusal to abandon the religious test for public office, defended the Jews against "the charges which we have frequently heard made by our streetcorner gossipers and windy patriots, that the Israelites of the South failed to perform their duty during the recent war."[152]

So frequent and bitter were the verbal attacks on the Jews that the Rev. Maximilian J. Michelbacher, rabbi of Beth Ahabah Congregation of Richmond, delivered a public answer to them in a sermon which he preached at a Confederate Fast Day service in Fredericksburg in 1863 and which was printed in the daily papers and even found its way up North.[153] He said that accusations against Jewish merchants were so common that he could no longer keep silent. If the Jews were guilty, he said, they would find no defender in him, because he prided himself on the fact that "I always speak of your faults without fear, favor, or affection." He had investigated the conduct of Jewish merchants and was convinced that "the Israelites are not speculators nor extortioners." How could they be? The Jewish merchant specialized in rapid turnover sales, he said; the speculator made his fortune by hoarding. Besides, Jews did not deal at all in the basic commodities in which speculation was most common: "Flour, meal, wheat, corn, bacon, beef, coal and wood." For that matter, if the Jews actually were the extortioners, how could they stay in business? Wouldn't the trade go to non-Jews who were, by implication, free of all taint of profiteering? How, then, could one explain the uproar against the Jews? Michelbacher said he was prepared to assert that the condemnation of the Jews was deliberately *instigated*—"cunningly devised after the most approved mode of villainy"—to shield the real extortioner and speculator, "who deals in the miseries, life and blood of our fellow citizens," from the pent-up indignation of the Confederate populace. The "monstrous and evil thing that draws its nourishment from the heart's blood of men, women and children" was blamed on the Jews so that those who were actually guilty could escape punishment!

Was Michelbacher defending the Jews because they were his people and he had to speak out in their behalf? Or was his contention that prejudice and profit were the roots of the accusation, valid and demonstrable?

Before we can attempt to assay the evidence, a clear picture of the Southern economy must be kept in mind. Although industrialization had proceeded farther than is commonlv supposed, it is nevertheless true that the South was basically an agricultural society. Its entire life and conception of life were founded on a maintenance of the slave system and the plantation standard. The section had never produced anything approaching the equivalent of its consumption of manufactured goods; imports from Europe and the North were always required to supplement local production. This need for the importation of the products of modern industry gave rise to certain significant items in the South's brief against the North: resentment against the tariff system which protected Northern industry but penalized the South; and the widespread belief that the South was being exploited only for the benefit of the Northern industrialist empire.[154]

An obvious impasse was reached with the outbreak of the war. Supplies from the North were cut off. The blockade of Southern ports by the Union Navy prevented the importation of European products. Whatever trend there had been, before the war, towards increased industrialization was necessarily channeled into the production of war materiel. The result was, of course, an instantaneous shortage of all kinds of goods, and a rapid inflation of prices. Buying agents from the larger cities scoured the interior in search of stocks which might still be unsold in the rural stores; blockade runners earned fantastic prices for cargoes taken on in the Caribbean area; illegal trade along the borders increased by leaps and bounds as smugglers risked life and liberty to get valuable merchandise across the lines.

The process of attrition had been an inevitable one. The only corrective would have been a completely authoritarian control of economic affairs by the Confederate government. Such a regime would have pegged prices, but there would still have been no safeguard against the development of a black market. Price controls could not have produced more goods.[155]

Everyone who produced or sold commodities was involved in the inflationary spiral: farmers, manufacturers, merchants, tradesmen, Jews and Gentiles, natives and foreigners, traitors and patriots. This was the way the *Macon Daily Telegraph* put it: "It is doubtful if any man in these times can pursue a speculative or money-making business consistently with his duty to his country."[156] Unless they changed their means of earning a livelihood, or entered military service, they had to participate in the economic system. Were they to blame, however, for the scarcity and the inflation? Should the responsibility not be ascribed to the fire-eaters who had assured their compatriots that the South could maintain itself militarily and industrially in peace *and in war*, that the slave system was not only an advantage to the Southern economy but that it was worth fighting for, that the South could live as an independent nation and had to fight for the right to do so? Far more guilty than the farmers and merchants were the men who led the South into secession and war without calculating fully the realistic problems of a war crisis, and the legislative and executive leaders of the Confederacy who failed to grapple with the serious economic struggle for survival on the home front.

It is not difficult to prove that, in at least a few cases, the accusations against Jews were motivated by a climate of prejudice rather than an objective consideration of the facts. We are fortunate, for instance, in possessing the memoirs of a Talbotton Jew.[157] He was Isidor Strauss, who was later to become one of the outstanding merchant princes of the nation. In 1862 he was seventeen years old, living with his father and family: *they were the only Jewish family in Talbotton and theirs was the only Jewish store in the county!* Isidor recalled in after days how hurt and bewildered his father had been when he was informed of the grand jury's condemnation of Jewish merchants. Lazarus Straus had believed that he had earned the respect of the fellow-townsmen, that they were fond of him and his family. But how wrong he had been. So he immediately determined to move away from a town "which had cast such a reflection on him as the only Jew living in their midst." The reaction to the announcement of his imminent departure was bizarre: his fellow citizens waited upon him in large numbers, seeking to persuade him to remain; every member of the grand jury which had issued the pronouncement called upon him; every minister in town asked him to change his mind. They assured him that there had been no intention to reflect upon *his* business ethics or *his* faith—although they now saw that it was possible for their action to be so interpreted! Nevertheless, the Straus family moved on to Columbus, Ga. One is moved to pity and compassion for these folk who were so possessed by prejudice that they could not anticipate Lazarus Straus' reaction to their denunciation of his people.

Congressman Foote, on the other hand, does not deserve pity. It was generally known that he disliked Jews and took advantage of every opportunity to vent his hatred upon them, no matter how flimsy the evidence. On January 7, 1864, for instance, the *Daily Richmond Examiner* printed a rumor that an unnamed Congressman had obtained passports out of the Confederacy for three Jews.[158] According to the report, he had been paid three thousand dollars for his helpfulness. That very morning, Foote jumped to the floor and demanded the appointment of a committee to investigate the charges and to bring the culprits to the bar of justice. He wished it understood in advance that he had no desire to become a member of the committee because, said a newspaper report, "many members thought him already too fond of ferreting out abuses and frauds." The resolution was adopted and the committee appointed forthwith.[159] Its members reported back to the House on January 25. They had found "nothing to sustain the charge." When they had asked the editor of the *Examiner* for evidence, he told them a long, involved story. The article had originally been written by one of his reporters, but when he asked the reporter for the evidence and became convinced by his silence that there was no truth to the story, he had forbidden its publication. Some slip-up had occurred, however, and the article found its way into print. He was still unable to furnish any proof, and said that he "knew nothing of the truth of it."[160]

The House had not been interested, of course, in investigating a story about three Jews; the purpose of the committee was to ascertain the truth of a report about a Representative's dishonesty. Foote never suggested that a committee be appointed to investigate any of his other charges against Jews, nor did the House ever trouble itself to do so. This was the only investigation which was ever ordered to track a rumor about Jews to its source—and it proved to be without foundation.

It is interesting to note in passing the contrasting tone of the Confederate loyalties of Congressman Foote and the Jew he disliked so deeply, Secretary Benjamin. The latter fled the Confederacy at the very last, after Lee's surrender and the transfer of the capital from Richmond, with the vow never to be taken alive by the Union forces. He made good his pledge and established a new life in England. Foote's political career reached its zenith on February 27, 1865, when he was expelled from the Confederate House of Representatives for deserting the Stars and Bars and crossing the lines to the Union.[161]

The appointment of the investigating committee, at Foote's behest, was grist for J. B. Jones' mill. It earned a typical flourish against the Jews in his diary.[162] But he did not feel it necessary to mention the committee's report which proved the *Examiner* article to be a fabrication. Jones could not, by any stretch of the imagination, be regarded as a detached observer when it came to Jews. He appears to have been driven by a psychopathic Judaeophobia. The word "Jew" appears in his diary more than forty times—each time part of an unfriendly reference to an individual Jew or to all Jews. Some psychological compulsion forced him to label Jews as though they were members of a curious species; if there was any uncertainty about a person's religion, he would hazard a guess to be on the safe side: (*Jew?*)[163] or (*Jew name*)[164] or *perhaps a Jew*[165] or (*another Jew, I suppose*).[166] So he assured himself that if it came to a test he could not be accused of missing a single one. Any testimony by Jones about J. P. Benjamin, or Quartermaster General Myers, or any or all Jews, ought to be accorded the credence which his hostility deserves.[167]

The reaction of the Jews to the public outcry against them was similar to that in the North: bewilderment, hurt pride, anger, rebellion. In Savannah, they held a public meeting, passed resolutions against the people of Thomasville who had banished Jews from their town, and urged their non-Jewish neighbors to repudiate the citizens of that place as "enemies of human liberty and freedom of conscience."[168]

In Richmond, the two congregations, Beth Ahabah and Beth Shalome, held consultations for the discussion of possible courses of action "to vindicate our character as Jews and good citizens, which has been repeatedly and grossly assailed in public prints, etc." The Board of Beth Ahabah suggested that the Jews raise a special fund to be distributed among the poor of the city, apparently in the belief that this would earn the gratitude of Richmond citizens. A meeting of Beth Shalome congregation was called to consider the project, and unanimously rejected it in the conviction that the poor were the responsibility of all denominations, not only of the Jews. The Beth Shalome members probably suspected that unilateral generosity would be regarded as an evidence of guilt, rather than of charity. In regard to the existing prejudice, they resolved:

> That while this meeting denounces the unfounded aspersions made against the Israelites of this city, and feels satisfied that the acts of our co-religionists can well bear the test of comparison with those of any other denomination in this community for patriotism, charity, or freedom from selfishness, yet think the best and most dignified course to be adopted, will be to treat them with silent contempt, confident that the enlightened and unprejudiced do not join in this crusade against our people.[169]

Letters were written to the editors of newspapers,[170] and one Jew even challenged an editor to a duel. Colonel Adolphus H. Adler of the Confederate Army, a Hungarian who had served as an officer in Garibaldi's army, was so incensed at the editor of the *Richmond Examiner* for printing libelous statements about the Jews that he wanted to settle the matter with his sword. The editor is said to have made an apology in lieu of an appearance with seconds.[171] The answers of the Jews were the same as they have always been: Jews were individuals; many were fighting in the Confederate Army; some had given their lives in the conflict; Jews were as patriotic as their neighbors; blanket condemnations are unjust. These arguments would always be brought forward by a people hounded by slander.

In the Confederacy as in the Union, there were fair-minded non-Jews who were convinced that the generalized accusations were unjust, and that they were motivated by prejudice and dislike. The editor of the *Richmond Sentinel* felt that Jews, like all others, should be judged as individuals, and that the Confederacy ought to defend this principle of fair play especially at this time of crisis in the national epic. Loyal citizens should, he felt, be wary of spurning any support—no class of the population should be insulted and perhaps, alienated, by prejudiced statements. "We consider it a duty to hail every good citizen as a brother. We ask him not where he was born or what his faith." The editor went on to question the loyalty of those who were activated by prejudice; they were espousing principles foreign to America, and though they were born in America, their identification with the nation might be judged by the Irishman's remark: "a man's being born in a stable doesn't make him a horse."[172]

The missionary chaplain who wrote a letter of protest to the *Savannah Daily Morning News* had long wanted to reply to the complaints about Jews, he said, but his service with the military forces had consumed all his time. Now the formation by the Jews of Macon of a company for the defense of Savannah, had reactivated his interest in the question. He did not intend to be an apologist for the Jews. They needed none. But he wished it understood that he had concluded, from his own personal experience and contact with Jews, that they were "pretty largely represented" in the military, and that they made "good, enduring, hard-fighting soldiers." He had seen them in camp, in battle, on long marches, sharing all the privations and hardships of their fellows. In civilian life, he knew them to be "true patriots . . . giving as much towards supporting the Government, clothing the troops, administering comforts for the sick and wounded, &c., as any other class of citizens."[173]

An editorial in the *Augusta Sentinel*, in 1866, said that its editor had been in a position to observe Jewish conduct during the war, and that he was certain that the charges of Jewish disloyalty were "most gratuitous and unfounded slander upon that people." He gave examples of Jewish officers and soldiers who played outstanding roles in the front lines, and cited the names of young Augusta Jews who had served in the army.[174]

One of the fairest answers to the anti-Jewish libels came from the pen of the editor of the *Richmond Dispatch*. He would have no part in the campaign of propaganda against Jews. He agreed with the Rev. Michelbacher's assertion that, though Jews may have speculated in certain merchandise, they had not profiteered in flour, grain, or any other food products, in which category the most ruthless speculation was done. He suggested that the so-called Christians who were the leading speculators, "starving people to death by their horrible extortions in the staff of life," and who were "grieving their righteous souls over the audacity of Jews in speculating in jewels and other luxuries," should read their New Testaments somewhat more frequently. Jews were as good and as bad as non-Jews, and for every Jew who left the country with a fortune, there were many non-Jews guilty of the same thing. So far as he could tell, Jews had contributed money and support and blood to the Confederate cause in their correct proportion, and Christians had better look to the guilty in their own midst before criticising Jews. These were the opinions of a non-Jewish editor.[175]

Yet another eminently just comment on the outcry against the Jews came from the editor of the *Charleston Courier:*

> We have said, and shall say, and urge our opinions against extortioners and bloodsuckers and prowling beastly bipeds of prey under whatever guise they come, but we protest earnestly and emphatically against any wholesale denunciation of Germans or Jews, or of German Jews. We have no more and no less opposition to an extortioner who happens to be a German and a Jew, than one who is an Englishman, or a Frenchman, or a Welchman, or a Yankee, and a so-called Christian. If there is such an animal as a Christian extortioner, we hate and abhor it, and would gladly exterminate it. Let the offenders and all who trouble our political Israel, and devour people, be rebuked, denounced, execrated, imprisoned, or expelled, if it can be done, but let us hear of no more abuse of a class as a class.[176]

In these impassioned phrases, the Charlestonian came to the crux of the problem, seeing clearly that it was a question of fanatical prejudice versus fair-mindedness.

Although the evidence relating to anti-Jewish propaganda in the Confederacy is less voluminous than that which has been gathered for the North, its total cumulative effect is equally damning. Continued research in the periodical and journalistic literature of the Confederacy will undoubtedly uncover hosts of items which will offer further substantiation of the pattern of prejudice.

The North and the South, despite provincial and sectional loyalties and hostilities were, after all, part and parcel of the same country. The people who dwelt in Alabama were not so vastly different from those residing in Illinois or New Hampshire that they should be diametrically opposed in culture and thought patterns. This is especially true in regard to their conceptions of the Jewish people. It would actually be unaccountable if anti-Jewish prejudice had not appeared with equal virulence in both halves of the sundered nation.

The war was the key, the secret combination, which unleashed heretofore dormant prejudices. If there had been no leading public figures who were anti-Jewish, if all the Jews had been law-abiding patriots, the emotional, economic, and social frustrations of the war years would still, in all likelihood, have been directed against them. Society had to have scapegoats, in the South and in the North, for all its pent-up passion, frustration, anger, disappointment, fear, insecurity, anxiety, shame, jealousy. Lincoln was the outstanding scapegoat in the Union, while Davis occupied a similar position in the South; both suffered bitterly from the senseless slander which was directed against them. There were other scapegoats during the war, as well: Yankees who were caught in the South at the outbreak of the hostilities, German settlers in Texas, sincerely loyal Democrats in the North; but, apparently, the Jews were a more popular scapegoat in all areas than any of these.

There were no realistic causes, no justified reasons, no logical bases, for the war-time rise of prejudice—as there never have been—except the unconscious roots of hostility, transference, and anxiety which the psychiatrist uncovers, and the deliberate hate-promotion of men who hope to profit when a competitive group loses caste in the public eye. Many of the economic libels against Jews were undoubtedly set forth by men who stood to gain from the removal of Jewish business men. But for all, consciously or unconsciously, an escape-valve was necessary. General Sherman was telling more of the truth than he realized in a letter which he wrote to Grant about the smugglers, in 1862: "The great profit now made is converting everybody into rascals, and it *makes me ashamed of my own countrymen* every time I have to examine a cotton or horse case . . ."[177] Sherman's shame was wiped away by imputing the major responsibility for smuggling to the Jews.

Consciously or unconsciously, citizens both North and South absolved themselves of guilt and cleansed themselves of fear, and projected their anxiety, by blaming their scapegoats for all the evils of American life and the dangers and hurts of war. A British visitor to the Confederacy was saying this, perhaps without realizing it, when she wrote:

> . . . [T]hese extortioners were generally known to be "Northern men with Southern sympathies" (for Southern dollars), or German Jews . . . No perquisites, no money-making contracts and frauds were heard of in the South, but such as were traced to Jews or Yankees . . .[178]

Could she not have carried this thought to its logical conclusion by saying: the average Southerner would have lost faith in himself, his fellows, and his cause, were he to admit to himself that the economic and social evils unleashed by the war were, in the final analysis, his own responsibility; foisting the blame upon "traitorous" Jews and Yankees saved him from the emotional agony of such realism.

If no Jews whatever had lived in the Union and Confederacy, some other group—perhaps the Catholics, as in the recent days of Nativism—would have served as a major escape-valve. The Jews were an insignificant feature of the story. The fact that any scapegoat was necessary was an important commentary on the nature of the American ethos in time of stress.

8

Lincoln and the Jews

> Brethren, the lamented Abraham Lincoln believed himself to be bone from our bone and flesh from our flesh. He supposed himself to be a descendant of Hebrew parentage. He said so in my presence.[1]

These words were spoken by Rabbi Isaac M. Wise during the eulogy which he delivered five days after the assassination of the President. There is no shred of evidence to substantiate Wise's assertion, and Lincoln is not known to have said anything resembling this to any of his other Jewish acquaintances. He could not, however, have been any friendlier to individual Jews, or more sympathetic to Jewish causes, if he had stemmed from Jewish ancestry.

The roll of Jews who knew Lincoln grows with the years, as researchers delve deeper into the documents and records of the age. The Robert Todd Lincoln Collection of Lincoln Papers in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, opened for public inspection in 1947, has provided another source for the elucidation of Lincoln's contacts with various Jews. In particular, these papers indicate how intimately Abraham Jonas and Isachar Zacharie were associated with Lincoln the Illinois lawyer and Lincoln the war-time President.

I

On April 29, 1861, Lincoln appointed his old friend and political co-worker, Abraham Jonas, to the postmastership of Quincy, Ill. In a sense this was a partial payment of a political debt, for Jonas had been Lincoln's consistent champion in central Illinois over a long period of years but it was also a token of respect for a man whom Lincoln regarded a "one of my most valued friends."[2]

Lincoln and Jonas had probably struck up a friendship shortly after the latter's arrival in Quincy in 1838. Both had already served their apprenticeship in politics: Lincoln for two terms in the Illinois State Legislature and Jonas for four in the Kentucky House. It was natural that the two young politicians should gravitate towards each other, even though their personal backgrounds were so different.

Jonas had come to Cincinnati from England in 1819, with a sizable group of Jews from Plymouth and Portsmouth, after his brother Joseph, the first Jew to settle in the town, sent back the news that life on the western frontier showed much promise.[3] After a few years in the growing Queen City, Abraham decided to move on. Perhaps it was the sudden death of his young wife, a daughter of the Revolutionary War patriot rabbi, Gershom Mendes Seixas, in 1825; perhaps it was the pioneering spirit which made him seek out less crowded land; perhaps it was for business reasons that he moved. At any rate, in 1828, he opened a store in Williamstown, Kentucky, and began to flex his political muscles. Four years of service in the fledgling state legislature taught him the practical lore of political life. Within a few years he had risen to the position of Grand Master of Kentucky Masons, a state-wide tribute to his capacity for leadership. He would undoubtedly have gone far had he remained in Kentucky.

But again the pioneering instinct would not let him rest. Illinois beckoned to him as it did to so many other Kentuckians. After his arrival in Quincy in 1838, he divided his time between store-keeping and the study of law, except for a brief period in 1840–41 when he moved to Columbus Ill., to take the leadership in a movement which favored the transference of the county seat of Adams County from Quincy to Columbus. During this unsuccessful venture he edited the *Columbus Advocate*, organ of the pro-Columbus forces.[4] In 1842, he made his first bid for political office, running for the state legislature on the Whig ticket. Twenty-one candidates were seeking five places in the Adams County representation; Jonas ran third in the race, receiving 1,297 votes, a good showing for a man who had lived in the district only four years.[5] The following year he was admitted to the bar and gave the management of his business over to two brothers who had meanwhile joined him in Quincy. That year also saw the establishment of a partnership with Henry Asbury that was to be terminated only by Jonas' death.

Jonas sought elective office only once more. In 1844 he ran for a seat in the Illinois Senate, but was defeated by the Democratic candidate. The results were extremely close: 106 more votes would have gained the election for him.[6] From 1849 to 1852 he served as postmaster of Quincy under appointment from Presidents Taylor and Fillmore, in recognition of his continuing services to the Whig Party in Illinois.

What kind of man was this British Jew who was accepted so wholeheartedly by the people and by his fellow-workers in the field of politics in a day when there were so few Jews in the area that you could count them on the fingers of both hands?[7] Gustav Körner, a German immigrant who was later to serve as justice of the Illinois Supreme Court and a lieutenant-governor, said in his diary that one of the secrets of Jonas' success was his talent as a public speaker. In Körner's judgment, Jonas was "the best debater and best politician" of all the Whig members of the legislature. "His quickness of perception, his readiness of speech, his plausibility made him a very formidable opponent" in political debate and election rallies. Körner described Jonas as having a "slender figure, brilliant dark eyes, an aquiline nose, black hair and a very good voice."[8]

By 1854, when Lincoln visited Quincy for the first time, Jonas was his closest friend in town. Indeed, Lincoln had agreed to make the trip from Springfield to address a Whig Party meeting only because Jonas had written him an importunate letter urging his personal support for the district's Whig candidate for Congress. Stephen Douglas was to speak in Quincy in behalf of the Democratic nominee, and Jonas was convinced that a speech by Lincoln in reply to Douglas "would be more effective, than any other." "Be assured," Jonas had written, "that nothing will afford greater pleasure to your personal friends and the Whigs generally than you consent to visit us—and the Douglasites would as soon see old nick here as yourself." When Lincoln arrived by stagecoach from Springfield, Jonas was on hand to meet and escort him to the hall where the rally was to be held. Afterwards, in company with others, the two friends went to an oyster house for refreshments and political talk. Then Jonas walked Lincoln back to the Quincy House, where he was staying for the night.

There must have been many more interchanges of correspondence between Jonas and Lincoln than have been preserved by the historical societies and libraries, and many more meetings between the two than have been recorded. By December of the same year, 1854, Jonas was doing political spade-work for Lincoln, sounding out powerful Whigs for their reaction to the Springfield lawyer's candidacy for the national Senate in the next election. For himself, Jonas wrote,

> I have no pretensions for that or any other office at this time—and Browning and Williams not being in the way, I should prefer you to any other—and should be pleased to render you any service in my power.

The old Whig Party finally died in the sectional strife over the slavery issue, and Jonas and Lincoln decided to enlist in the ranks of the new Republican Party. Both served as presidential electors on the Fremont ticket in 1856, that first bid of the new party for national power. During the campaign, as was his wont, Jonas traveled the district delivering lengthy, impassioned political speeches. He was, apparently, one of the most successful political orators in central Illinois.[9]

In July 1858, Jonas summoned Lincoln post-haste to give another one of his "*sledge hammer speeches*," at a district convention in Augusta, Hancock County, this time in behalf of James Stark, the Republican candidate for Congress. Douglas was again on the scene, and Jonas was certain that an address by Lincoln would "effect wonders." He promised "the tallest kind of a crowd" if his Springfield friend could see his way clear to making the trip. Lincoln trusted Jonas' political judgment and, as in 1854, did not hesitate to take Jonas' word for it that his services were needed by the party. Even though he was in the midst of his exhausting series of debates with Douglas, the political turning-point of his life, he wrote back to Jonas that "my mind is at once made up to be with you." Two months later Jonas proudly signed his name as Chairman of the Republican Committee of Arrangements to an advertisement which invited "The Friends of Hon. Abraham Lincoln" to "hear the true principles of the Republican party expounded, and the unsound doctrines of the Douglas Democracy exposed" at the Quincy debate between the two great contenders for popular favor.[10]

In December 1858, Horace Greeley came to Quincy to deliver a public lecture. Afterwards, the leading Republicans of the town—Wood, Williams, Browning, Bushnell, Asbury and Jonas—closeted themselves with the New York editor and talked about the presidential election of 1860. Henry Asbury mentioned Lincoln as a possible nominee of the party. Asbury later wrote that "my suggestion fell flat, it was not even discussed, none of them seemed for Lincoln. I felt a little mortified,—finally, some one said Lincoln might do for Vice President—at this point Mr. Jonas probably to relieve my embarrasment [sic] or probably because he concurred—said: Gentlemen there may be more in Asbury's suggestion than any of us now think. Here the whole subject was dropped and the caucus dispersed."[11] Whatever Jonas then thought of Lincoln's chances for the nomination, by early 1860 he was unquestionably in the Lincoln camp. On February 3, he wrote to his Springfield friend for a copy of the published version of the Lincoln-Douglas debates, assuring him that "with proper exertions and judicious selections at Chicago in June, we shall be able to carry the day and in November proclaim *victory* to all the world."

Shortly after Lincoln was nominated at the Chicago convention, Jonas wrote him a confidential letter conveying the news that Douglas' cohort, Isaac N. Morris, was collecting false affidavits to prove that Lincoln had been a member of the old Know-Nothing Party, which affidavits would be published in an effort to draw the foreign vote away from him in the coming election. Lincoln had denied the charge previously, but Jonas felt that the whole matter was too dangerous to ignore. Ironically enough, the accusation centered around Lincoln's visit to Quincy back in 1854 when he had hardly been out of Jonas' sight long enough to attend the Know-Nothing meeting which had supposedly been conducted that night. In his answer to Jonas, Lincoln recalled the details of his visit to Quincy and, without saying it in so many words, suggested that Jonas was the logical man to make public denial of the accusation. Lincoln was too clever a politician to repudiate the old Know-Nothing voters at such a crucial time, but the foreign vote had to be safeguarded under all circumstances. There is no record of Jonas' statements on the subject, but it is entirely possible that he went to the Democrats and threatened to expose their attempt to misrepresent Lincoln's political affiliations unless they called a halt to the scheme. Whatever Jonas' course of action, the affidavits were not published.

During the campaign, Jonas again took to the political platform, traveling the area which he knew so well in behalf of Lincoln's candidacy. Orville Hickman Browning, a close political friend of both Jonas and Lincoln and Senator from Illinois for a brief period during the war, accompanied Jonas to three important meetings and shared the stump with him. Browning recorded in his diary that Jonas' speech before ten thousand persons at Stones Prairie on August 25, 1860, "occupied an hour."[12] He agreed with Körner that Jonas was one of the ablest orators in the area.

In December, after Lincoln's election had been interpreted by the slave states as the signal for secession, Jonas wrote Lincoln another "confidential" letter. He apologized for taking up the President-Elect's time "when you have so much to think of and so many things to perplex you." But the matter was urgent. Jonas had many relatives and friends in the South; he had just received a letter from New Orleans warning him of a plot by prominent Southerners to assassinate Lincoln before the inauguration. Jonas regarded the writer of the letter as a cautious, sober, and reliable person who would transmit such information only if he were convinced that it was authentic. He pleaded with his friend to take all precautions for "your personal safety and the preservation of our National Integrity." Jonas, needless to say, was not among those who laughed and sneered a few months later when news leaked out that Lincoln had arrived at Washington under secret guard to avert a threatened attack upon his train in Baltimore. Jonas believed that the life of the Chief Executive was really endangered by the fanatics of the South.

Jonas was not one to ask favors for himself. But his friend Browning knew that he would like to be appointed to the Quincy Postmastership again. He wrote, on December 9, 1860, to the President-Elect, that "when the time arrives for appointing to offices throughout the country, I would be glad to have our mutual friend Abram [*sic*] Jonas remembered in connection with the Post Office at Quincy. He wishes the place, and, I think, ought to have it."[13] Only a short time after the inauguration, Lincoln obliged his Quincy colleague with the desired appointment; perhaps he would have done so whether or not Browning had written.

In 1862, Lincoln turned to Jonas for a favor. A Missourian charged with disloyalty had been held in prison in Quincy despite a flock of petitions for his release. Lincoln decided to leave the decision to his friends Abraham Jonas and Henry Asbury, and so wrote in his order:

> Will the Secretary of War please direct that Mr. Thoroughman may be disposed of at the discretion of Abram Jonas and Henry Asbury of Quincy, Illinois, both of whom I know to be loyal and sensible men?[14]

In May 1864, Jonas' family turned to Lincoln, through Orville Browning, for a final favor. Like Lincoln's, Jonas' was a "house divided." Four of his sons were fighting on the Confederate side. One, Charles, had been captured and confined in a prisoner-of-war camp. Jonas had made no attempt to secure his son's release, but now he was on his death-bed and the physicians had given up all hope for his recovery. So Mrs. Jonas wired to Browning and asked him to intercede with Lincoln for Charles' release to pay a last visit to his father.[15] Lincoln must have been shocked to hear the news of his friend's fatal illness; directions were immediately issued for Charles' furlough:

> Allow Charles H. Jonas now a prisoner of War at Johnson's Island, a parol[e] of three weeks to visit his dying father, Abraham Jonas, at Quincy, Illinois.
> June 2, 1864.
>
> A. Lincoln[16]

It was none too soon. Charles reached Quincy on the day of his father's death, but, as he wrote later with a thankful heart, "in time to be recognized and welcomed by him."[17]

One final act of friendship and the Lincoln-Jonas story was closed. Two days after Jonas' death, Browning went to see the President and obtained his promise to appoint Mrs. Jonas to serve out her husband's unexpired term in the Quincy Post Office.[18] Again we do not know whether Browning's prompting was necessary or not. But Lincoln did make the appointment and so paid another tribute of friendship to his comrade whose life had paralleled his own in many ways, who had shared many interests and principles with him, and who had been so loyal to him during all the disappointing years which had preceded his election to the highest office in the land.

II

One of the most enigmatic intimates of President Lincoln during the war years was Isachar Zacharie, an obscure British-born physician and chiropodist who, according to the *New York World*, "enjoyed Mr. Lincoln's confidence perhaps more than any other private individual . . . [and was] perhaps the most favored family visitor at the White House."[19]

It all began in September 1862, when Zacharie, who had already removed corns and bunions from some of the most distinguished feet in the country, including those of Henry Clay and William Cullen Bryant, journeyed to Washington for an interview with Secretary of War Stanton. Whether it was to treat Stanton's feet or for another purpose, is not known; but the Jewish chiropodist first looked to Stanton's pedal comfort, and then proceeded to discuss the foot health of the army. He proposed to organize a corps of chiropodists for army service, "a corps of corn doctors, or foot soldiers," as the punning *New York Herald* would have it. The Secretary of War apparently thought more of Zacharie's professional treatments than he did of his military proposals, for he passed him on to the President not to discuss the chiropodists' corps, but to relieve Lincoln's feet.[20]

After the treatment, Zacharie requested a recommendation from his distinguished patient. The President promptly wrote the following testimonial:

> Dr. Zacharie has operated on my feet with great success, and considerable addition to my comfort.
>
> A. Lincoln[21]
>
> Sep. 22, 1862.

According to the newspapers, Zacharie then proceeded to remove corns from the feet of Generals McClellan, Banks and Burnside, and of various cabinet members and other high officials. Punsters and satirists had the time of their lives when word got around about Zacharie's professional success in Washington:

> . . . In the certificates furnished to the chiropodist by the President, Secretary Seward and other members of the Cabinet, and by Generals McClellan, Banks and Burnside, we have a cornucopia of information about the secrets of this war. The President has been greatly blamed for not resisting the demands of the radicals; but how could the President put his foot down firmly when he was troubled with corns? There have been rumors of personal animosities and ill-timed bickerings among the members of the Cabinet; but undoubtedly these have been caused by the honorable Secretaries inadvertently treading upon each other's bunions under the council board. Some of our generals have been reproached for their slow movements; but is celerity of motion to be expected of persons

> whose toe nails are growing into the flesh? No human being could be expected to toe the mark of our expectations under such circumstances . . . General Pope, who by a singular paradox placed his headquarters in the saddle, made a few rapid evolutions, during which he nearly succeeded in using up himself, the enemy and our army; but Jackson's barefooted rebels, who do not know the need or the value of a chiropodist, got the better of him at last . . . It would seem, therefore, that all our past troubles have originated not so much with the head as with the feet of the nation. Dr. Zacharie has shown us precisely where the shoe pinches . . .[22]

This was just the kind of nonsense that the President liked to read to his friends. Perhaps the editorial jokers were partly responsible for the development of a cordial relationship between the Chief Executive and his corn doctor.

We do not know what Zacharie told Lincoln while he was removing his corns, or how many times he returned to the White House, but four months later Zacharie was in New Orleans on a special mission entrusted to him by the President. He hardly practiced his profession at all, except for General Banks' personal convenience; the rest of his time was devoted to readjusting the exchange rates of Louisiana and Union currency, to interviewing local people in an effort to gauge public opinion, and to penning reports for the presidential eye on the state of affairs under the military govenment of General Banks. In his reports Zacharie retailed stories of Butler's regime, related military gossip, and praised Banks' moderate policy towards the residents of New Orleans. His duties apparently combined those of a special presidential envoy, special assistant to the Military Governor, and intermediary between the military government and the civilian population.[23] In the latter capacity he took special pains to secure a generous hearing for Northern Jews who had been caught in New Orleans by the outbreak of war, and for New Orleans Jews who had to depart for the Confederacy upon their refusal to take the oath of allegiance to the Union. Indeed, this connection with his co-religionists in the Louisiana port was a key to another role which the chiropodist was destined to play, as we shall see very shortly.

In March 1863, Zacharie returned to the North to convey special reports and secret memoranda to Lincoln. Within ten days he was on his way back to New Orleans with Lincoln's replies. On the eve of his departure Zacharie wrote the President a note in which he referred to his agitation over "the great responsibility resting on me." We have no way of ascertaining the nature of "the great responsibility." Perhaps Lincoln had charged him with the duty of fostering the activities of the Union associations in New Orleans, for after his arrival in Louisiana the chiropodist began to report on the success of these groups. But perhaps he had already broached a much more important subject to the President, a subject which had undoubtedly been the focal point of much of his activity in New Orleans: *a negotiated peace with the Confederacy!*

General Banks conceived himself to be a peace-maker. He had already sent one emissary, Martin Gordon by name, to Richmond to sound out official and popular opinion on the question of a peaceful settlement to the war.[24] So encouraging was Gordon's report that Banks determined to make an official effort to bring the men at Washington and at Richmond together around a conference table. It is not clear whether Zacharie or Banks took the initiative in formulating their joint plan for peace; in his letters to Banks, Zacharie frequently refers to himself as the author of the scheme.[25] At any rate, on July 2, 1863, Banks instructed his Quartermaster to issue five thousand dollars in Confederate currency to Zacharie,[26] wrote a letter of introduction to Secretary of State Seward for Zacharie to deliver in person,[27] and sent the chiropodist off to the North.

The letter which the General wrote to the Secretary of State indicated the importance of Zacharie's Jewish contacts in New Orleans:

> The return of Dr. Zacharie to New York offers me an opportunity to say that he has enjoyed many opportunities of obtaining information which are not open to Officers of the Government, and that I am satisfied he is a zealous supporter of the Government. His connection with the Jewish Community of New Orleans which is very large and very powerful both by its numerical strength, and the activity which distinguishes its leading members has given him great advantages in this respect. He has been considerate and attentive to many of the families that have been recently required to leave the Department as Registered Enemies and enabled the Officers of the Government to perform some acts of grace trifling in themselves, but of service to all parties. These attentions have won from persons who have great influence with leading men of the Rebel Government expressions of gratitude and secured for him such endors[e]ments as will enable him to do that which other men cannot do, and which perhaps could not be given to a man of more commanding social or political position . . .[28]

Armed with such a letter, Zacharie could not fail to obtain an interview with Seward, who thought enough of his plan to send him on to Lincoln. The President was delighted to renew acquaintanceships, listened carefully to the details of his scheme, and then referred him back to Seward for arrangements for his trip into the Confederacy. Several days later, however, the Secretary of State very coldly informed him that the Cabinet had rejected the proposal. So far as Zacharie knew, the scheme had been killed.[29]

But Lincoln was not one to leave any stone unturned. Apparently on his own responsibility, and without consultation with his Cabinet officers, he called Zacharie back to Washington about a month later, discussed his ideas with him for two days, and then authorized him to cross over into the Confederacy for a meeting with Confederate officials.[30] Arrived in Richmond, he was met by Benjamin, the Secretary of State, Mallory, the Secretary of the Navy, Seddon, the Secretary of War, and General Winder, Provost-Marshal of Richmond, and began consultations which lasted for several days.[31] What the actual proposals were which Zacharie presented to the Confederate high command during his stay in Richmond is not known, but he returned to Washington happy in the thought that "the interview was of the most friendly nature."[32] To Banks he wrote, confidentially, that "Benjamin & Mallory spoke of you in the *kindest manner*, and Benjamin said that he was under many obligations to you for your kindness towards his sister."[33]

Sometime later the *New York Herald* caught wind of the episode and reported a fantastic version of the Zacharie peace-plan:

> . . . Davis, the rebel Cabinet and the rebel armies are to go to Mexico. Our government is to furnish them with transportation to that favored land and with rations on the way. Jeff Davis calculates to land in Mexico with one hundred and fifty thousand veteran fire-eaters, each of whom can devour a Frenchman at a meal, without salt and without the slightest injury to his digestion. With this force he will drive away Napoleon's hordes and proclaim himself President of the new Mexican republic. Simultaneously the seceded Southern States will return to the Union with whatever negroes are left in them. This will end the war satisfactorily to all concerned . . .[34]

Apparently *anything* Zacharie did brought the press' sense of humor into play. It is unlikely that such a plan as the *Herald* reported should have received Lincoln's serious consideration, or the Confederate statesmen's either.

At any rate, as Zacharie wrote to Banks, "on my first arrival Mr. Lincoln detained me 2 hours, locking his doors and preventing any person from having access to him. He seemed to be delighted with my revelations."[35] If the President was pleased, his Cabinet was not. Seward was angry that Lincoln had gone ahead with the scheme over his disapproval; Chase was opposed to any negotiations with the Rebels.[36] Despite this, Lincoln talked with Zacharie again; he seemed reluctant to forego any chance for a peaceful settlement:

> . . . the President is true and is perfectly delighted with my success. But how to act he does not know. *He reminds me* of the *man* that *won the Elephant at a Raffle*. He does not know what to do with it . . .[37]

Lincoln sent Zacharie to see Seward several times, but the Secretary of State had an objection for every alternative suggestion Zacharie made, although so far as he was concerned, he said, Zacharie was free to carry on the negotiations:

> . . . He said go to New York and keep quiet—if you wish to go down to see *Benjamin* again to do so, that I could do whatever I liked, that the President was satisfied with whatever I [had] done, and when the time came & all was ready he could clintch [*sic*] the matter . . .[38]

He received many kind words from both Lincoln and Seward, but neither was willing to activate the follow-up Zacharie recommended, namely, that General Banks be recalled to Washington for the express purpose of continuing the consultations with Richmond. There was a plaintive note in Zacharie's frustrated plea to Banks: "*Now what is the use of my going to see Benjamin, if we are not ready to do any thing.*"[39]

The chiropodist was convinced that his plans were thwarted by two groups of officials: the radicals who would not relent from their determination to destroy the South, and jealous bureaucrats who would not permit Banks' emissary to proceed because they feared that the popularity which would result from success would guarantee the Presidency to Banks in 1864. And, indeed, Zacharie's letters to his chieftain were chock full of assurances that the people were anxiously awaiting the opportunity to elect him in '64. Whatever the reason for the rejection of the Zacharie-Banks peace plans, the Jewish chiropodist was now a member of that remarkable group of fanatics, thieves, visionaries and idealists who believed that they could have ended the war if the Government had only supported their activities.

Back to New York and the comparatively unexciting job of cutting toenails and removing corns! But Zacharie's services to the Jews in New Orleans was not overlooked. According to a laudatory article in *The Jewish Messenger*,[40] in May 1864, a group of New York Jews, headed by A. R. B. Moses, Samuel A. Lewis, Jacob S. Cohen, and Lewis J. Phillips, tendered him a testimonial evening and presented him with an expensive silver tea service and salver in appreciation of his "noble and fraternal efforts" in behalf of the Jews of New Orleans and other Confederate Jews whom he had helped.

Samuel A. Lewis had good reason to be among the group who were expressing their gratitude to Zacharie. He was the uncle of Ada Jackson, fiancée of Goodman L. Mordecai of Charleston, S.C., who had been imprisoned in Washington as a Confederate commercial agent on his way to Nassau. The chiropodist had made a personal trip to Washington to see the President about the case and convinced Lincoln to order the young man's release. Mordecai insisted on going to the White House to thank the President. During the interview, Zacharie mentioned the fact that Mordecai's father had contributed $10,000 to South Carolina immediately after its secession from the Union and was one of the most active participants in all of Charleston's war activities. With a typical touch of his quixotic humor, Lincoln grasped the young Confederate veteran's hand and said: "I am happy to know that I am able to serve an enemy!"[41]

After appropriate speeches by the members of the committee, who had originally hoped to give a testimonial dinner for their honored guest (which idea he rejected), and the reading of congratulatory messages from General Dix, Rabbi Raphall, and others who could not be present, Zacharie himself arose to speak. He touched on various subjects, his love of the Union, the high place which Jews had achieved in the modern world, his own humble origin and struggle to better himself, and his gratitude for being honored by his fellow Jews for doing his duty to his adopted country. Zacharie then invited his friends into the dining room "where a sumptuous collation was prepared . . . [and] appropriate toasts were given and responded to, among them, the health of Dr. Zacharie and family, his aged father, now absent, the Committee, the Jewish press, the ladies, the President of the United States, Maj. Gen. Banks, Sir Moses Montefiore, and many other sentiments . . ." One wishes that details were available about other cases in which Zacharie used his personal influence to intercede for persons in trouble. There must have been a sizable number to warrant the expression of gratitude by a whole committee of New Yorkers.

During the next few months Zacharie spent his time electioneering for Lincoln and the Republican party. The practice of his profession never seems to have satisfied him. He conferred with local party officials, took their demands and queries to the President, and obtained statements from him designed to quiet the more restless spirits among his fellowing. He even undertook several political trips through Pennsylvania and New York, but it is not clear whether it was to consult with local politicians, to speak at rallies, or merely to propagandize for Lincoln as a private citizen. Here, as on previous occasions, it is difficult to define the chiropodist's relationship to the President. We cannot tell from their correspondence whether Zacharie undertook these missions on his own initiative, or whether the President assigned them to him.

In a report to the White House on November 3, Zacharie indicated that he had been concentrating on the Jewish voters of New York City:

> As regards the *Isrelites* [*sic*]—with but few exceptions, they will vote for you. I understand them well, and have taken the precaution, to see that they do as they have promised. I have secured good and trustworthy men to attend on them on Election Day. My men have been all the week seeing that their masses are properly Registered. . . .

Zacharie evidently did not agree with the Jewish press in its campaign against a "Jewish vote." As in other elections, the *Messenger* was insisting that "nobody is authorized to speak for our co-religionists on political questions; there is no such thing as a 'Jewish vote.' "[42] The *Record* agreed, with the reservation that Jews should be advised to vote against candidates who appeared to approve of the agitation for a Constitutional amendment recognizing Christianity as the official religion of the country.[43] Myer S. Isaacs, co-editor of the *Messenger*, wrote an indignant letter to Lincoln, the month before the election, when daily papers printed a report that certain New York Jews had gone to Washington to pledge the Jewish vote to Lincoln. John Hay answered reassuringly that

> No pledge of the Jewish vote was made by these gentlemen and no inducements or promises were extended to them by the President. They claimed no such authority and received no such response as you seem to suppose—The President deems this statement due to you . . .[44]

The *Messenger* would not have been so eager to record the honors given to Zacharie if it had been aware of his efforts to shepherd the Jewish vote into the Republican fold.

The final recorded contact between the chiropodist and the President occurred after the fall of Savannah. Zacharie's family had lived there all during the war and Lincoln had promised his friend that he would arrange permission for him to go there as soon as the Union armies captured it. On January 25, 1865, therefore, he instructed the Secretary of War to see that Zacharie was granted a pass to enable him to proceed to Savannah.

The last letter which the chiropodist wrote to the White House was a message that he was leaving for the South and would happily undertake any mission which Lincoln would want to entrust to him! For the first time, the President found no business at hand worthy of the chiropodist's inventiveness; he set out for Savannah without a presidential mission. Lincoln was assassinated before Zacharie returned from the South.

What manner of man was this chiropodist-presidential envoy who sent baskets of bananas, oranges, and pineapples to the White House, conveyed his "kind regards" to Mrs. Lincoln, and, after two years of correspondence, began to address the President as "My Dear Friend"? What was the nature of the friendship which led the *New York World* to say that "the President has often left his business-apartment to spend an evening in the parlor with this favored bunionist"?[45]

The *New York Herald* described him as a man of charm and grace:

> Dr. Zacharie is distinguished by a splendid Roman nose, fashionable whiskers, an eloquent tongue, a dazzling diamond breastpin, great skill in his profession, an ingratiating address, a perfect knowledge of his business and a plentiful supply of social moral courage . . .[46]

The *World*, on the other hand, thought him a conniving "toe-nail trimmer," and accused him of speculating in cotton in New Orleans, and of taking bribes for the favors he obtained from the President.[47] Rumors of his speculation *were* widespread. He himself told the President of their currency and warned him not to believe them. Banks, in his letter of introduction to Seward, repudiated the suspicion by assuring the Secretary of State that "I can only say that Doctor Zacharie has had no favors whatever from the Government and has asked for none at my hands."[48] Suspicion of dishonesty in captured Southern territory was not unusual; a General's personal character reference was very unusual.

Undoubtedly the chiropodist had high expectations of reward. He was actually on two political band-wagons at almost the same time, supporting both Lincoln and Banks. In his letters, Zacharie continually assured Banks of his loyal support, and promised over and over again that he would permit no one to steal "the honour" of achieving peace: it belonged to his Commanding General and himself. When, later, he worked actively for the re-election of Lincoln, practically every letter contained a hint that his services to the Chief Executive merited some tangible recognition. In what directions did his ambitions tend? Perhaps he was revealing a hidden hope when he spoke in this wise to the Jews who honored him in May 1864:

> . . . Let us look at England, France, Russia, Holland, aye, almost every nation in the world, and where do we find the Israelite? We find them taken into the confidence of Kings and Emperors. And in this republican and enlightened country, where we know not how soon it may fall to the lot of any man to be elevated to a high position by this government, why may it not fall to the lot of an Israelite as well as any other? . . .

Did he conceive of himself as another Jewish premier, like Judah P. Benjamin, wielding the power of statecraft for an affectionate President? It is not altogether unlikely.

But whatever Zacharie's secret ambitions, the two men who trusted him and took him into their confidence, Banks and Lincoln, were not credulous, naive men. Lincoln, in particular, had a profound insight into human character. What he saw beneath the chiropodist's charm and glibness struck him as sound enough to warrant opening the White House doors to him whenever he came to Washington, sending him to New Orleans to work out policy with Banks, listening seriously to his analysis of political developments, while all the time he was an unknown, unimportant foreigner, with no mass following or well-placed backers. Whatever Zacharie's motivation for ingratiating himself into the presidential favor—even if it was only social-climbing—Lincoln liked him well enough and believed in his integrity enough to discuss high matters of state policy with him and to while away hours of despondency in his company.

Zacharie dropped back into obscurity after Lincoln's death, returning eventually to his native England, where he passed away in 1897.[49] Whatever his role—sycophant, court-jester, politician, spy or sincere friend—his relationship with Lincoln was one of the strange corners in the personal and public life of the Civil War President.

III

In March 1863, Lincoln conferred with a strange and visionary man, Henry Wentworth Monk, the Canadian-born Judaeophile and early Zionist, who had come to Washington to urge upon the President a plan for the abandonment of the war. Lincoln was not seriously disposed to listen to his proposals, so Monk went on to discuss one of his pet projects: the restoration of European Jewry to Palestine. The President agreed that the vision which Monk had of a Jewish state in Palestine was worthy of consideration, but protested that the United States was in no position to take a leading role in international affairs until it had set its own house in order and reunited the two warring sections. This is what he said of the Jews:

> . . . I myself have a regard for the Jews. My chiropodist is a Jew, and he has so many times "put me upon my feet" that I would have no objection to giving his countrymen "a leg up."[50]

This passing reference to Zacharie was the only known opinion Lincoln ever registered in regard to the Jews, beyond the general comments to Wise and his friends in connection with the Grant Order and to Fischel concerning the chaplaincy clause. In those two cases he had expressed an interest in seeing justice done to the Jews, and was willing to take upon himself the responsibility for the necessary action. He understood the quality of democratic equality well enough to know that no group could be deprived of its rights without endangering the whole structure of democracy. Indeed, his personal dealings with Jews in his Illinois years, with Abraham Jonas the lawyer, Julius Hammerslough the merchant,[51] and Henry Rice the clothier,[52] undoubtedly helped him to realize that Jews were no different from other human beings, despite the widespread prejudices against them.

The wide variety of Jews whom he met during the election year and in the White House deepened his understanding of Jews as individuals. Henry Greenebaum, another Illinois politician who had long been an abolitionist;[53] Sigismund Kaufmann[54] and Abram J. Dittenhoefer,[55] both Republican presidential electors; Moritz Pinner, the St. Louis abolitionist;[56] Simon Wolf, the lawyer,[57] and Adolphus S. Solomons, the printer and photographer,[58] both of Washington; Edward Rosewater, the War Department telegrapher;[59] Gustavus A. Myers, the Richmond lawyer[60]—these were only a few of the many Jews whom Lincoln met, some of whom saw him frequently on official or personal business. A man with Lincoln's broad understanding of human beings could not have been prejudiced against Jews at the first; meeting so many Jews only served to broaden his experience with them.

Lincoln met four rabbis, according to the record. Three we have already mentioned: Wise, Fischel, and Szold. The fourth was Morris J. Raphall of New York, the divine whose pro-slavery sermon had aroused such controversy in early 1861. One wonders if Lincoln, who once told an Army chaplain that he "sometimes thought that Moses didn't quite understand" the Almighty's instructions on slavery,[61] might not have discussed the matter with Raphall if he had known of Raphall's sermon on the subject. As it was, Raphall and Adolphus Solomons, who introduced him to the President, were given only a brief interview. The rabbi had come to ask for a promotion for his son. It happened to be one of the National Fast Days which Lincoln proclaimed for public prayer in behalf of the armed forces. After Raphall told his story, Lincoln said, as Solomons recalled it, "As God's minister is it not your first duty to be at home today to pray with your people for the success of our arms as is being done in every loyal church throughout the North, East and West?" Lincoln could not know that Raphall was one of the rabbis who never failed to conduct services on such public occasions. "My assistant is doing that duty," the rabbi replied. "Ah, that is different," said the President, as he turned to his table to write out a message to Stanton on one of his small cards:

> The Secretary of War will promote Second Lieutenant Raphall to a first Lieutenancy.
>
> A. Lincoln.

"Now doctor," he said, "you can go home and do your own praying."[62] One of the most interesting Jewish experiences in Lincoln's life was the presentation to him of a Hebrew souvenir by Abraham Kohn, President of the KAM Congregation and City Clerk of Chicago. Kohn had been introduced to Lincoln, shortly after the nominating convention, as a Republican stalwart who would help to marshall votes for the Lincoln ticket. They talked, it is said, not only of politics, but also of the Bible. In February 1861, one month before the Inauguration, Kohn, a pious and learned Jew, was pondering the fate of the nation and its leader. What message of encouragement could he send to the President-Elect? He turned to the Bible and found in the first chapter of the Book of Joshua words whose meaning the President would take to heart:

> Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, to you have I given it, as I spoke unto Moses. From the wilderness, and this Lebanon, even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your border. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee nor forsake thee. Be strong and of good courage; for thou shalt cause this people to inherit the land which I swore unto their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, to observe to do according to all the law, which Moses My servant commanded thee; turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest have good success whithersoever thow goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy ways prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage; be not affrighted,

> neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

He painted a replica of the American flag, and upon it, in Hebrew, the verses from the Book of Joshua.

Lincoln was probably unfamiliar with Kohn's address in Chicago, for he appears to have sent a note of appreciation to Kohn through the agency of J. Scammon Young, who misplaced it for almost six months before forwarding it to Kohn:

> Chicago, August 28, 1861.
>
> Abraham Kohn, Esq.
> My dear Sir: The enclosed acknowledgement of the receipt of your beautiful painting of the American flag by the President got lost among my letters or it would have been sent to you before. Regretting the delay, I am,
>
> Truly your friend,
> J. Scammon Young.

Unfortunately Lincoln's letter was lost again, this time irretrievably. It must have been an interesting one. Lover of the Bible that he was, he must have been deeply moved by Kohn's quotation of the inspiring words of Scripture.[63]

In late 1862, a New York paper printed a report that some local Jewish women had presented a flag to Mrs. Lincoln. A. S. Cohen, editor of *The Jewish Record*, attempted to discover the details, but no one seemed to know the source of the report, so he took his pen in hand and wrote to the President. John Hay answered the query:[64]

> Executive Mansion,
> Washington, November 28, 1862.
>
> My Dear Sir:
>
> The paragraph to which you refer was altogether erroneous.
>
> The "flag" referred to was a small painting of the American banner, inscribed in Hebrew characters with a passage from the Ist Chapter of Joshua, from the 4th to the 9th verse. It was presented to the President in February, 1861, before his departure from Illinois, by Abraham Kohn, City Clerk of Chicago, who had himself painted it. It has been in the Executive Mansion ever since the President's inauguration.

Your obt. Servant,
John Hay,
Assist. Priv. Sec.

A. S. Cohen & Co.,
&c., &c.

Lincoln's attitude towards the Jews must be measured in part, at least, by his opinions of the Know-Nothing movement. The overwhelming majority of Jews were, after all, immigrants, and although the Nativists never mentioned Jews as a specific target, they were undoubtedly included in the general classification of unwanted aliens. The 1860 letter to Jonas, already mentioned, was a carefully written political document, not a personal opinion. In 1855, at the peak of the Know-Nothing crusade against Catholics and aliens, Lincoln had expressed himself more fully in a letter to Joshua Speed:

> I am not a Know-Nothing. That is certain. How could I be? How can any one who abhors the oppression of negroes, be in favor of degrading classes of white people? Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid. As a nation, we began by declaring that "*all men are created equal.*" We now practically read it "all men are created equal, *except* negroes." When Know-Nothings get control, it will read: "all men are created equal except negroes, *and foreigners and Catholics.*" When it comes to this I should prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty—to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocrisy . . .[65]

In answer to a query from a German editor as to his estimation of the Massachusetts provision for the restriction of the citizenship privileges of aliens, Lincoln wrote:

> I say, then, that as I understand the Massachusetts provision, I am against its adoption in Illinois, or in any other place, where I have a right to oppose it. Understanding the spirit of our institutions to aim at the *elevation* of men, I am opposed to whatever tends to *degrade* them. I have some little notoriety for commiserating the oppressed condition of the negro, and I should be strangely inconsistent if I should favor any project for curtailing the existing rights of *white men*, even though born in different lands and speaking different languages from myself . . .[66]

The Lincoln who urged his countrymen to banish all thoughts of vengeance against the foes who had embroiled them in a four-year-long holocaust, whose words "with malice towards none, with charity for all" ring with a noble biblical tone—that Lincoln had friendship in his heart for all men—foreign-born and native, Negro and white, Jew and Catholic and Protestant. His dealings with Jews were another dynamic demonstration of his truly democratic spirit.

IV

It was the eve of the fifth day of the Passover festival and Union Victory evening: April 14, 1865. Jews were gathered in their synagogues to celebrate the two-fold holiday and to thank God for the deliverance of their forefathers from Egyptian slavery and the return of peace to the United States. In his sermon that evening, Rabbi Max Lilienthal of Cincinnati spoke of the weary struggle through the years and of the aims of the Union in the war. It was, he said, a victory for freedom and democracy all over the world. He pleaded that all thoughts of vengeance and hatred against the Confederacy be expunged from the hearts of true Unionists, and that friendship and kindness be offered to the Southern rebels. He spoke also of the President:

> Four years ago the President-elect, the scorned rail-splitter, on his way to Washington had to disguise himself as a Scotchman, in order to elude the assassin's dagger that awaited him in Maryland . . . And four weeks ago the same man, re-elected to the same office, in spite of having signed the declaration of emancipation, now respected and revered, now considered as a man of manifest destiny and heroic immortality—renders the oath into the hands of another Chief Justice, the advocate of universal freedom . . .[67]

At about 10:15 that evening the President was shot in Ford's Theater in Washington. A short time after dawn the next morning he died without regaining consciousness.

Jews were on their way to synagogue or already worshipping when tidings of the assassination reached them. Black draperies were quickly hung on the altars; Yom Kippur hymns and chants were substituted for Passover melodies; Jews who had not planned on attending services hastened to join their brethren in the sanctuaries where they could find comfort in the hour of grief. The rabbis put their sermon notes aside, and spoke extemporaneously, haltingly, reaching out for the words to express their deep sorrow. But no matter how words were multiplied, they could not say more than Dr. Lilienthal that morning, in the spirit of David's lament over Abner, "Indeed a great man has fallen in Israel."[68]

Rabbi Samuel Adler of Temple Emanu-El, New York, the newspaper said, began to deliver a sermon, but he was so overcome that he could not continue.[69] Alfred T. Jones, *Parnas* of Beth El-Emeth Congregation of Philadelphia, asked Isaac Leeser to say something to comfort the worshippers; he did, but it was so disconnected that he had to apologize: "the dreadful news and its suddenness have in a great measure overcome my usual composure, and my thoughts refuse to arrange themselves in their wonted order."[70] The tidings took longer to reach San Francisco. The Rev. Elkan Cohn was just rising to deliver his sermon when a member of the congregation handed him a note conveying the news. He burst into tears, said the *Daily Alta California*, and then in sobbing voice told the congregation of the national tragedy.[71]

During the next days, synagogue boards, B'nai B'rith lodges, and other Jewish communal organizations met to affix in words their declaration of unity with the nation in it time of sorrow. The Hebrew Young Men's Literary Association of St. Louis resolved to wear the badge of mourning for thirty days in memory of "our great, worthy Chief Executive, a man of generous impulses and of noble nature."[72] Montefiore Lodge No. 54 of B'nai B'rith in New York City draped its charter and lodge symbols in black cloth, and lauded "the irreproachable character of Abraham Lincoln, as a man, his purity of purpose as a statesman, his exalted patriotism and his magnanimity in the hour of triumph."[73] The resolutions of the Hebrew Benevolent Society and Orphan Asylum spoke of the "kind-heartedness [and] humility" which had characterized the President's personal dealings with men, urged that they become an example to all Americans.[74] Beth Israel Congregation, of Jackson, Mich., like many others throughout the country, resolved to drape the altar in mourning cloth and to recite memorial prayers in the President's memory for six weeks. Its resolutions asked Him "who ruleth all the People of the Earth, in His Providence, to work out His Purpose in this appalling Calamity, that has gone so near to the heart of the American people, and to decree and hasten that end which our lamented President has so nearly consummated, religious Liberty, and the Restoration and perpetuation of the American Union."[75]

The columns of the Jewish periodicals, encased in heavy black border lines, added their voice to the keen of sorrow. *The Israelite* compared the assassinations of Caesar and Lincoln: "Caesar was slain to restore the Roman Republic; Lincoln and Seward fell victims of revenge to crushed slavery. Liberty or slavery, patriotism or revenge—here is the difference between Brutus and the assassins of Lincoln and Seward." Forgotten was Wise's partisan sniping at Lincoln the man: "Attired in a garb of simplicity and good humor, his modest worth lay concealed under a rough and uncouth exterior. He was an upright, honest, unassuming man, possessing the extraordinary skill of hiding his individuality behind the mighty deeds planned in his great intellect. . . He was forgiving in his nature, gentle as a child. . ."[76] *The Jewish Record* compared the passing of Lincoln before he could see the fruits of his war-year labors with Moses' death on Mount Pisgah in sight of the Promised Land. And yet the *Record* could not lay aside its opposition to his policies: "This is no hour for carping criticism. Posterity will pass judgment upon his virtues and his foibles. He was a man of energy, of perseverance; his sternest enemies never denied that his actions were based upon firm conviction. Of his schemes and the modes of execution others, at a later date, will speak with historical impartiality. Meantime, be it enough for us to state that the news of his assassination had shed a gloom over the country that time alone can dispel. The most inveterate haters of the principles with which he ever identified himself, bow their heads with sorrow at the decree of Providence. . ."[77]

The texts which the rabbis chose for their memorial sermons on April 19, the day of the funeral services in the White House, and on June 1, the Day of National Mourning appointed by President Johnson, were loving biblical tributes to the Lincoln who drew strength and comfort from Holy Writ.[78]

David Einhorn of Philadelphia[79] and Isaac M. Wise of Cincinnati[80] thought of the martyred President as another patriarchal Abraham departing from familiar surroundings at the divine behest, holding fast to the promise that his people would be a blessed nation:

> Now the Lord said unto Abram: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show

> thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." So Abram went, as the Lord had spoken unto him . . .

Samuel M. Isaacs of New York[81] took his text from a biblical verse which many had regarded as almost a Presidential motto during the war:

> Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, thy reward shall be exceedingly great.

King David's lament for Abner was the passage to which Henry Vidaver of St. Louis[82] and Bernard Illowy of New Orleans[83] turned for their expression of sorrow:

> And the king lamented for Abner, and said: "Should Abner die as a churl dieth? Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put in fetters; as a man falleth before the children of iniquity, so didst thou fall." And all the people wept again over him. And all the people came to cause David to eat bread while it was yet day; but David swore, saying: "God do so to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or aught else, till the sun be down . . . Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel? . . ."

David's rebuke to the Amalekite who slew Jonathan was the question which Max Schlesinger of Albany[84] asked in the name of all Americans:

> "How wast thou not afraid to put forth thy hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?"

Bernhard Felsenthal of Chicago[85] commenced his sermon with Isaiah's stirring proclamation of hope:

> "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning,
> And thy healing shall spring forth speedily . . ."

The sermons were as varied in text and in thought as their authors in character and interest. But there was a uniformness, a sameness about them, nonetheless. They dealt with the inscrutability of God's ways; the inevitability of death; the hope of immortality. Lincoln's death was compared over and over with Moses': the work of one era done, the transference of leadership to another generation. The rabbis sought to find a lesson for America in the murder of a beloved chief executive: everyone who had committed a sin or swerved from the ethical life shared Booth's responsibility for the assassination; Lincoln's death was a visitation from God, punishment of America for all the evil of the war. There was thanksgiving and gratitude for Lincoln's deeds and character; his noble work was a legacy to the nation—the abolition of slavery and the reconstruction of the Union; but his habits of heart were also an inheritance to be passed on to future generations.

Many of the memorial sermons referred to Lincoln's relationship with the Jews. Isaac Leeser said that the action taken by the President in reference to Jewish chaplains and the Grant affair "speak loudly for the natural kindness of the late President, which all can cheerfully acknowledge, whatever their political opinions may be, and let us hope that all in authority in America may be animated by the same spirit of justice and liberality."[86] Col. Philip J. Joachimsen of New York, who was invited to deliver the memorial address at the Temimi Derech Synagogue in New Orleans, said that "we, as Jews, had a distinct ground to love, respect and esteem him. I know that he, in his high position, appreciated those of our creed who had come forward to sustain him. His mind was not subject to the vulgar clamor against Jews, and when . . . an order was made to banish Jews as a class from a particular Department . . . our deceased President at once reversed an unauthorized command so harsh and . . . condemnable."[87] Alfred T. Jones, President of Beth El-Emeth Congregation of Philadelphia and an outspoken Democrat during the war, said that

> While many occupying high positions have either ignored our existence or turned a deaf ear to our claims for protection or redress, his just, kind and generous nature was never appealed to by us in vain. On every occasion (and he has been several times appealed to) he promptly recognized our claims as a religious body to national protection, and acceded unhesitatingly to all our just demands. So strong and noble a contrast to others did he exhibit in this respect, that we should be guilty of gross ingratitude not to acknowledge it.[88]

The Jews were not ungrateful for the President's fairmindedness towards them.

Isaac M. Wise tried to grasp the meaning of Lincoln as a human being, and spoke of "the passions, feelings, struggles, victories, motives and thoughts of . . . the man who stood at the head of affairs during this gigantic struggle, his cares and troubles, his sleepless nights and days of anxiety, his thoughts and his schemes, his triumphs and mortifications, his hopes and fears, and ten thousand more sentiments, feelings and thoughts . . ." But it was impossible, he said, to describe the inner Lincoln in words or pigment or stone. One would have to be satisfied to emulate the spirit and principles of the man.

> Let us carry into effect and perpetuate the great desires which heaved the breast of Abraham Lincoln; let us be one people, one, free, just and enlightened; let us be the chosen people to perpetuate and promulgate liberty and righteousness, the union and freedom of the human family; let us break asunder, wherever we can, the chains of the bondsman, the fetters of the slave, the iron rod of despotism, the oppressive yoke of tyranny; let us banish strife, discord, hatred, injustice, oppression from the domain of man . . . and we set him the most durable monument in the hearts of the human family . . .[89]

Sabato Morais was chagrined at the efforts of some Protestant divines to prove that Lincoln was a religious man.

> Why, my friends, [he said] if the essence of religion is what the great Hillel taught us, then I unhesitatingly say that the breast of our lamented President was ever kindled with that divine spark. "To forbear doing unto others what would displease us," was his golden rule. It is the maxim he illustrated in the immortal document of emancipation that bears his honorable signature. It is that which he exemplified by his numerous acts of clemency towards the unworthy, by remitting criminal offenses, by restoring the child of guilt to a widowed mother, or a desolate household. It is that which is breathed in every line of his last official message. He who penned these soul-elevating words needs not an open declaration of faith to evince his piety. "With malice towards none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us finish the work in which we are engaged, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and orphans; to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."[90]

Max Lilienthal saw in Lincoln "the first laborer-President." He had risen from the lowliest of origins to the highest office in the land. His election had unfolded, for the first time, "the full meaning of American liberty and equality."

> Do not give up the work, says his example, because you are born in an obscure station; do not get disheartened, because you have to wrestle with the disadvantages of a want of education—life is the best school, energy and perseverance the best teacher, honesty of purpose the best means for obtaining success; follow his example, and we shall finally, and in fact, establish the equality of mankind. He has achieved this triumph, and a whole world stands there, first amazed and then admiring the man, who, by his own indomitable energy, proved the greatness and glory of our institutions.

Lilienthal found in the personal story of Lincoln an object-lesson for his congregation of immigrants. They, too, might share in the realization of democracy patterned on the life of "the people's President."[91]

Rabbi Samuel Adler of Temple Emanu-El, New York, thought that Lincoln resembled Moses in the rare quality of meekness.

> Man cannot create meekness; it is natural; it comes with and remains with him. He was the great spirit which sheltered and protected this whole nation . . . Like Moses, he was ever thoughtful of the duty allotted to him, to bring his people back to enjoy the whole land. For land and people were the desires and determinations of these men. Both lived lowly in spirit, both were respected, loved, and adored, and both died with the same qualities. How terrible that Abraham Lincoln, having performed a portion of his duty, should be taken away by the hand of destiny before he completed it. This sad event was the will of God, and we must bear it calmly, as if a prophet had died. . . .

As if a prophet had died! Not one who peered into the future, but one who by the depth of his spiritual insight and the universality of his compassion, brought a divine message to his fellow-men.[92]

In the estimation of Rabbi Bernard Illowy of New Orleans, Lincoln's memorable qualities were his honesty and goodness.

> No, thy hands were never bound by the wiles of others, by the ties of flattery or by the galling manacles of fear; thou didst hear nothing but the

> wishes of thy people, thou didst fear none but God who alone was thy guide and trust . . . Thy hands were always active, always stretched forth to help, when and where thy help was needed. Thy feet were not put in chains, never restrained by selfishness, never checked by ambition, but with self-denial, with noble ardor, with paternal love and a brave and courageous heart didst thou walk before thy people, to save their honor, to guard their rights and to restore peace and harmony to their gates; and thou hast succeeded . . . Thou hast wound thyself lovingly around the hearts of millions with gentle ties, which even the destructive tooth of time can never loosen. Ages will roll upon ages, but thy memory will still live in the hearts of thy countrymen until the latest generations. . . .[93]

For John Wilkes Booth, the rabbis found no word too harsh. Samuel M. Isaacs asked his congregation if they would have believed a week ago that "here on earth, in this century, monsters could be found to deprive so valuable, so good, so religious a being of his life? Yet it is a fact, that in our boasted age of civilization and intellect, there are yet hearts so depraved, intellects so stunted as to harm the nation's benefactor."[94] Dr. Max Lilienthal thought that the War Department was at fault for not having kept its eye on Booth. "To allow a man like Booth—a man who, on the stage of New Orleans, trampled upon our flag, spat at it and disgraced it—to allow such a man to go about free and unmolested in our capital, was a fatal error, a disastrous mistake, and the whole country has to suffer and to mourn for it."[95] Illowy thought Booth was an "infernal fiend;"[96] Wise called him a "mad villain;"[97] Vidaver said he was an "imbruted assassin;[98] to Morais he was an "execrable wretch [who] has robbed liberty of its staunchest defender, and nature of its noblest creation."[99]

In their mourning over the loss of the martyred leader, and their anger at the psychopathic deed of his assassin, all of the rabbis were humane enough to urge restraint on extreme ideas of vengeance.

> Justice, [said Lilienthal] but no vengeance! Do you wish to honor his memory? Try to finish that part of his work he left undone . . . The South lies conquered and subjugated at our feet. She has sown the wind, and has reaped the whirlwind. But now she is no longer our foe; she is part and parcel of our family. We must assist her in healing her deep and sore wounds. With charity to all, we must help her to recover her former flourishing condition. We must feed and clothe her; we must take care of her widows and orphans; by the hand of free labor we must redeem

> her devastated territory. We must learn not only to forgive, but also to forget, so that the South, seeing her sin repaid by love and charity, may come back in sincere repentance, and resolve to wipe out, by future deeds of loyal patriotism, the shame and disgrace of past rebellion. The Union—then a Union, not of the law and the sword, but of sentiment and brotherly feeling—will inscribe, with tears of joy and gratitude, on Lincoln's monument the appropriate words: "The United Nation to the savior of the country."[100]

So, too, Elkan Cohn of San Francisco expressed the hope that Booth's crime might not arouse the North to exact vengeance from the entire Southland:

> And we pray that He, in His infinite love, may graciously avert the dreadful consequences of this calamity, calm the passions of the people, so justly aroused at this atrocious crime, soothe the grief and sorrow so deeply cutting in the very heart of our nation, and speak to the Angel of Destruction: "Enough! The noblest victim may be the last. Henceforth, the great work for which they bled stands under my divine protection ... I will now seal their work with the great blessing of peace!" O God! Thou who hast given victory to Thy people, may it please Thee to bless thy people with peace.[101]

Echoing the sentiments of his rabbinical colleagues, Sabato Morais called upon the people of America to immortalize Abraham Lincoln in the only real way a human being could be immortalized by his fellow-men.

> It is not by polished marble that the memory of our sainted chieftain can be extolled. The heart that sorrows for his untimely decease, the heart that glows with gratitude at the recollection of his labor and services, is the acknowledgement that becomes one so good. We must bear his name with a blessing upon our lips. Teach our children to pronounce it with the reverence inspired by that of the immortal father of this Republic. Picture it in their presence, as an incentive to virtue, his unostentatious goodness. Show how he adhered to truth amid appalling trials; how he met death for the sake of principles. The precious blood will then, indeed, bear fruits of sublimity.... Oh, blessed be the grief we feel, if it will adjust all differences, bury away all animosities, make an end of party strife, and raise a high and exalted throne to enduring peace in the country of Lincoln and Washington.[102]

In many cities throughout the nation, Jewish organizations took part in community-wide memorial exercises. The two Memphis congregations participated in a union memorial service in the city park; 167 members of Euphrates Lodge of B'nai B'rith marched in the procession preceding the service, and Rabbi Tuska spoke briefly as the Jewish representative.[103] Congregation B'nai B'rith of Los Angeles was one of the organizations which sponsored a memorial procession in that city. Since the congregation had no synagogue, its members met at the home of Rabbi Abraham Edelman after the public exercises for a Jewish memorial service.[104] Congregations in Chicago[105] and Boston[106] also participated in civic processions and memorial services.

As "the lonesome train" made its way from city to city, and millions of citizens bade a last farewell to the fallen leader, special committees were appointed to escort the train from one area to another. Josiah Cohen of Pittsburgh,[107] Abraham Kohn of Chicago[108] and Julius Hammerslough of Springfield,[109] were members of these civic committees in their respective communities. The greatest demonstration of all was held in New York City. About three thousand Jews marched in the civic procession, representing Jewish Masonic lodges, the B'nai B'rith and other Jewish fraternal orders, the Ceres Union and other Jewish social and literary organizations. Meanwhile other Jewish groups met at the Shearith Israel Synagogue for special exercises, after which they proceeded to the public memorial meeting in which the Rev. S. M. Isaacs represented the Jews. He read some passages from Scripture and an original prayer. *The Jewish Record's* report of these activities is reprinted as Appendix D.[110]

To all this outpouring of grief by Jewish congregations and rabbis, only one voice of objection was raised, not on political but on traditional grounds. A New Jersey gentleman, writing to *The Occident*, rebelled against the recitation of memorial prayers for Lincoln:

> I have heard that in one of our congregations, an Escava [memorial prayer] was repeated by the Hazan. If not sinful, is this not most absurd and ridiculous? If we are to maintain our form, and perpetuate the peculiar ideas of our faith, should we not be careful to guard against innovations under any pretense whatever? It was entirely right and proper that the Jewish congregations should express their sorrow at the death of the Chief Magistrate of the country, and their detestation of perpetrators of the horrible deed which deprived him of life, but is it

> necessary for this purpose to run counter to the opinions and religious views of their co-religionists? Is there a Jew in this whole land, educated in the history and traditions of his people, who would consider a Christian deserving of any of the *religious* services appertaining to Jewish worship or who in a moment of calm reflection can find any comparison between the late President and their great law-giver, "whom the Lord knew face to face"? . . .[111]

By their resolutions and services, the Jews of America showed themselves to be far more liberal than this narrow sectarian from New Jersey. The Rev. Leeser gave his answer to this letter in his memorial sermon in Washington on April 22:

> It is, indeed, somewhat unusual to pray for one not of our faith, but by no means in opposition to its spirit, and therefore not inadmissible. We pray for the dead, because we believe that the souls of the departed as well as of the living are in the keeping of God . . . The prayers, therefore, offered up this day for the deceased President are in accordance with the spirit of the faith which we have inherited as children of Israel, who recognize in all men those created like them in the image of God, and all entitled to His mercy, grace, and pardon, though they have not yet learned to worship and adore Him as we do who have been especially selected as the bearers of His law. . . .[112]

Prominent citizens of the town from which Lincoln had gone forth to lead the nation in war met together on May 2, 1865, to form the Lincoln Monument Association, for the purpose of erecting a monument which would honor Illinois' most distinguished son.[113] Julius Hammerslough, a Springfield merchant who had been on intimate terms with the late President and was the first president of Temple B'rith Sholom, was asked to represent the Association in an appeal to the rabbis and synagogues of the nation. His letter asked Jews to contribute to the fund out of a desire to prove themselves patriotic citizens as well as out of reverence for Lincoln's memory. "Let it be remembered," he said, "that we have, as a race, despite the advanced and enlightened age, to meet the prejudices still existing in the minds of many. Let us quell this feeling, and vindicate ourselves by contributing to this holy national work, in a manner that shall prove that the Hebrews are, as they have ever been, the staunch friends of freedom and liberty, and the foes of all oppression and wrong."[114]

The response which Hammerslough received was a gratifying indication of the eagerness of Jews to unite with their fellow citizens in memorializing the late President. Special committees collected funds for the monument in Philadelphia and Cincinnati.[115] The duplicate receipts for contributions to the Monument Association are so organized that it is not possible to ascertain the total sums collected by these committees, but Hammerslough himself received a total of $260.25 from his appeal, and the congregations in Alton, Ill., LaPorte, Ind., Louisville, Ky., Quincy, Ill., and St. Joseph, Mo., sent additional sums totaling $225 directly to the Association. Congregations Keneseth Israel of Philadelphia, and K.A.M. and B'nai Sholem of Chicago, forwarded another $150. This does not, of course, include contributions from individual Jews.[116]

New York and Philadelphia had plans for their own monuments in Lincoln's memory. Sabato Morais was delegated to send Mikveh Israel's contributions of $300 to the Mayor of Philadelphia.[117] The Rev. J. J. Lyons of Shearith Israel Congregation of New York made a personal appeal to his congregation at services, asking each member "to assist in the furtherance of so noble and commendable an undertaking, which will in [the] future bear testimony of your love of a good man, and your appreciation of the services of a faithful officer—peace be unto his memory."[118] *The Jewish Messenger* printed the names of ninety-nine New York Jews who had forwarded their contributions to its office for transmission to the proper authorities.[119]

So American Jewry paid a last tribute to the President who had appointed the first Jewish chaplains and ordered the revocation of the most sweeping anti-Jewish regulation in American history.

9

Epilogue

Into the four years of the Civil War were compressed the experience and lessons and pain of generations. Events of our own day continue to be motivated by political, economic and psychological forces which were created by the catastrophe of 1861–1865. Such contemporary problems as the social backwardness of many areas of the Southland, the recognition of the civil rights of the Negro in many sections of the country, the tremendous discrepancy between the economic productivity of the North and that of the South, the effect of Southern sectionalism upon national political issues—these and many other problems demonstrate over and over again the vital relevance of the Civil War to our own age.

The experiences of the American Jewish community during the Civil War also had far-reaching effects. Out of the crucible of those emotion-laden years came trends which were to shape the life of American Jewry for several generations.

The first of these was the highly accelerated pace of Americanization which resulted from Jewish participation in the war on both the individual and communal levels. In less critical periods of the national life the immigrant tends to assimilate the atmosphere of his new home slowly, cautiously, unhurriedly. He savors the mores and manners and ideas of his environment gradually, as a stranger, with a mixture of fear and reluctance, retaining as a safeguard the bulk of his older heritage. In some periods and areas, several generations have had to pass through the assimilatory process before the change-over from immigrant to American has been completed. During the fratricidal blood-bath of the Civil War however, the most desperate, fearsome period in American history, almost every inhabitant—citizen, immigrant, visitor—was drawn into the fray, emotionally even more than physically. Psychologically it was almost impossible for the alien to remain aloof from the strife which was disrupting the nation. In the South and in the North, the average immigrant became a partisan—generally sharing the ideas and attitudes of his neighbors, opposing them in a few, rare instances, but making an emotional commitment whatever his stand. The national defeats and triumphs were part of his daily life; the high excitements of victory and the depressions of tragedy drove deeply into his nature. Enduring the hardships of battle, burying sons and husbands and friends, participating in the multifarious welfare activities of the home front, taking sides in political arguments—these and a thousand other aspects of life in a nation at war with itself Americanized the large immigrant population at a much more rapid rate than that of more peaceful times.

Jews, like other immigrants, felt that they had earned their stake in the country. They belonged to it. This feeling of being a part of America played a major role in the inner life of American Jewry in the post-war generation. Reform Judaism, for example, which many regarded as a conscious adaptation of the Jewish tradition to the American climate, entered its greatest period of expansion and growth with the end of the war. When the floods of Jewish refugees from the pogroms of Eastern Europe began to beat against the shores of America in the late Seventies, the German immigrants of the previous generations had practically completed the process of acculturation. Reform Judaism had, in fact, become estranged in many ways from the major currents of Jewish thinking and practice. The amazing antipathy between the Eastern European, Orthodox Jewish immigrants and the Americanized Reform Jews, which has been a significant feature of American Jewish communal life almost to our own day, was at one and the same time a result and a demonstration of this rapid pace of assimilation. Another indication of this same factor was the attempt of the Reform communities to accelerate the natural, slow process of adjustment in the lives of the East-European immigrants. But classes and organizations and clubs and centers could not hasten assimilation in the same manner as the emergency of a war. Many of the new immigrants remained aloof, looking askance at what they considered to be the sacrifice of the essentials of Jewish tradition by the Americanized Reform Jews.

But those self-same immigrants who were shocked at the Protestant-like behavior of the Reform Jews were subjected to yet another stunning blow: the emotional furore of the first World War speeded up the assimilatory process in the lives of their own children, who began to take on the coloration of the environment with the same haste as the German immigrants after the Civil War.

One important feature of the process of acculturation is a realistic appraisal of the conditions of the new life. During the Civil War, American Jewry had learned much about the problems which it would have to solve. It had been confronted with two critical challenges: the denial of equal rights in connection with the chaplaincy legislation, and the increasing onslaughts of anti-Jewish prejudice. In the two specific cases of the Jewish chaplaincy and Grant's General Order Number 11, the Jewish communities made public demand for rectification and achieved their objective. In the one case, Congress recognized the principle of equality, and in the other, President Lincoln cancelled the offensive regulation as soon as it came to his attention. American Jewry knew that it need have no hesitation about using the right of petition; its faith in the American safeguards of the rights of religious minorities was upheld. The government was not indifferent to victims of bigotry.

But could one legislate against the misrepresentation of Jews by newspaper editors and other prejudiced individuals? American Jewry knew that it would not be free from attack; but it also knew that those attacks were not typical of America. This was a major lesson of the Civil War period; one which would have to be learned again and again. It was not a question of black or white; one could not say that all Americans respected the Jews, nor that they all disliked the Jews. In certain quarters prejudice would arise; in others there was fairmindedness. Each occurrence of discrimination had to be dealt with as a specific case. In 1867, for instance, five insurance companies announced that they would no longer issue policies to Jews. Many prominent non-Jews denounced the action as intolerant and un-American. Public protest meetings conducted by non-Jews as well as Jews were held in many cities. Other firms made hasty announcement of their opposition to the policy of the five. By and large, the newspapers and the public took a determined stand against the offending companies. America as a whole had, perhaps, learned something from the excesses of the Civil War.

Another result of the Civil War experiences of the American Jewish community was its heightened consciousness of the need for national organizations and institutions. The impulse towards nation-wide unification of effort had been halted, temporarily, by the outbreak of hostilities in 1861. But the events of the war years had strengthened the determination of Wise, Leeser and Isaacs to reach the objectives for which they had been striving through several decades. The crises of the war had demonstrated to them and to many other Jews throughout the land how feeble American Jewry actually was without representative organizations. Now, with the end of the conflict, the leaders returned with renewed vigor and conviction to the task of creating a climate which would be favorable to cooperative endeavors. Their success was noteworthy. Leeser and the eastern Traditionalists opened the doors of Maimonides College, the first American Jewish academy of higher learning, in 1867. Within a few years it had graduated the first two American-trained Jewish spiritual leaders. Wise, working desperately to unite the congregations throughout the mid-West and South, finally realized his dream when the Union of American Hebrew Congregations held its organizational meeting in 1873. Two years later the Union established the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati.

American Jewry had been, in 1860, inchoate and immature, uncertain of its needs and unsure of its strength, almost completely unprepared to solve the most elementary of its problems. Time alone would serve to give it the understanding and wisdom, the courage and self-discipline it required. But the process of time was assisted by the devastating experience of the Civil War. In 1865 American Jewry was more than five years older; it had learned the lessons and gained the insights of several generations.

Appendix A

List of Printed Sermons, Speeches and Prayers Dealing with the Civil War

Bondi, Jonas: Prayer. Philadelphia; *Occ.* XXII, No. 9, p. 403, Dec. 1864.

Cohn, Elkan: Prayer. San Francisco; *HEB* I, No. 46, p. 1, Oct. 28, 1864.

DeCordova, R. J.: Sermon. New York; *Occ.*, XVIII, No. 42, pp. 253–4, 260–1, Jan. 10, 1861. *Isr.*, VII, No. 29, pp. 228–9, Jan. 18, 1861.

DeCordova, R. J.: Sermon. New York; *Mess.*, IX, No. 20, pp. 154–5, May 24, 1861.

DeLeeuw, M. R.: Prayer. New York; *Mess.*, XVI, No. 21, p. 164, Dec. 2, 1864.

Deutsch, Solomon: Speech. Syracuse; *Isr.*, IX, No. 11, p. 83, Sept. 19, 1862. No. 15, pp. 116–7, Oct. 17, 1862. No. 17, p. 130, Oct. 31, 1862.

Einhorn, David: Sermon. Philadelphia; *Sinai,* VII, No. 7, pp. 183–192, Aug. 1862.

Einhorn, David: Sermon. Philadelphia; Published separately, Phila. 1864.

Felsenthal, Bernhard: Sermon. Chicago; *HL*, VII, No. 11, p. 1, Dec. 22, 1865.

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Appendix B

Jonas-Lincoln Correspondence

Quincy Ills Sep 16. 1854

A Lincoln Esq
Springfield Ills

My Dr Sir—We are in the midst of what will probably be the warmest contest for Congress that we have ever had in this district—if the election was near at hand—Williams, I think would be elected beyond a doubt. This district is to be the great battle field, the defeat of Richardson at this time, would be the downfall of Douglas, standing and occupying the same position on the Nebraska humbug—every foul and unfair means will be brought to operate against Williams. Douglas is to be here and will [speak?] in this and other counties of the district. Williams has just left for Oqua[w]ka—it being court in Henderson on Monday next—and has requested me to say to you, that he, as well as all the Whigs here, would be much gratified if you could make it convenient and pay us a visit, while the little giant is here. It is believed by all who know you, that a reply from you, would be more effective, than from any other. I trust you may be able to pay us the visit and thereby create a debt of gratitude on the part of the Whigs here, which they may at some time, have it in their power, to repay with pleasure and with interest. We do not exactly know when Douglas will be here—but you can consent to come, we will let you know in time. I will thank you to answer this as soon as convenient—and be assured that nothing will afford greater pleasure to your personal friends and the Whigs generally than you consent to visit us—and the Douglasites would as soon see old nick here as yourself. The present indications here are good. This county will do better, or I am much mistaken, than it has done for many years. Pike will give a decided majority for us. Brown will do as well as on former occasions although Singleton is doing all in his power against us. We hear favorably from all parts of the district—and I think with your assistance, we can check mate them

Trusting to hear from you soon
I remain Yrs truely
A Jonas[1]

Quincy Dec 2. 1854

A Lincoln Esqu
My dear Sir

Yrs of the 27th ultimo is at hand. I have seen Mr. Sullivan. I can get nothing out of him except that he will act altogether with the Whig party in regard to Senator and will make no pledges.

He would of course support Williams or Browning—and no doubt would prefer either of these gentlemen to any others—and I am inclined to think though he did not say so, that you would be his next choice—and I think, that Browning & Williams out of the question, you may rely on him—although I am not authorized to say so.

I have no pretentions for that or any other office at this time—and Browning & Williams not being in the way, I should prefer you to any other—and should be pleased to render you any service in my power.

Yrs truely
A Jonas[2]

Urbana, Oct. 21. 1856

A. Jonas, Esq
My dear Sir:

I am here at court, and find myself so 'hobbled' with a particular case, that I can not leave, & consequently, can not be with you on the 23rd. I regret this exceedingly, but there is no help for it. Please make the best apology, for me, in your power.

Your friend as ever
A. Lincoln[3]

Quincy July 30. 1858

A Lincoln Esqu
Springfield Ills
My dear Sir

You will see by the enclosed slip that we hold a district convention at Augusta in Hancock Co, on the 25th of August. This town is quite near the line of Adams & Schuyler and on the Quincy and Chicago Rail Road—36 miles from this city. You are of course aware that a Senator has to be elected from the counties of Hancock, Henderson & Schuyler. This is one of the most important districts and the result in the Senate in my opinion, depends on it. The fight will be a desperate one; James Stark of Augusta will be the Rep Candidate and with the proper exertions can be elected. Can you make it convenient to be [in?] Augusta on the day of the convention, we can get to hear you the tallest kind of a crowd, and one of *your sledge hammer speeches*, will effect wonders—it is I think a very important point, and you ought not to miss being there. Answer me, on this subject immediately, so that we may make it known in time. Things are working well here. Jac Davis is an Independent democratic candidate in opposition to Morris he and his friends—will canvass the District. The anti Douglas and anti Morris feeling is greatly on the increase—many of the Leaders are openly out for the Administration. Brooks of the Herald will be removed from the P.O. in a few days, and WH Carlin, who is anti-Douglas and anti Morris, will be appointed, it is said—the most bitter feeling prevails between the different factions—pray God it may result in good.

God speed you in your fight

Yrs sincerely
A Jonas[4]

don't fail answering

Springfield, Aug: 2. 1858—

A. Jonas, Esq
My dear Sir

Yours of the 30th July is just received. My mind is at once made up to be with you at Augusta on the 25th of August, unless I shall conclude it will prevent my being at Freeport on the 27th when and where, by appointment, I am to meet Judge Douglas. I suppose there will be no difficulty in getting from Augusta to Freeport in due time.

Yours very truly
A. Lincoln[5]

Quincy Ills Augt 5/58

Hon A. Lincoln
Springfield Ills.
My dear Sir

There will be no difficulty in the world in your getting to Freeport on the 27th after being at Augusta on the 25th. I have therefore had it announced that you will be there—and you may expect the tallest kind of a crowd.

Things look well here, and the split is widening daily between the two branches of the unterrified. The Buccaneers supporting Jac Davis and the Douglasites, I N Morris—the latter will poll by far the largest vote, but the *Stinkfingers* are daily gaining strength—the great difficulty with us is in getting a Candidate for Congress. Browning could I think be elected, but he will not consent to run under any circumstance, what we shall do on the 25th I can hardly say?—but like Macawber—hoping that something will turn up—

I remain Yrs truely
A Jonas[6]

Quincy Feb 3/60

Hon A Lincoln
My dear Sir

I want to get a copy of the book publishing in Ohio containing the speeches of your self and Doug in the Campaign of last year, can you procure me a copy, or advise me, how and where I can get one.

Let me congratulate you on the election of Speaker—and indications are that with proper exertions and judicious selections at Chicago in June, we shall be able to carry the day and in November proclaim *victory to all the World.*

Yrs &c A Jonas[7]

Springfield. Feb. 4 1860

Hon: A. Jonas
My dear Sir:

Yours of the 3rd inquiring how you can get a copy of the debates now being published in Ohio, is received. As you are one of my most valued friends, and have complimented me by the expression of a wish for a book, I propose doing myself the honor of presenting you with one, as soon as I can. By the arrangement our Ohio friends have made with the publishers, I am to have one hundred copies gratis. When I shall receive them I will send you one by Express. I understand they will not be out before March, and I probably shall be absent about that time. So that you must not be disappointed if you do not receive yours before about the middle of that month

Yours very truly
A. Lincoln[8]

"Confidential"

Quincy Ills. July 20/60

Hon A Lincoln—
My dear Sir

I have just been creditably informed, that *Isaac N. Morris* is engaged in obtaining affadavits and certificates of certain Irishmen that they saw you in Quincy come out of a Know Nothing Lodge—the intention is to send the affadavits to Washington for publication. I do not know if there is any truth in the matter, neither do I care, but thought it best to let you know about it—the object is to work on the Germans—and Morris can get men to swear to any thing—my informant saw one of the affadavits or certificates.

Yrs truely
A Jonas[9]

if it all false, let me know

Confidential

Springfield Ill July 21st 1860.

Hon. A. Jonas
My Dear Sir—

Yours of the 20th is received. I suppose as good, or even better men than I may have been in American or Know-Nothing lodges; but in point of fact, I never was in one, at Quincy or elsewhere. I was never in Quincy but one day and two nights while Know-Nothing lodges were in existence, and you were with me that day and both those nights. I had never been there before in my life; and never afterwards, till the joint debate with Douglas in 1858. It was in 1854 when I spoke in some hall there, and after the speaking, you with others took me to an oyster saloon, passed an hour there, and you walked with me to, and parted with me at the Quincy House, quite late at night. I left by stage for Naples before day-light in the morning, having come in by the same route, after dark the evening previous to the speaking, when I found you waiting at the Quincy House to meet me. A few days after I was there, Richardson, as I understood, started this same story about my having been in a Know-Nothing lodge. When I heard of the charge, as I did soon after, I taxed my recollection for some incident which could have suggested it; and I remembered that on parting with you the last night, I went to the office of the Hotel, to take my stage passage for the morning, was told that no stage office for that line was kept there, and that I must see the driver before retiring, to insure his calling for me in the morning; and a servant was sent with me to find the driver, who after taking me a square or two, stopped me, and stopped perhaps a dozen steps farther, and in my hearing called to some one, who answered him, apparently from the upper part of a building, and promised to call with the stage for me at the Quincy House. I returned and went to bed, and before day the stage called and took me. This is all.

That I never was in a Knownothing lodge in Quincy, I should expect could be easily proved, by respectable men who were always in the lodges and never saw me there. An affidavit of one or two such would put the matter at rest.

And now, a word of caution. Our adversaries think they can gain a point if they could force me to openly deny the charge, by which some degree of offence would be given to the Americans. For this reason it must not publicly appear that I am paying any attention to the charge

Yours Truly
A. Lincoln[10]

"Private"

Quincy Dec 30/60

Hon A Lincoln
My dear Sir

The purport of this communication, must be my apology for troubling you—and my great anxiety in regard to your personal safety and the preservation of our National integrity will I think justify me on this occasion, when you have so much to think of and so many things to perplex you.

You perhaps are aware, that I have a very large family connection in the South, and that in New Orleans I have six children and a host of other near relatives. I receive many letters from them, their language has to be very guarded, as fears are entertained that the sanctity of the mails, is not much regarded. On yesterday I received a letter from N.O. from one who is prudent, sound and careful of what he writes and among other things, he says "things are daily becoming worse here, God help us, what will be the result it is dreadful to imagine. One thing I am satisfied of, that there is a perfect organization, fearful in numbers and contrauled by men of character and influence, whose object is to prevent the inauguration of Lincoln, large numbers of desperate characters, many of them from this city, will be in Washington on the 4th of March and it is their determination, to prevent the inauguration, and if by no other means, by using violence on the person of Lincoln. Men engaged in this measure are known to be of the most violent character, capable of doing any act, necessary to carry out their vile measures." The writer of this, I know, would not say, what he does, did he not believe the statement above given to you. I cannot give you, his name, for were it known, that he communicated such matters to persons in the North, his life would be in danger—and I trust you will not communicate, having received any such information from me. I had seen rumors in the Newspapers to the like effect, but did not regard them much—this however alarms me, and I think is worthy of some notice. What ought to be done—you are more capable of judging, than any other person—but permit me to suggest—ought not the Governors of the free States, and your friends generally to adopt at once some precautionary measures—no protection can be expected from the damned old traitor at the head of the Government or his subordinates—something should be done in time and done effectually.

With great esteem and devotion
I am truely yrs—
A Jonas[11]

Appendix C

Zacharie-Lincoln Correspondence[1]

St Charles Hotel
New Orleans Jany 14th 1863

To his Excellency
A Lincoln President
of the United States
Dear Sir

In my last communication I promised to give you further details related to Genl Butler & now embrace the opportunity

What I now relate I get from one of the party in person. Several Gentlemen were called before Genl Butler to further some certain purpose of his, to which they would not however agree, when as a threat he told that by a wave of his hand from the top of the St Charles Hotel he could make New Orleans a second St Domingo, and if it suited his purpose he would yet make the Streets of the City run with blood

I now relate a pecuniary transaction. Messer Hyde & Goodrich the principal Jewelers here, remited to a relation in the City check on one of the Banks for five thousand dollars, payable to a relation here by the name of Norton, the proceeds of the check to be paid over to the clerks in their establishment for salary due. The letter containing the afore mentioned check fell into the hands of Genl Butler, who sent for Mr Norton, who he made endorse the check under threat of sending him to Fort Jackson. The check was paid, but is there any record of how the money was applied? I know another transaction for twenty one hundred dollars of the same kind.

Mr. I P Davis President of the Bank of New Orleans, one of the most esteemed gentlemen of this city, who Genl Butler threatened with hanging, & who he confined in a criminals cell for over two weeks, has entirely lost his mind. This is looked upon here by all classes of people as an unjustifiable act of severity

Some parties robbed the Jesuit church of two sets silver candellabras & other silver articles. The day after Genl Banks took command they were returned

The practice of my profession & as I have before mentioned my habits of life, has thrown me among all classes of people. At the same time it has been my good fortune to have secured the friendship of many of our most distinguished statesmen, commencing in my boyhood with the great Henry Clay. But I have never known a person better fitted both by nature & education for his position than Genl Banks is for the one he now honors. You can not imagine the vast amount of business he gets through with each day, never loosing his self possession, listening patiently to all. I some times wonder that his health stands it as well as it does. For my own part I have endeavored to assist him all in my power. My great desire is that our efforts may prove of benefit to your administration, any action you may suggest be assured will have my most cordial & heart felt cooperation. My desire is to serve you in such a manner that my services may rebound to your honor.

So far I feel flattered at the success I have met with not only among my own people but among the most wealthy & influential of citizens. Do not think it egotism on my part what I write. One of the most prominent gentleman remarked yesterday—Doctor had the President sent six missionarys amongst us like you it would have more effect upon us than hundreds of cannon

As regards Genl Banks, the only persons who I have heard mention a word here against him, are those connected with Genl Hamiltons staff, why this should be I cant say, such however is the fact

Very Respectfully
Your Obt Servt
I Zacharie M D

St Charles Hotel
New Orleans Feby 19th 1863

To his Excellency A Lincoln
President of the United States
Dear Sir

I must apologize for not writing more punctually. Perhaps I'm some what like the Irish Biddy who remarked to the lady of the house, "Shurr Mistress darlent a poor gal that works hard likes to know if she gives satisfaction to youz"

Now I can only repeat what I have previously written, & I am gratified in being able to do so. The people every day are becoming more favorably disposed to the Government, not only in this City but through the different Parishes. This I know from personal observation

The reported return of Genl Butler has created intense excitement among all classes, & from information which I have, am fearful should he reach here he never will return

The same favorable feeling manifested towards Genl Banks which I mentioned in former letters continues—only today a gentleman remarked to me. The people just yet cannot openly express their good feeling towards him, but they nevertheless appreciate his honesty, his uprightness, & his true patriotism, & trust before long when the proper occasion offers to express themselves publicly

The policy which he has adopted in regard to Negroes laboring upon plantations, meets with much favor by both black & white. Through its beneficent influence I hope to see an increase in the production of those commodities which are of the utmost importance to the happiness & comfort of the human family

A friend of mine just from Baton Rouge informs me that our army there is in excellent condition, of its movements you are no doubt fully informed. Port Hudson is very strongly fortified

For two weeks past it has taken considerable of my time attending to the currency. Certain parties here have used every effort to depreciate United States Treasury notes in comparison with Louisiana Bank bills, & have endeavored to influence planters not to dispose of their produce without it was for City Bank notes. This had to be stopped. Some seemed unwilling to sell without receiving specie in payment. This delusion had to be removed. You must know the commerce of this city is rapidly increasing. Large quantities of Sugar & Molasses reach here daily. Seldom a day passes without two or three hundred bales of Cotton arriving. With such diversified interest, it took time & labor to bring the currency to an equalized point. I have done so, & that too without having closed a Banking house, or seriously interfering with the rights of any merchant or tradesman

In doing this, I doubtless have made some enemies, men who came here to speculate, & cared not how they made money even at the expense of the Government. I mention this, as I have understood that parties here have written to Washington, stating that I too have been speculating—which I most earnestly deny. Never since I have been here, have I bought sold or bartered, or been interested in any speculation to the value of one cent. My profession thank God has always given me a competency. Since I have been here I have not practiced it—Genl Banks deeming my time could be better occupied. On the other hand, should I be so disposed there is nothing here now to make money out of, unless it were to go to plantations & take Horses, Mules, Cotton or Sugar, or to the houses of these unfortunate people & rob them of their furniture & plate, which I regret to say has been done. But Heaven forbid that I or any friend of mine, should be guilty of such an act, even if they had permission from the Commanding General. Therefore should it at any time be brought to your notice that I have been speculating here, I trust you will out of justice towards me deny the charge

I came here to use my best efforts, humble though they be, in aiding to unite our country, should I in any way be instrumental in consumating so great a result, my ambition will be gratified. For I shall know full well my name will not be forgotten either by the United States Government or the people of Louisiana

With my best wishes for your health & happiness

Most respectfully
Your Obt Servt
I Zacharie, M D

Office of U. S. Military Telegraph,
War Department.

The following Telegram received at Washington *1.15 P. M.*
17th March 1863,
From *New York* M.
Dated, *March 17th* 1863.

President of the U.S.
Washington D. C.

Arrived here last night. Am quite unwell. Will have the honor of seeing you in day or two.

I. Zacharie
M. D.

Washington City
Friday morning
March 27 1863

To the President
Dear Sir

Policy prevents my seeing you, which I greatly regret. I would wish to have said adieu in person

My mind is much agitated on account of the great responsibility resting on me. I trust everything will be consumated to realize your best wishes. If it does not the fault shall not be mine

I hope you will aid my efforts by giving such orders as will tend to carry out the suggestions contained in my memorandum

Thanking you for the prompt & kind manner you have acted towards me

Believe me most
Faithfully, Your
Obt Servant
I. Zacharie, Md.

St Charles Hotel
New Orleans April 25th 1863

To his
Excellency A Lincoln
President of the United States
Washington D C
Dear Sir

After an absence of five weeks I find but little change in the condition of affairs in this city. The Levee & some parts of the business streets are less lively. This is to be accounted for in the decreased receipts of produce. The crop of Sugar within our lines has been brought to market & disposed of The crop of Cotton in Southern Louisiana has never been of much importance. The high prices ruling in January Feby & March brought every bale to market. Thus the Planter having disposed of his produce we cannot look for a revival of business until the country now regained by Genl Banks throws of[f] its shackles & is agained [*sic*] opened to the commercial world.

As regards the feelings of the people—which I have given much attention to—I find the kind disposition evinced towards Genl Banks continues. There are a few that will complain, but the feeling towards yourself & the general Government is improving. The Union associations of the city have five thousand names enrolled, & there are *many* good Union men here who have not yet enrolled

The recent rapid & effective movements of the Army under the leadership of the General commanding in person, has given courage, new life as it were, to all true lovers of the Union, while to its enemies, it has astonished & disheartened. The country regained is the finest portion of the State, & the people there yield submissively to the Government. The despondency of the secessionists is very marked. They complain of the cream of their country being given up without a struggle, & the little preparation made for its defence. They say their only hope now is Magruder who they look for from Texas with a body of thirteen thousand men. He can't [have?] raised half the number. That they may receive reinforcements from Texas is true, but they have a long ways to march over bad roads & poor means of transportation, & before they reach the Red River country it is to be hoped our troops will have permanent possession

My reception here by the citizens, particularly the creole, has been very kind, & I trust my influence among them will be of benefit to the Government

I have communicated with Genl Banks & wait his pleasure

Trusting your in the enjoyment of good health

Most Respectfully
Your Obt Servt
I Zacharie M D

Private & Confidential

Willards Hotel
Washington D C
July 20 1863

To the President
Sir!

On my interview with the Hon Secretary of State, he informed me he could not grant my—or rather General Banks'—request at present, which was to give me a pass to proceed to Ackin's Landing Va. This determination disarranges all my plans, as it was my intention to proceede from Richmond to Mobile & from there to New Orleans & rejoin General Banks so as to keep him fully advised of all proceedings both Military & Political

I am fearfull that in my short interview both with yourself & Mr. Seward my intentions have been misunderstood, & was anxious to see you today on the subject, regret not having been able to do so, as I have matters of importance to communicate only for your ears

What I wish to do is for the benefit of yourself & my country. I have no other aspirations. I leave for home this evening. Should you wish at any to listen to me, or if I can serve you I am at your command

Very Respectfully
Your Obt Servt
I Zacharie M. D.
760 Broadway
New York

Office U. S. Military Telegraph.
War Department.
The following Telegram received at Washington, *6.35* P M.
Sept 29 1863
From *Fort Monroe* M.
Dated *September 29* 1863.

His Excellency
A Lincoln P. U. S.

Just returned. Will be with you tomorrow afternoon.

Zacharie

SDH

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760 Broadway
New York Oct 22, 1863.

His Excellency A. Lincoln
President of the United States
Dear Sir

On my way home in the cars late evening I was amazed on reading the Herald Newspaper to find the article concerning my recent visit to you

I embrace this first opportunity to write to you in reference thereto, for fear you might imagine that I had betrayed the confidence you so kindly reposed in me.

I pledge you that I have not lisped a word respecting this matter, except to Mr Seward, Genl Bowen of New Orleans and yourself.

I am of the opinion that my movements since my return from New Orleans have been watched by some person in your immediate vicinity, and the matter stated in the Herald drawn from the writers immagination as to the purport of my visits to you.

I beg you will not for a moment harbor any idea but that I have kept faithfully within my own breast all that has passed between us.

From casual remarks made by persons here it is looked upon as a sensation article and as little importance is attached to it as the belief in its correctness.

Do you think it advisable for me to write the *fact* that you did not give me any pass to Richmond, or shall I let the paragraph die a natural death?

Please assure Mr Seward that I had neither directly nor indirectly any knowledge of the article in the Herald until I read it.

I have not seen Mr Bennett or any one connected with the Herald for the last six months.

Yours very Respectfully
I. Zacharie, M.D.

Phila. Feb. 13th 1864

Hon A. Lincoln
Dear Sir.

Some time ago, I purchased a *Barral* of *Homminy* in this city, to be forwarded it to you, and to my astonishment I found on my return here, that it had not gone.

Now Dear Sir, I send it, hoping you will find it good, and eat it with much enjoyment.

With kind regards to Mrs Lincoln.

Yours Respectfully
I. Zacharie. MD

PS. prehaps I will take a run over to see you, in a few days,
I.Z.[2]

---

760 Broadway
New York
May 13th 1864

To His Excellency
A. Lincoln.

Dear Friend.

I sent you some days ago a Box of five *Pine apples*, which I hope you received. With kind regards to Mrs. Lincoln,

I remain
Yours Truly
I. Zacharie MD

---

760 Broadway
New York. Sept 21st 1864

Dear Friend.

Yours of the 19th came duly to hand, it has had the desired effect, with the friends of the Partie.

I leave tomorrow for the interior of Pennsylvania, may go as far as Ohio. One thing is to be done, and that is for you to impress on the minds of your friends for them not to be to[o] sure.

Yours Truly
I. Zacharie, MD

To His Excellency
A Lincoln,
Washington D. C.

---

760. Broadway,
New York. Nov. 3d 1864

My Dear Friend.

I just returned to this city after a trip of 9 days through Pennsylvania and New York States, and I am happy to inform you, that I am satisfied that I have done much good. I *now think all is Right*—and if we can reduce the Democratic majority in this city, I shall be satisfied. As regards the *Isrelites* [*sic*]—with but few exceptions, they will vote for you. I understand them well, and have taken the precaution, to see that they do as they have promised. I have secured good and trustworthy men to attend on them on Election Day. My men have been all the week seeing that their masses are properly Registered. So that will be right on the 8th ins.

As Regards Pennsylvania, if you knew *all*—you and your friends would give me much credit, for I flatter myself I have done one of the sharpest things that has been done in the campaign. Will explain it to you when I see you.

I wish to God all was over for I am used up, but, 3 years ago, I promised I would elect you, and if you are not it shall not be my fault.

Raymond will inform you that I am doing all I can for him but his chances are very doubtful—I should feel very bad if your chances was like his. I have much to say to you but have been up almost every night—that I am used up. I hope to see you after the fun is over, when I hope you will say

"Well done, My good and faithful servant."

With kind regards to Mrs. Lincoln.

Yours truly,
I. Zacharie, MD

P. S. did you receive the oranges.

Office U. S. Military Telegraph.
War Department.

The following Telegram received at Washington, *12* M.
Dec 26 1864.

From *New York* *Dec 26* 1864.
His Excellency A Lincoln

Allow me to congratulate you on the fall of Savannah
My family are crazy with joy

I Zacharie

15 111 Pd

Executive Mansion
Washington Jan 25. 1865

Hon Secretary of War
My dear Sir

About Jews. I wish you would give Dr. Zacharie a pass to go to Savannah, remain a week and return, bringing with him, if he wishes, his father and sisters or any of them. This will spare me trouble and oblige me—I promised him long ago that he should be allowed this whenever Savannah should fall into our hands.

Blumenberg, at Baltimore. I think he should have a hearing. He has suffered for us & served us well—had the rope around his neck for being our friend—raised troops—fought, and been wounded. He should not be dismissed in a way that disgraces and ruins him without a hearing.

Yours truly
A. Lincoln[3]

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760. Broadway
New York.

My Dear Friend

I leave on Saturday for steamship *Arago* for Savannah where I hope to find my Dear old Father and friends—if you have any matters that you would have properly attended to, I will consider it a favour for [you] to let me attend to it for you.

Please inform me if you received the *Bananas*.

God bless you is the sincere prayer of

Yours Truly
I. Zacharie, MD

Appendix D

The Jewish Record's Description of Jewish Participation in the New York Lincoln Memorial Exercises

THE FUNERAL PAGEANT

The last sad tribute of respect—Jewish citizens in the ranks—the meeting in union square, &c, &c, &c.

With oriental brightness and warmth did the sun shine down, on Tuesday last, upon crowded house-top and groaning balcony, haughty monument and unpretending dwelling, glorious banners, the emblems of victory, and trailing draperies, sombre evidences of woe. Never before had the historian to chronicle so unaffected a display of universal sorrow, so grand a pageant testifying respect for a departed chief. Not in the old world could a monarch, with his unnumbered legions, command the payment of any such tribute of admiration even to the memory of a fallen hero. Nor could the new world have beheld such an outpowering of its masses, had the object of popular recognition been a great conqueror or a great king. It was reserved for the people of this land thus to honor the recollection of one who had sprung from their midst. It was reserved for this country, through the masses, its true and sole representative, to drop a tear in the yawning grave soon to be closed upon the mortal remains of the late President of the Republic. Everywhere the seemingly silent grief of the people had found utterance in a display of draperies of woe. Everywhere huge banners with bindings of dark crape, forming a strange contrast with the crimson and azure of the stripes and fields, tiny bannerets, with appropriate inscriptions, epitaph-like mottoes, wreaths of *immortelles*, pendent festoons, golden eagles enshrouded, as it were, by a cloud of gloom, pillars as sombre as those of the catafalco itself, badges of mourning, saddened faces and sorrowing hearts. Artistic skill, the poetry of woe, the tenderness of women were alike brought into requisition to further demonstrate to the eye how solemn was the occasion.

The funeral was a grand pageant. Cavalry that had charged on many a battlefield, artillery-men that had planted their batteries and stared death full in the face, infantry that had shared the forced marches incident to the strategical combinations of war, benevolent and protective associations having for object the assisting of the weak, the guarding of the helpless, the healing of mental and physical ills, all professions, all trades and social organizations were hand in hand testifying by their presence in the ranks to the respect they bore the deceased Chief Magistrate. It was a grand, an impressive scene; one which the youngest will remember to the last hour of life, with the recollection of the darkly-brilliant scene undimmed by the lapse of years.

The funeral pageant started from City Hall a few minutes before two o'clock, the military cortege forming the vanguard, followed by the representatives of the City, County and State governments and of the United States Department. Then came the clergy, the press, the bar and several political organizations. The Fourth Division, in charge of General J. H. Hobart Ward, numbered in its ranks hundreds of Jewish citizens. Foremost of these came the

FREEMASONS,

in whose ranks were noticeable three organizations numbering none but Jewish members: the Adelphi Lodge, headed by P. M. W. Asheim; Mount Neboh Lodge, in charge of W. Bro. J. Sulzberger, and King Solomon Lodge, under the guidance of Bro. Koch. In direct sequence advanced the

INDEPENDENT ORDER OF RED MEN,

in whose van there were borne three massive links of a chain, enshrouded with black crape, their banner being also draped in black. The order comprised some eighteen lodges, numbering in all about fifteen hundred members. In direct sequence marched the members of the

INDEPENDENT ORDER OF B'NAI B'RITH

represented by fifteen lodges and in charge of P. W. Frank, Esq., Grand Marshal, J. Ballin and N. Schainwald, Aids. Each lodge was preceded by its respective officers and all advanced in the following order: New York Lodge, No. 1; Zion, No. 2; Saran, No. 3; Hebron, No. 5; Lebanon, No. 9; Beer-Sheba, No. 11; Jordan, No. 15; Palestine, No. 18; Cansan, No. 29; Rhehoball, No. 38; Arnon, No. 39; Isaiah, No. 41; Mordecai, No. 57; Hillel, No. 28; Tabor, No. 31. The order numbered in all from twelve to fourteen hundred members.

THE ORDER OF B'NAI ABRAHAM,

was represented by Abraham Lodge No. 1, mustering about fifty members.

THE ORDER OF B'NAI MOSCHE

mustered some four hundred members who bore in front two magnificent banners, bearing the mottoes of the Order, with the brilliancy of the gilding and the brightness of the hue dimmed by the sombre shroud that embraced the folds.

THE I. O. FREE SONS OF ISRAEL

numbered ten lodges under the command of the M. W. Grand Master Bro. Pettenger. In the ranks were the Constitution Grand Lodge; Noah Lodge, No. 1; Reuben, No. 3; Levy, No. 5; Arich, No. 6; Issachar, No. 7; Zebulon, No. 8; Dan, No. 9; Napthali, No. 10, and Gad, No. 11, turning out in all some nine hundred members.

THE CHEBRA ANSHE EMUNO

numbered about one hundred representatives, headed by Mr. M. Stark, who brought up the rear in the Jewish department of the Fourth Division. In the Seventh Division, the

CERES UNION

one hundred and twenty-five strong, presented a good appearance, wearing a badge of white satin ribbon, with a heavy black border, bearing the inscription:

CERES.

URN.

WE MOURN OUR LOSS.

THE NATIONAL GLEE CLUB,

a combination of the Henry Clay Debating Society, the Webster Literary Association, made a creditable display, and brought up the rear of the procession, inasmuch as their co-religionists were participants in its grandeur. The dense mass marched onward and upward, the sad music ever and anon swelling in volume and dying away upon the spring breeze and, at length, the lower portions of the city resumed its wonted aspect, no vestiges left of the mighty throng that so recently had invaded every foot of tenable ground.

AT UNION SQUARE.

At four o'clock precisely were assembled at the Nineteenth street Synagogue, delegates from a number of congregations and associations who, in charge of Benj. I. Hart, Esq., marshal, and M. S. Isaacs, Esq., aid, marched to Union Square. In the ranks of this large deputation were representatives of the congregation B'nai Jeshurun, Shaary Tefila, Anshi Chesed, Rodef Sholem, B'nai Israel, Ahavas Chesed, Beth Israel Bikur Cholim, Poel Tsedek, Bikur Cholim u Kadisha, Aderath El, Mishkan Israel; of the Hebrew Benevolent Y.M.H.B. Fuel, Hebrew Free School, Hebrew Mutual Benefit, Mutual Benefit and Burial, Jerusalem and Purim associations; and deputies from the Orphan Asylum and Board of American Delegates. In all, the representatives numbered about two hundred; they proceeded through Fifth avenue to Fifteenth street, thence to the Maison Doree. The meeting was just being called to order.

On the speakers' platform we noticed the Rev. Drs. Raphall, Bondi; the Rev. Mr. Kramer; Henry Josephi, Esq., President of the Board of American Delegates, B. I. Hart, Esq. and several other co-religionists. After a prayer by the Rev. Dr. Tyng, an oration by the Hon. George Bancroft, the reading of the late President Lincoln's last inaugural address, the further reading of a psalm by the Rev. Mr. Boole, and the offering up of a fervent prayer by the Rev. Dr. Rogers, the Rev. S. M. Isaacs stepped forward and prefaced his prayer to the throne of grace, by the following passage from the scriptures:

"Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving kindness; for they are eternal. Grant us to be among those who die by thy hand, O Lord! those who die by old age, whose lot is eternal life; yea, who enjoy even here Thy hidden treasures. His soul shall dwell at ease, and his seed shall inherit the land. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be overturned and though the mountains be hurled in the midst of the seas.

"He redeemeth thy life from destruction; He crowneth thee with [loving] kindness and tender mercies. Wherefore doth living [man] complain, he who can master sins? Small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master. For He remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away and cometh not again. All flesh shall perish together, and man shall return unto dust—who rejoice even to exultation and are glad when they find a grave.

"And such a frail mortal, shall be more just than God? Shall man be more pure than his maker? In God I will praise His word, in the Lord, I will praise His word. Man is like to vanity; his days are as a shadow of thing that passeth away. Be kind, O Lord, unto those that are good, and unto them that are upright in their hearts. Let the pious exult in glory; let them sing aloud upon their couches. Then shall Thy light break forth as in the morning, and Thy health shall spring forth speedily, and Thy righteousness shall precede Thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil. He shall preserve thy soul.

"Behold, the keeper of Israel doth neither slumber nor sleep. The Eternal killeth and maketh alive; He bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up. Wilt Thou not turn and revive us, that we may rejoice in Thee? Let us, therefore trust in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption.

"One generation passeth away and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever. For the word of the Lord is upright, and all his works are done in faithfulness. The dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

"And as for him, righteousness shall precede him and form steps for his way.

"Ye are blessed of the Eternal, who made heaven and earth."

The reverend gentleman then delivered the following impressive prayer:

"Thou, whose attributes are omnipotence, Thy eye unseen, sees, Thy direction unknown, guides; Thy mercy unbounded, upholds; our God, our Father. From hearts penetrated by grief, we pray; oppressed by the weight of our feelings, bruised in spirit, we most earnestly implore Thee, visit us not in Thine anger, nor chastise us according to our works. Enter not into judgment with us, look not to our iniquities. As frail, erring creatures, in faltering accents we confess our guilt. Who can be justified before Thy immaculate purity? In humble and reverential awe, we approach Thee, invoking Thee to inspire us with a proper spirit and temper of heart and mind under the powers of Thy providence. God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, millions of beings Thy will has created this day fall prostrate at Thy throne, offering the overflowing of their hearts and their resignation to Thy will, as the homage of their adoration. The inhabitants of this land are overburdened with grief. The good being who, like Aaron of old, "stood between the living and the dead," so that the war which decimated the land might cease. Alas! he is no more. Thy servant Abraham Lincoln, has, without a warning, been summoned before Thy august presence. He has served the people of his afflicted land faithfully, zealously, honestly, and, we would fain hope, in accordance with Thy supreme will. O that "his righteousness may precede him and form steps for his way" to the heavenly abode of bliss; that Thy angels of mercy may be commissioned to convey his soul to the spot reserved for martyred saints; that the suddenness with which one of the worst beings deprived him of life may atone for any errors which he may have committed. Almighty God! every heart is pierced with anguish—every countenance furrowed with grief, at our separation from one we revered and loved. We beseech Thee, in this period of our sorrow and despondency, to sooth our pains and calm our griefs; and, as in days of old, before the sun of Eli went down, Thou didst cause that of Samuel to beam upon Israel, so it may be thy divine will, as the sun of our deeply lamented Abraham Lincoln had scarcely set, and darkness covered the people, that the sun of Andrew Johnson, which has burst upon the gloom, may shed its brilliant rays as sparkling it is borne amid purity and innocence. Our Father, who art in Heaven, show us this kindness, so that our tears may cease to depict our sorrow and give peace to the joyful hope that, through Thy goodness, peace and concord may supersede war and dissension, and our beloved Union, restored to its former tranquility, may be enabled to carry out Thy wish for the benefit and the happiness of humanity. We pray Thee do this; if not for our sakes, for the sake of our little ones unsullied by sin, who lisp Thy holy name, with hands uplifted, with the importunity of spotless hearts, they re-echo our supplication. Let the past be the end of our sorrow, the future the harbinger of peace and salvation to all who seek Thee in truth. Amen."

At the conclusion of this prayer, two poems by William Cullen Bryant were read by Dr. Osgood, "Old Hundred" was sung by the entire assemblage and the benediction was announced by Rev. Dr. Hitchcock. Then the crowd slowly dispersed in every direction, ebbing down tributary streets, descending and ascending the great thoroughfare, and in an hour thence, as evening closed in, the statue of the Father of his country gazed calmly down on a deserted and seemingly limitless waste.

Abbreviations Used in Notes

Asm	*The Asmonean*
DAB	*Dictionary of American Biography*
HL	*The Hebrew Leader*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
Isr	*The Israelite*
JCCS	*Journal of the Confederate States of America, 1861–1865*
JE	*The Jewish Encyclopedia*
JISHS	*Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*
JR	*The Jewish Record*
JSH	*The Journal of Southern History*
Mess	*The Jewish Messenger*
MVHR	*The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*
Occ	*The Occident*
PAJHS	*Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*
SHSP	*Southern Historical Society Papers*
UJE	*The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*
WROR	*War of the Rebellion . . . Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*

Chapter Notes

1 AMERICAN JEWRY IN 1860

1. The statistical estimates of the Jewish population and congregations in this and the following paragraphs were taken from the very careful compilation made by Rabbi Allan Tarshish for his unpublished doctoral dissertation, *The Rise of American Judaism*. Rabbi Tarshish brought together various estimates (for specific cities and states) from widely separated periodical sources and combined them into the best available charts of American Jewish population statistics for the nineteenth century. A good survey of governmental census statistics is to be found in H. S. Linfield, "Statistics of Jews and Jewish Organizations in the United States," pp. 65–72. Other authorities, including Dr. Jacob Lestschinsky, one of the outstanding students of Jewish statistical data, are agreed on the rough estimates given in the text.

2. See Dr. Hyman Grinstein's listing of New York congregations in his *Rise of the Jewish Community of New York 1654–1860*, pp. 472–4; *Mess.*, V, No. 15, p. 4, Apr. 15, 1859, states that there were 160 permanent congregations in the country, and about 50 more for the Holy Days in the fall. The official census reports, as digested by U. Z. Engelman in "Jewish Statistics in the U.S. Census of Religious Bodies (1850–1936)," pp. 129–30, list 37 synagogues in 11 different states in 1850, 77 synagogues in 19 states and the District of Columbia in 1860. These listings are at sharp variance with contemporary data and the research of scholars like Grinstein and Tarshish.

3. Jacob R. Marcus, "Light on Early Connecticut Jewry."

4. J. J. Benjamin, *Drei Jahre in Amerika*, pp. 40ff., 341ff.

5. See B. D. Bogen, *Jewish Philanthropy*, and M. J. Karpf, *Jewish Community Organization in the United States*, for material on the development of Jewish philanthropy in America.

6. Grinstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 109–14.

7. B. Rabinowitz, "The Young Men's Hebrew Associations (1854–1913)," pp. 223–32.

8. See, for instance, Israel Goldstein, *A Century of Judaism in New York*, pp. 115–8; J. G. Heller, *As Yesterday When It Is Past*, pp. 42–54; H. Morais, *The Jews of Philadelphia*, pp. 154–5; J. Trachtenberg, *Consider the Years*, pp. 149–51; Grinstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 225–59.

9. *DAB*, XI, 137–8.

10. *DAB*, IX, 513–4.

11. *DAB*, XX, 426–7; M. B. May, *Isaac Mayer Wise*; D. Philipson and L. Grossman, *Isaac Mayer Wise; Life and Selected Writings*; I. M. Wise, *Reminiscences*.

12. *DAB*, VI, p. 65; *David Einhorn Memorial Volume.*

13. See R. C. Hertz, *The Rabbi Yesterday and Today*, for an interesting survey of the changing rabbinate.

14. Solomon Jackson's monthly paper, *The Jew* (1823–25), the first Jewish periodical in America, was issued to combat the activities of the Christian conversionist group, the American Society for Ameliorating the Conditions of the Jews. Robert Lyon's *Asmonean* (1849–58) and Isidor Busch's *Israel's Herold* (1849) were the other exceptions. Although edited by a layman, whose premature death brought his publishing venture to a sudden end, the *Asmonean's* contributors were, in the main, the rabbinical leaders of the time. The fact that rabbis sprang to the fore even in a paper edited by a layman is another indication of the reluctance and/or inability of laymen to take an active role in Jewish leadership.

15. A copy of the circular appeal has been preserved in the archives of Mikveh Israel Congregation, Philadelphia. Photostat in American Jewish Archives.

16. See Grinstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 423–39, for details of these activities.

17. *JE*, IX, 35–6.

18. Grinstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 433–9.

19. See Temple Emanu-El circular of opposition, AJHS Library.

20. B. A. Elzas, *The Jews of South Carolina*, pp. 147–65, 208–19; L. C. Moise, *Biography of Isaac Harby*; C. A. Rubenstein, *History of Har Sinai Congregation of the City of Baltimore*; M. Stern, *The Rise and Progress of Reform Judaism . . . A History . . . Of Temple Emanu-El of New York. . . .*

21. D. Philipson, *The Reform Movement in Judaism*, pp. 339–53.

22. See, for example, Wise's comments on the atheists in *Reminiscences*, p. 272, 302, 327.

23. *Archives Israelites*, XXI (1870), p. 412.

24. *Isr*, VII, No. 5, p. 34, Aug. 3, 1860.

25. See *JE*, III, 194–201, for various types of European Jewish community organizations.

26. The circular referred to above in Note 19 leans heavily upon possible non-Jewish reactions to the organization of the Board.

27. One might make a good case for the contention that attempts to convert American Jews were actually helpful to the Jews. Many Jewish activities were instituted, directly or indirectly, in response to groups like the American Society for Ameliorating the Conditions of the Jews. Leeser began answering the Society's propaganda in the very first issue of *The Occident* (I, No. 1, pp. 43–7, Apr., 1843). See Grinstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 381–6, for some interesting data on the attitude of New York Jews to conversionist movements.

28. See Albert M. Friedenberg, "Calendar of American Jewish Cases," for a number of interesting examples of court cases in which Jews pleaded their rights as Jews, and L. Hühner, "The Struggle for Religious Liberty in North Carolina, With Special Reference to the Jews," pp. 46–52, for the story of Jacob Henry's struggle to occupy his seat in the State Legislature.

29. Grinstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 414–65; S. W. and J. M. Baron, "Palestinian Messengers in America, 1849–79."

2 THE RABBIS AND THE SLAVERY QUESTION

1. *Annual Report of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society*, pp. 1105.

2. E. Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, III, 21 ff., cited by A. V. Goodman, *American Overture*, p. 50.

3. For the statement that the largest house for the sale of slaves in Richmond was owned by Jews, see Hermann Schuricht, *History of the German Element in Virginia*, II, pp. 92–3.

4. See M. Vaxer, "Haym M. Solomon Frees His Slave," pp. 447–8, for the text of one indenture. Schappes, *A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States*, pp. 118 *passim*, lists a sizable number of Jews who freed their slaves under the auspices of this Society.

5. Isaac Goldberg, *Major Noah*, pp. 251–2, 265–8.

6. M. J. Kohler, "The Jews and the American Anti-Slavery Movement," pp. 152–3, gives the details of Pinner's abolitionist activities, as well as much interesting data about other Jews who participated in the abolitionist movement.

7. See R. D. Meade, *Judah P. Benjamin, Confederate Statesman*, pp. 100–3.

8. Yulee letter to *East Floridian* reprinted in *St. Augustine Examiner*, Nov. 17, 1860.

9. J. A. Wax, "Isidor Bush, American Patriot and Abolitionist."

10. Kohler, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

11. A facsimile of a broadside of a sale of slaves by Moses, dated Nov. 14, 1859, was printed in Charles F. Heartman, *Americana Catalogue* (1947), p. 145. The word "Negro" has been capitalized here and in subsequent citations, in keeping with current practice.

12. Letters, Kakeles to Smith, Nov. 13, 1850, and Jan. 26, 1851, Numbers 447 and 481 of the Gerrit Smith Papers.

13. Leon Hühner, *Judah Touro*, p. 69.

14. Gustav Pollak, *Michael Heilprin and His Sons*, pp. 169–70.

15. Morris J. Raphall, *The Bible View of Slavery*, reprinted in E. M. F. Mielziner, *Moses Mielziner 1823–1903*, pp. 212–24. Mrs. Mielziner performed a genuine service by reprinting this controversial sermon together with three other items bearing upon the subject, to be referred to below, in her volume on her father-in-law.

16. Raphall, *op. cit.*, pp. 27–8; Mielziner, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

17. *Ibid.*

18. Raphall, *op. cit.*, pp. 37–8; Mielziner, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

19. Raphall, *op. cit.*, p. 30; Mielziner, *op. cit.*, p. 220. See Schappes, *op. cit.*, p. 683, for the intriguing discovery that Raphall was made an honorary member of the American Society for Promoting National Unity, a group of pro-slavery Northerners and Southerners, including in their number the Reverends George Jacobs, James Gutheim and J. Blumenthal.

20. For text and comment, see *New York Tribune*, Jan. 5, 14, 18, 22, 1861; *New York Daily News*, Jan. 5; *New York Herald*, Jan. 5, 1861.

21. *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, Jan. 7, 1861.

22. L. G. Tyler (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography*, II, p. 52.

23. *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, Jan. 29, 1861.

24. *Memphis Daily Appeal*, Jan. 23, 1861.

25. Quoted *Ibid.*, May 12, 1861.

26. *New York Tribune*, Jan. 15, 1861, reprinted in Mielziner, *op. cit.*, pp. 224–34. For various answers to Raphall by non-Jews, see Schappes, *op. cit.*, pp. 685–7. Most effective of all, perhaps, were the lines of a poem written by R. S. H. for *The Independent* and entitled "Rabbi Raphall":

He that unto thy fathers freedom gave—
Hath he not taught thee pity for the slave?

Reprinted in Schappes, *Ibid.*

27. Pollak, *op. cit.*, pp. 3–9.

28. Mielziner, *op. cit.*, pp. 224–5.

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 21–23; treatise reprinted pp. 64–103.

30. G. Gottheil, *Moses Versus Slavery: Being Two Discourses on the Slave Question.*

31. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

32. *Sinai,* I, No. 9, pp. 258–9, Oct., 1856; No. 11, pp. 353–9, Dec., 1856; II, No. 6, pp. 599–601, July, 1857; see also VII, No. 7, pp. 183–92, Aug., 1862.

33. *Sinai,* VI, No. 1, pp. 2–20, Feb., 1861; No. 2, pp. 45–50, 60–1, Mar., 1861; No. 3, pp. 99–100, Apr., 1861. The first article is reprinted in Mielziner, *op. cit.*, pp. 234–50.

34. Mielziner, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 250.

36. David Einhorn, *War With Amalek*, pp. 4–5.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

38. *Sinai,* I, No. 9, pp. 258–9, Oct. 1856; VII, No. 7, pp. 207–9, Aug. 1861.

39. *Sinai,* VII, No. 5, pp. 135–42, June, 1861; *Isr,* VII, No. 48, p. 382, May 31, 1861.

40. *Sinai,* VII, No. 5, p. 140, June, 1861.

41. Letter, Einhorn to R. Oppenheimer, Aug. 13, 1861, Marcus Collection.

42. *Sinai,* VII, No. 10, p. 319, Dec., 1862; letter, Einhorn to Felsenthal, Sept. 3, 1862, in AJHS Library.

43. Letter, Felsenthal to M. J. Kohler, Oct. 25, 1901, American Jewish Archives.

44. Emma Felsenthal, *Bernhard Felsenthal, Teacher in Israel*, p. 23.

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 33–4.

46. Reprinted from the *Chicago Republican* in *HL,* VII, No. 11, p. 1, Dec. 22, 1865.

47. *Sinai,* VI, No. 7, p. 208, Aug. 1861.

48. Felsenthal, "The Jews and Slavery," letter to *Illinois Staatzeitung*, June 6, 1862, reprinted in *Sinai,* VII, No. 6, pp. 158–63, July, 1862; also *HL,* VI, No. 25, p. 1, Sept. 8, 1865. The German-language abolitionist press made frequent anti-Jewish comments about Jews who supported the Confederacy. Felsenthal sought to defend his people, recognizing that the attacks were not realistic discussions of the issue, but were motivated by hostility to the Jews brought from Germany. Isaac M. Wise understood this thoroughly, and delivered himself of some blistering rebuttals to Felsenthal's defense as well as the German attacks, in *Isr.*, IX, No. 4, pp. 3–4, July 25, 1862. The specialist in immigrant adjustment to life in the United States will be interested in comparing the political affiliation and activities of German non-Jews and Jews during this period. The Germans were much more a compact, unified body, than were the Jews. See Ella Lonn's excellent study, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, for material on German refusal to support the Confederacy, and on the strong prejudice against Germans which existed in the South.

49. *Mess.*, IX, No. 17, p. 133, May 3, 1861. Julius Eckman's *San Francisco Weekly Gleaner* disagreed with the *Messenger's* "ungenerous" attitude towards Einhorn and told its readers that Einhorn was "a martyr." *Mess.*, X, No. 1, p. 5, July 12, 1861.

50. *Mess.*, IX, No. 3, p. 21, Jan. 18, 1861; No. 4, p. 28, Jan. 25; No. 5, p. 37, Feb. 1. The editors were not entirely consistent. On the same day that Raphall had delivered his sermon, *Mess.* published an article by one of its regular contributors, "Judaeus," completely siding with the South:

> . . . No matter how patriotic and unpartisan Mr. Lincoln may be, the mass of the Southern people, relying on the statements of their political leaders, believe him to be an uncompromising abolitionist . . . Northern men must leave their Southern brethren to regulate their own internal concerns . . . It was designed [in the Constitution] that wherever slavery existed, it should be protected and not disturbed . . . [Abolitionism] is

the primary cause of the present dissatisfaction at the South. The interference of abolitionists was entirely uncalled for . . . That the country will pass safely through the present ordeal, I am confident . . . (*Mess.*, IX, No. 1, p. 2, Jan. 4, 1861).

51. *Mess.*, XIV, No. 13, pp. 108–9, Oct. 9, 1863.

52. *Mess.*, XVII, No. 5, p. 36, Feb. 3, 1865; XIX, No. 4, p. 1, Jan. 26, 1866; No. 5, p. 1, Feb. 2. The editors of the paper had changed their tune by the end of the war, and printed, every week, a digest of national news in which the editorial policy was consistently conservative and anti-vindictive. One cannot help feeling that S. M. and Myer Isaacs were afraid to take an editorial stand in the pre-war months, rather than convinced that they should not.

53. *Occ.*, XVII, No. 43, p. 259, Jan. 17, 1861; No. 44, p. 268, Jan. 24; No. 45, p. 274, Jan. 31. It was somewhat typical of Leeser's cast of mind that, in one breath, he should say he will not take a public stand, and in the next reveal his substantial agreement with Raphall by differing with him on minor points.

54. *Occ.*, XVIII, No. 33, p. 197, Nov. 8, 1860. For Frederick Law Olmsted's comments on this problem, see Chapter 7, Note 132, of the present work.

55. See the writer's essay on "Isaac Mayer Wise On the Civil War," for a fuller discussion of the subject.

56. *Isr.*, VII, No. 22, p. 173, Nov. 30, 1860; No 24, p. 188, Dec. 14, No. 26, p. 205, Dec. 28; No. 31, p. 244, Feb. 1, 1861; No. 37, p. 292, Mar. 15; No. 48, p. 381, May 31; VIII, No. 16, p. 124, Oct. 18; No. 30, p. 236, Jan. 24, 1862. Lincoln agreed, at least in part, with Wise's judgment of the role of the clergymen. He said, to a visitor in 1863, "Sir . . . the parsons and the women made this war." D. Barbee, "President Lincoln and Doctor Gurley," p. 11.

The degree to which misinformation about the Jews found its way into print was indicated by an editorial in the *Memphis Argus*, in March, 1861, accusing Wise of being an abolitionist! "This paper," said the *Argus*, "ostensibly devoted to the religious needs of the editor's Israelitish brethren is, in truth, little more than a Jewified repeater of the doctrines of Beecher & Co. The editor . . . has . . . deduced two prominent facts: First, that the nigger is superior to the white race, even 'the chosen race' of God, which He once held in bondage, and secondly, that the abolition of slavery is as much enjoined by Moses as by Theodore Parker." Wise was as likely to be anti-slavery as the *Argus* itself. How it came to print such nonsense must remain a mystery. *Isr.*, VII, No. 40, p. 318, Apr. 5, 1861.

57. *Isr.*, VII, No. 26, p. 205, Dec. 28, 1860.

58. *Isr.*, VII, No. 29, p. 230, Jan. 18, 1861; XIV, No. 52, p. 4, July 3, 1868. M. J. Kohler in his essay on "Jews and the American Anti-Slavery Movement," p. 150, and Philip S. Foner in *The Jews in American History*, 1654–1865, p. 60, both state erroneously that Wise endorsed Raphall's sermon. As late as 1897, Wise himself, still alive, felt impelled to print a formal denial that he "shared the opinion of Dr. Raphall . . . that slavery was a divine institution, sanctioned by the Old Testament Scriptures, or that there is on record one paragraph to show that the said Isaac M. Wise ever was a pro-slavery man or favored the institution of slavery at any time." *Isr.*, LXVIII, No. 52, p. 4, June 24, 1897, in answer to charges by the *London Jewish Chronicle* .

59. *Isr.*, XI, No. 20, p. 156, Nov. 11, 1864, to No. 26, p. 204, Dec. 23. The series is entitled "On the Provisional Portion of the Mosaic Code, with Special Reference to Polygamy and Slavery." Around the same time, Lewis N. Dembitz, one of Wise's Louisville friends and supporters, published an article "On Slavery and Polygamy Tolerated by the Bible," in one of the Louisville newspapers. Its conclusions were similar to Wise's. *Isr.*, XI, No. 19, pp. 148–9, Nov. 4, 1864.

60. *Isr.*, XI, No. 26, p. 204, Dec. 23, 1864.

61. *Isr.*, XI, No. 25, p. 196, Dec. 16, 1864.

62. See Korn, *op. cit.*, pp. 639–40.

63. *Isr.*, X, No. 5, p. 36, July 31, 1863.

64. *Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation Trustees Minute Book*, May 3, 1863, called to the writer's attention by Rabbi Morris M. Feuerlicht of Indianapolis.

65. *Occ.*, XVIII, No. 44, pp. 267–8, Jan. 24, 1861.

66. *Isr.*, VII, No. 38, p. 301, Mar. 22, 1861; VIII, No. 35, p. 278, Feb. 28, 1862.

The Rev. A. Gunzberg of Rochester was another rabbi who was convinced that the Jews were a peculiar blind spot in the liberal thinking of the abolitionists and so he wrote in a letter to G. F. Train, referring to "high standing politicians who are very zealous for the half-civilized Negro, [but] so illiberal against our nation." *Isr.*, XI, No. 46, p. 364, May 12, 1865; No. 48, p. 381, May 26; No. 49, p. 388, June 2, 1865.

67. *JR*, I, No. 18, p. 2, Jan. 9, 1863.

68. *JR*, I, No. 20, p. 2, Jan. 23, 1863.

69. *Ibid.*

70. *JR*, I, No. 21, p. 2, Jan. 30, 1863; No. 22, p. 2, Feb. 6.

71. *JR*, VI, No. 2, p. 2, Mar. 24, 1865. Benjamin Szold was one rabbi who disagreed with the *Record*. After Maryland freed her slaves, H. L. Bond and others organized "The Baltimore Association for the Educational and Moral Improvement of the Colored People." A letter was sent to the ministers asking for their support, because the sponsors felt it was a project which should appeal to "every Christian man's charity." It did not; many ministers did not answer; others wrote bitter attacks against the society. Rabbi Szold mailed fifty dollars to the Association, noting that it appealed to his "*Jewish* charity." His note made so forceful an impression on the officers that they elected him to their Board. H. L. Bond, "Dr. Szold and Timbuctoo."

72. Lilienthal's Victory Sermon, printed in *Isr.*, XI, No. 44, pp. 349–50, Apr. 28 1865, a profoundly revealing expression of Lilienthal's personal opinions.

73. Sophie Lilienthal, *The Lilienthal Family Record*, pp. 56–7.

74. Receipts for payment of slave rental fees in George Jacobs Scrapbook; information supplied by Miss Rebecca Jacobs.

75. Sermon printed in *JR*, II, No. 13, p. 1, June 5, 1863. The *Record*'s editor found it difficult to understand how Michelbacher could be so loyal to the Confederacy. Isaac M. Wise had little to say about the sermon except that it was "a partisan rigamarole dictated by some partisan stump speaker," but criticised the *Record* for saying Michelbacher was a rabbi:

> . . . "The Rev. Rabbi Michelbacher" never was and is not now a rabbi, never made any studies to this end, never received any such title of any authorized person or persons, and to the best of our knowledge never claimed any such title . . . Mr. Michelbacher could as easy write a work on astronomy as he writes a sermon. He can do neither. He can sing and chant . . . (*Isr.*, IX, No. 50, p. 394, June 19, 1863).

76. There had been one pardonable error in the 1853 report of the Anti-Slavery Society. Its officers could hardly have been expected to read every issue of the Jewish periodicals. Robert Lyon's *Asmonean* had already committed itself to a pro-slavery position in 1850–1, by defending the wisdom of the Fugitive Slave Law, (*Asm.*, III, No. 1, p. 6, Jan. 10, 1851; IV, No. 12, p. 92, Oct. 12, 1851) and by registering itself against the abolitionist crusade. Lyon felt that England was responsible for fostering the anti-slavery movement in order to

weaken the young republic. He was fearful of the results of the agitation for emancipation, warning his readers that events in Jamaica and Haiti foreshadowed what would occur in the United States, if the Negroes were to be given their freedom. Lyon adopted that line of reasoning which regarded the slaves as property, and therefore inviolate:

> Let our citizens, one and all, resolve this day, to put down Abolitionism, in whatever shape or form it may present itself, to discountenance it, by whomsoever its principles may be advocated, and to crush out at once and forever this attempt to plunder our Southern citizens of their property . . . Once more, Down with Abolitionism! Let us stand by the Union, and nothing but the Union. (*Asm.*, IV, No. 11, p. 88, July 4, 1851.)

Although Lyon had said nothing about Judaism, the very fact that he had printed such sentiments in a professedly Jewish newspaper subjected him to abolitionist rebuttal. The *Christian Freeman*, edited by the Rev. Sylvanus Cobb of Boston, thought it ill became Jews to favor slavery:

> Well done, Mr. Israelite . . . Had not our government better make slaves of you and all your people we can catch? For this we might plead some sanction from the word of God, which declares that you shall be trodden underfoot of all nations! Jehovah never said this of Africans. (*Asm.*, IV, No. 13, p. 104, July 18, 1851.)

Not in the least disconcerted, Lyon turned tables and accused Cobb of being a poor Christian, thus to threaten the Jews with slavery. The Bible, said he, did not teach abolition, but respect for property!

77. The only congregational action on record was the adoption by the Beth Elohim Congregation of Charleston, S. C., of a provision in its 1820 constitution that all duly converted proselytes be accepted as members of the Congregation "provided he, she, or they are not people of color." B. Elzas, *The Jews of South Carolina*, p. 153.

78. W. W. Sweet, *The Story of Religions in America*, pp. 412–47. See also C. B. Staiger, "Abolitionism and the Presbyterian Schism of 1837–1838."

79. *Report of the Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Meeting of District Grand Lodge No. 2, Independent Order of B'nai B'rith, Held in Cincinnati Ohio, on July 9, 1865, and Following Days*, pp. 6, 20.

3 THE RABBIS TAKE SIDES

1. *Isr.*, X, No. 13, p. 88, Sept. 25, 1863.
2. *Mess.*, X, No. 8, p. 63, Oct. 17, 1861.
3. *Isr.*, IX, No. 11, p. 83, Sept. 19, 1862.
4. *Isr.*, X, No. 47, p. 371, May 20, 1864.
5. J. Trachtenberg, *Consider the Days*, p. 166.
6. A. E. Frankland, "Fragments of History," p. 94.
7. *Occ.*, XVIII, No. 43, p. 260, Jan. 17, 1861.
8. *Mess.*, X, No. 6, pp. 44–5, Sept. 18, 1861.
9. Letter, A. Hart to Morais, Sept. 21, 1862, Morais Collection.
10. *Shearith Israel Trustees Minutes*, VI, p. 441, May 5, 1861.
11. *Mess.*, IX, No. 17, p. 133, May 3, 1861; No. 20, pp. 156–7, May 24.
12. *Cleveland Leader*, May 18, 1861; S. Wolf, *The Presidents I Have Known, From 1860 To 1918*, pp. 33–5.
13. *Easton Argus*, May 23, 1861, quoted by Trachtenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

14. A. E. Frankland, op cit.; *Mess.*, XXI, No. 18, p. 5, May 10, 1867.

15. *Easton Argus, op. cit.*

16. *Mess.*, IX, No. 17, p. 133, May 3, 1861.

17. *Mess.*, X, No. 7, pp. 52–3, Oct. 4, 1861. It has been stated that Morais was anti-slavery (see Kohler, *op. cit.*, p. 151) but there is no indication of this in his sermons. The phrase "the adversaries of human brotherhood," quoted in the text undoubtedly refers to the secession of the South from the "brotherhood" of the Union, not to the evils of slavery.

18. *JR*, II, No. 9, p. 1, May 8, 1863.

19. *Mess.*, XI, No. 16, pp. 129–30, May 2, 1862.

20. *Ibid.*

21. Nos. 15646–7, Robert Todd Lincoln Collection.

22. Letter, May 13, 1862, Morais Collection.

23. *Mess.*, XV, No. 2, pp. 9–10, Jan. 15, 1864; letter, John Hay to Harr, Jan. 9, 1864, Morais Collection.

24. *Mess.*, XIII, No. 19, p. 165, May 15, 1865.

25. *Mess.*, XV, No. 2, pp. 9–10, Jan. 15, 1864.

26. *Mess.*, XIV, No. 2, pp. 12–3, July 10, 1863. According to a letter to the writer, March 9, 1950, from J. William Hardt, Pres. of the Union League of Philadelphia, League minutes do not record Morais' election to honorary membership, but do list him on the special Clerical Roll, which appears to have been the equivalent of honorary membership.

27. All of the sermons in *Mess.* were reprinted from Philadelphia newspapers. The copy of the Fast Day sermon which was sent to Lincoln (note 21) was a clipping from an unidentified Philadelphia daily.

28. Letter, Morais to Lieberman, Dec. 15, 1864, Morais Collection.

29. *Ibid.*

30. *Mikveh Israel Adjunta Minutes*, Feb. 5, 1865.

31. *Ibid.*, Apr. 7, 1865.

32. *Mikveh Israel Congregation Minutes*, Apr. 9, 1865.

33. *Mess.*, XVIII, No. 19, p. 165, May 15, 1865; H. S. Morais, *The Jews of Philadelphia*, pp. 62–3.

34. *Isr.*, VII, No. 27, Jan. 4, to No. 32, Feb. 8, 1861.

35. *Isr.*, VII, No. 42, p. 334, Apr. 19, 1861.

36. *Isr.*, IX, No. 4, p. 46, July 25, 1862.

37. *Isr.*, IX, No. 19, p. 147, Nov. 14, 1862.

38. *Isr.*, VII, No. 33, p. 262, Feb. 15, 1861.

39. *Isr.*, VII, No. 37, p. 294, Mar. 15, 1861.

40. *Isr.*, VII, No. 50, p. 396, June 14, 1861. In XIII, No. 1, p. 5, July 6, 1866, Wise said:

> The war broke out and broke my staff of existence in two. Half of my subscribers resided in the Southern States, and of those who resided in the North nearly half stopped payment for my support . . . I lost every thing I had, and I lay prostrated, crushed to the ground . . .

The Occident had been published weekly in 1860–61, but had to return to monthly issues because of a similar problem. Leeser probably had more subscribers in the South than in the North. *Occ.*, XX, No. 1, p. 1, Apr., 1862. The *Messenger* was published only every other week for the second half of 1861 because of its sudden loss of subscribers, but managed to survive the rest of the war as a weekly, with a raise in price several times. *Mess.*, IX, No. 25, p. 196, June 28, 1861; XI, No. 1, p. 1, Jan. 5, 1862; XVII, No. 1, p. 4, Jan. 6, 1865.

41. *Isr.*, VII, No. 48, p. 381, May 31, 1861; XIII, No. 1, p. 5, July 6, 1866.

42. See Jacob R. Marcus, *The Americanization of Isaac Mayer Wise*, pp. 1–8, for a detailed treatment of Wise's political ideas. Wise probably voted for Douglas in 1860, although he supported no candidate in his paper. See his eulogy of Douglas in *Isr.*, VII, No. 49, p. 386, July 7, 1861. Wise, in his *Reminiscences* (p. 327) states that he was present at the Ohio organizational meeting of the Republican party, but withdrew because of its identification with the leading (non-Jewish) German atheists of Cincinnati.

43. *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, Sept. 6, 1863.

44. *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, Sept. 7, 1863.

45. *Isr.*, X, No. 12, pp. 92–3, Sept. 18, 1863, reprinted in *JR*, III, No. 2, p. 1, Sept. 25, 1863, which says that they were also printed in the *New York Times* of Sept. 10.

46. *Ibid.*

47. *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, Sept. 11, 1863.

48. *Ibid.*

49. *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, Sept. 11, 1863.

50. *Isr.*, XI, No. 8, p. 60, Aug. 19, 1864.

51. *JR*, III, No. 3, p. 2, Oct. 9, 1863.

52. The Conference of Rabbis which met in Pittsburgh in November, 1885, produced one of the earliest social justice pronouncements by any religious group. European Reform Judaism had been liberal theologically, but took no group interest in liberal political movements. It is interesting to compare the Race Relations statements by the Commission on Justice and Peace of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, as well as those of the Rabbinical Assembly of America, issued annually on Race Relations Day, with the rabbinical statements on slavery analyzed in the previous chapter.

53. *Occ.*, XVIII, No. 33, p. 197, Nov. 8, 1860; No. 47, p. 286, Feb. 14, 1861.

54. *Occ.*, XVIII, No. 43, p. 257, Jan. 17, 1861.

55. *Occ.*, XVIII, No. 39, pp. 237–8, Dec. 20, 1860.

56. *Ibid.*

57. *Ibid.*

58. *Occ.*, XIX, No. 3, pp. 92–3, May, 1861.

59. *Occ.*, XX, No. 5, p. 238, Aug., 1862.

60. *Occ.*, XXIII, No. 8, pp. 276–7, Nov., 1865.

61. *Occ.*, XXV, No. 9, p. 461, Dec., 1867.

62. *Isr.*, XIV, No. 33, p. 2, Feb. 21, 1868.

63. Morais, *op. cit.*, p. 256; C. Adler, *Lectures, Selected Papers, Addresses*, pp. 48, 51.

64. *Occ.*, XIX, No. 3, pp. 92–3, May, 1861.

65. Rough draft of letter, Leeser to Henry, June 3, 1861, Leeser Collection.

66. *Ibid.*

67. Letter, Henry to Leeser, June 5, 1861, Leeser Collection.

68. Manuscript Thanksgiving Sermon, delivered Nov. 29, 1860, Gutheim Papers.

69. A large collection of Gutheim's manuscript sermons was given to the American Jewish Archives on permanent loan by Temple Sinai of New Orleans, through the courtesy of Rabbi Julian B. Feibelman and Mr. Leonard Levy.

70. Manuscript Thanksgiving Sermon, delivered Nov. 29, 1860, Gutheim Papers.

71. Letter, Leeser Collection.

72. Gutheim was not exaggerating. Another New Orleans Jew wrote to friends in England that "almost the entire Jewish population daily leave, and two-thirds of the Portuguese Congregation with their Rabbi have already departed." Reprinted from the *London Jewish Chronicle* in *JR*, II, No. 22, p. 2, Aug. 21, 1863. *The Israelite* said that over

seven-eighths of the congregation had left, X, No. 1, p. 2, July 3, 1863.

73. *Occ.*, XXI, No. 5, pp. 234–5, Aug., 1863.

74. *Mobile Advertiser and Register*, May 29, 1863.

75. *Kahl Montgomery Minutes*, pp. 59, 61, 63, 66, 92.

76. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

77. Clipping from unidentified Montgomery paper, May 16, 1862, I. Solomon Scrapbook.

78. *Kahl Montgomery Minutes*, p. 106.

79. *HL*, VI, No. 22, p. 2, Aug. 18,1865.

80. *Occ.*, XXII, No. 6, p. 238, Aug. 1865.

81. Max Heller, *Jubilee Souvenir of Temple Sinai*, 1872–1922, p. 52.

82. T. E. Dabney, *One Hundred Great Years*, p. 236.

83. *SHSP*, X (1882), pp. 248–50.

84. *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, May 7, 1904.

85. How ironic that on April 29, 1863, the Confederate House of Representatives should have passed a resolution encouraging New Orleans residents to defy Butler and thereby testify "to the patriotic spirit and *Christian* faith of our people." *JCCS*, VI, p. 461.

86. *Mess.*, IX, No. 3, p. 19, Jan. 18, 1861.

87. *Mess.*, IX, No. 19, p. 148, May 17, 1861.

88. *Mess.*, IX, No. 16, p. 124, Apr. 26, 1861; see also No. 21, p. 164, May 31, for a quotation from the *New York Independent*, congratulating the *Messenger* on its editorial position, saying in part: "This tone of manly, independent patriotism might well be imitated by certain professedly Christian editors, who, though born and educated [in] the United States, study just now to maintain a neutral ground . . ."

89. *Mess.*, X, No. 1, p. 4, July 12, 1861.

90. *Mess.*, IX, No. 22, p. 172, June 7, 1861.

91. Letter, Jacobs to Leeser, Nov. 21, 1865, Leeser Collection.

92. Speech on life of Penina Moise by her niece, at South Carolina State Federation of Sisterhoods convention, in Marcus Collection.

93. See H. Hennig, *The Tree of Life*, pp. 4–6, for data on the Columbia congregation during the war. According to a manuscript deposition, Jan. 16, 1866, N. Y. Public Library, the Beth Elohim Congregation of Charleston deposited its Torah scrolls and other ceremonial objects with the Columbia congregation; these were, of course, destroyed in the fire.

94. *Mess.*, XVIII, No. 11, p. 85, Sept. 15, 1865. In this letter, Jacobs offered the hand of friendship to Isaacs in deference to the latter's age and long years of service to Jewry. He did not intend to perpetuate war-time enmities. According to Hennig, *op. cit.*, the Jews of Augusta also sent a contribution to assist their brethren in Columbia.

95. *Occ.*, XXIII, No. 3, p. 142, June, 1865.

96. Elzas, *op. cit.*, pp. 219–21, 260.

97. *Occ.*, XXIII, No. 11, pp. 462–81, Feb., 1866.

4 A QUESTION OF EQUALITY: THE CHAPLAINCY CONTROVERSY

1. See *The United States Army Chaplaincy*, for a detailed study of the historical development of the Army Chaplaincy.

2. See statistics and lists of Jews in the Union and Confederate armies and navies in Simon Wolf, *The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier and Citizen.*

3. *JCCS*, 11, pp. 160, 196. Ella Lonn (*Foreigners in the Confederacy*, p. 265) erroneously refers to the Rev. Jacob Frankel, who is discussed below, pp. 77 ff., as a Confederate chaplain. Miss Lonn obviously misread a vague phrase in the authority which she cites, Mrs. Townes R. Leigh, "The Jews in the Confederacy," p. 178, where it is not clearly stated that Frankel was a Union chaplain. *UJE.*, IX, pp. 519–20 (cited in Schappes, *op. cit.*, p. 439) referring to the Rev. Julius Lewin of Shreveport as having served in the Confederate Army, appears to be without warrant. Neither the Adjutant General of the War Dept. nor the Archivist of the Adjutant General of the state of Louisiana has any record of his service. No rabbi is known to have served as a chaplain in the Confederate Army.

4. *WROR*, III, I, p. 154.

5. *Congressional Globe*, 37th Congress, 1st Session, p. 100.

6. *Isr.*, VIII, No. 3, p. 23, July 19, 1861.

7. *Philadelphia Sunday Dispatch*, Oct. 20, 1861. There were undoubtedly many other cases in which the appointment of chaplains of minority faiths was attacked publicly. Carl Sandburg, in *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years*, II, p. 230, records the visit to Washington of a delegation of Philadelphia clergymen to urge Lincoln not to appoint a certain Universalist minister as chaplain, because "he believes that even rebels themselves will be finally saved."

8. His resignation was accepted on Sept. 26. Special Orders No. 79, Headquarters, Army of the Potomac, in *Records of the War Dept., Office of the Adjutant General, Vol. 403, Orders and Special Orders.*

9. Wolf, *op. cit.*, pp. 484–5. The law was passed only a few days before Allen enlisted (July 18, 1861, according to *Records of the Veterans Administration*, WO 1204831). The officers could hardly have known of the prohibitory clause. *New York Tribune*, Oct. 31, 1861.

10. Certificate in possession of Mrs. Clarence M. Allen, New York.

11. *Mess.*, XIX, No. 23, p. 4, June 15, 1866.

12. *Mess.*, X, No. 7, p. 52, Oct. 4, 1861; Henry S. Morais, *The Jews of Philadelphia*, p. 245.

13. P. 5 of an eleven page diary kept by Allen during the weeks his regiment was encamped near Washington, in the possession of Mrs. Clarence Allen of New York, printed, with an introduction, by Dr. David deSola Pool, in *PAJHS*, No. 39 (1949), pp. 177–182.

14. In a letter to the *Philadelphia Sunday Dispatch*, Oct. 20, 1861.

15. *Philadelphia Sunday Dispatch*, Oct. 27, 1861.

16. *Philadelphia Enquirer*, Oct. 12, 1861, p. 8.

17. *WROR*, III, I, p. 728.

18. Henry N. Blake, *Three Years in the Army of the Potomac*, p. 43.

19. *Presbyterian Banner*, cited in *Isr.*, IX, No. 2, p. 14, July 11, 1862.

20. *Isr.*, VIII, No. 6, p. 45, Aug. 9, 1861; No. 9, p. 70, Aug. 30, 1861. For further data on atheist chaplains see Ella Lonn, "The Forty-Eighters in the Civil War," in Zucker, *The Forty-Eighters.*

21. W. O. Stoddard, "White House Sketches," in *New York Citizen*, Oct. 6, 1866, quoted in Barbee, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

22. Practically nothing is known of Fischel's life beyond the fact that he was a native of Holland and that he returned there in 1862. *JE*, V, p. 400.

23. *Mess.*, X, No. 12, p. 93, Dec. 13, 1861; *Isr.*, VIII, No. 25, p. 196, Dec. 20, 1861, and various items in the Board of Delegates of American Israelites correspondence files (notably Letter No. 37, from Myer S. Isaacs, Secretary of the Board, to the Rev. Fischel, Nov. 27, 1861) establish the authenticity of his appointment by the officers of the regiment. Some of Fischel's activities are chronicled in the mis-named article by Myer S. Isaacs, "A Jewish

Army Chaplain." The Rev. Fischel's contract as lecturer at the Shearith Israel Synagogue in New York was about to expire on Oct. 31, 1861, and was not expected to be renewed. He was, therefore, seeking a new position. *Shearith Israel Trustees' Minutes*, VI, p. 477, *passim*.

24. *Mess.*, X, No. 12, p. 93, Dec. 13, 1861.

25. *Isr.*, VIII, No. 20, p. 157, Nov. 15, 1861; No. 23, p. 177, Dec. 6, 1861; No. 25, p. 196, Dec. 20, 1861; No. 44, p. 348, May 2, 1862.

26. *Occ.*, XIX, No. 9, pp. 417–20, Dec., 1861; XX, No. 5, pp. 236–7, Aug., 1862.

27. *Mess.*, X, No. 9, p. 68, Nov. 1, 1861; No. 12, pp. 92–3, Dec. 13, 1861; XI, No. 17, p. 136, May 9, 1862.

28. *Isr.*, VIII, No. 22, p. 172, Nov. 29, 1861; No. 39, p. 308, Mar. 28, 1862; *Mess.*, X, No. 13, p. 101, Dec. 27, 1861; *Occ.*, XX, No. 5, pp. 236–7, Aug., 1862.

29. *Isr.*, VIII, No. 39, p. 308, Mar. 28, 1862.

30. *Congressional Globe*, 37th Congress, 2nd Session, Part 1, p. 156; Fischel letter, Dec. 27, 1861 (see note 22).

31. Quoted in *Isr.*, VIII, No. 19, p. 146, Nov. 8, 1861; No. 22, p. 172, Nov. 29, 1861.

32. Quoted in *Isr.*, VIII, No. 27, p. 212, Jan. 3, 1862; *Sinai*, VII, No. 1, pp. 23–5, Feb., 1862.

33. Quoted in *Sinai*, VI, No. 10, p. 321, Nov., 1861.

34. *Isr.*, VIII, No. 26, p. 206, Dec. 27, 1861; No. 27, p. 215, Jan. 3, 1862. The only unfavorable reaction which the Jewish editors recorded came, not from an American journalist, but a British journalist, Sir William Howard Russell, American correspondent for the *London Times*, who felt that the Jewish agitation for a change in the chaplaincy law was a "hoax," and wrote to England that there were few enough Jews in the whole army, at best only a "slight sprinkling" in the Cameron's Dragoons, and that there was no justification for the Jewish request for the right to chaplains. Russell did not quite understand the deeper implications of the Jewish campaign. *Mess.*, XI, No. 5, p. 41, Feb. 7, 1862.

35. *Isr.*, VIII, No. 20, p. 157, Nov. 15, 1861, *passim*.

36. *Isr.*, VIII, No. 23, p. 177, Dec. 6, 1861.

37. *Congressional Globe*, *op. cit.*, pp. 25, 67, 219, 444.

38. *Baltimore Clipper* quoted in *Isr.*, VIII, No. 26, p. 206, Dec. 27, 1861; No. 27, p. 215, Jan. 3, 1862.

39. *Isr.*, VIII, No. 28, p. 223, Jan. 10, 1862.

40. *Isr.*, VIII, No. 29, p. 230, Jan. 17, 1862.

41. *Isr.*, VIII, No. 30, p. 239, Jan. 24, 1862. Other towns from which petitions were sent were: Louisville, Ky., Trafalgar, Ind., Laporte, Franklin, and Iowa City, Iowa.

42. For New York, see *Mess.*, X, No. 10, p. 72, Nov. 15, 1861 and *Temple Emanu-El Board of Directors Minutes (1851-1862)*, entry for Dec. 1, 1861. For Philadelphia, see *Sinai*, VI, No. 11, pp. 255–7, Dec., 1861; No. 12, p. 381, Jan., 1862. For Cincinnati, see *Isr.*, VIII, No. 22, p. 172, Nov. 29, 1861.

43. *Mess.*, X, No. 12, p. 93, Dec. 13, 1861.

44. Letter No. 37, Board of Delegates to Fischel. The Board apparently believed that it would later appoint a similar chaplain to be attached to the military forces in the Mississippi River area, and so wrote to A. J. Latz of St. Louis, asking his reaction. Copy of Letter, No. 43, Board of Delegates to Latz. No further mention of the project was made, but it is likely that it was dropped due to lack of funds.

45. Most of the material for the remainder of this section is taken from the Fischel reports to the Board of Delegates, unless otherwise noted. The reports are dated Dec. 11, 13, 15, 20, 27, 1861; Jan. 2, 7, 8, Mar. 10, Apr. 3, 1862. Some of them are printed, in part, in

Myer S. Isaacs, "A Jewish Army Chaplain," pp. 127–137, and L. M. Friedman, *Jewish Pioneers and Patriots*, pp. 46–48. Fischel's own interest in American Jewish history (he was collecting material in 1860–2 for "a comprehensive history of the Israelites in America," *Mess.*, X, No. 9, p. 68, Nov. 1, 1861; XI, No. 11, p. 88, Mar. 21, 1862) was undoubtedly responsible for the care with which he wrote these reports, and the wealth of detail which he included in them. He knew he was participating in an historic campaign.

46. Letter, Fischel to Hart, Dec. 15, 1861.

47. *Ibid.*, Dec. 11, 1861.

48. *Ibid.*, Dec. 13, 1861.

49. *Ibid.*, Dec. 15, 1861.

50. *Congressional Globe, op. cit.*, pp. 156–7.

51. A copy of the original bill, in printed form, was sent by Fischel to the Board in New York, and preserved with its other records.

52. Letter, Fischel to Hart, Apr. 3, 1862.

53. *Congressional Globe, op. cit.*, p. 299.

54. *WROR*, III, III, pp. 175–6.

55. This text of the protest is taken from *Sinai*, VII, No. 1, pp. 2–3, Feb., 1862. Leeser answered it in the *Philadelphia Enquirer*, Jan. 13, 1862 (reprinted in *Occ.*, XIX, No. 11, pp. 503–11). He was at a loss to explain the motives of "the six." What harm or hurt were they protesting against? His answer to the protest asserted that: 1) the Board of Delegates never pretended to represent all Jews; 2) the Board did represent *some* congregations, more than "the six," at least; 3) Dr. Fischel was actually accomplishing something in connection with the chaplaincy restrictions—"the six" had done nothing but talk!

Felsenthal continued the campaign against the Board in the *Illinois Staatszeitung* (Chicago), July 12, 1862 (reprinted in *Sinai*, VII, No. 7, pp. 200–1, Aug., 1862), denying that Fischel's activities had anything to do with Congress' final revision of the chaplaincy clause. He gave the credit to Senator Wilson. Of course the Senator had introduced the bill which included the revised regulation, but it is questionable whether anything would have been done in Washington if Fischel himself had not been there to lobby in behalf of the Jewish position. Protests and letters and petitions could easily be pushed aside in the rush of events, but Fischel could not be so neglected.

Those who supported the Board were not entirely objective in their bickering with the Reformers. When a writer to *Mess.*, (XII, No. 1, pp. 4–5, July 4, 1862) attacked the "Protest Rabbis," he descended to the lowest level of *ad hominem* arguments, suggesting that American congregations should refuse to call German and Polish rabbis (the six protestors were all immigrants from Central Europe) and should, in the future, call their rabbis from a civilized country like Great Britain (Raphall and Isaacs, supporters of the Board, had come to America by way of England, though neither was born there). He further suggested that the only explanation of the protest was that "the six" were jealous of the Board's success. Fischel himself was greatly exercized when he wrote in a letter to Hart, Mar. 10, 1862, that he had heard a rumor that the Reform rabbis were attempting to secure a chaplaincy appointment for one of their own group!

56. Letter, Fischel to Hart, Jan. 8, 1862. The bulk of the material in this section also, except as noted, is derived from the Fischel reports to the Board of Delegates.

57. Also noted in *Mess.*, XI, No. 2, p. 17, Jan. 17, 1862. In his report of April 3, 1862 (published in full in *Occ.*, XX, No. 5, pp. 219–222, Aug., 1862), Fischel commented: "Most of the Jewish soldiers, seeing that no provision had been made for them, had joined the Society

of Odd Fellows and other associations, that undertake to return the bodies of the dead to their relatives, and one instance came under my notice in which a messenger was sent from California to recover the body of a soldier, who was a member of some association in that State."

58. Fischel letter to Hart, Mar. 10, 1862.

59. Fischel letter to Hart, Dec. 20, 1861.

60. Quoted in *Mess.*, X, No. 13, p. 100, Dec. 27, 1861. Printed copies in Board of Delegates files and Leeser Collection.

61. See letter to Joseph Abraham, Cincinnati, Dec. 17, 1861, No. 44 in the Board of Delegates' correspondence files.

62. *Mess.*, XI, No. 1, p. 4, Jan. 10, 1862; No. 18, p. 144, May 16, 1862. Anshi Chesed Congregation of New York, in what was probably a typical action, tabled the Board's appeal for funds. *Anshi Chesed Board of Trustees Minutes (1856–1866)*, p. 437.

63. *Mess.*, XI, No. 6, p. 49, Feb. 14, 1862. Two weeks previously, the *Messenger* printed the news that a collection was about to be taken up in Pittsburgh for the support of the "Jewish chaplaincy mission." It is hoped that the children's contribution of $5 was not the result of a widespread collection throughout the Jewish community of Pittsburgh! *Mess.*, XI, No. 4, p. 33, Jan. 31, 1862.

64. See *Mess.*, citations above; *Occ.*, XIX, No. 10, pp. 476–80, Jan., 1862, where Leeser wrote, "... it cannot be expected that he [Fischel] should forego lucrative engagements to devote himself to the ministry at large, while our own people do nothing and contribute nothing ..."

65. *Mess.*, XI, No. 20, p. 161, May 30, 1862. The identity of the author is not known, but it is very possible that it was the Rev. Fischel himself, who liked to write and was known as a literary person. The scrupulous avoidance of any mention of Fischel's name or his activities, as well as the reference to a British boy killed in a recent battle, might point to Fischel as the author of this eloquent plea.

The bitterness of this essay was matched by that of an editorial which appeared in *JR*, I, No. 23, p. 2, Feb. 13, 1863, entitled "Shortcoming of our Clergy," which commented, after a discussion of the activities of the U. S. Christian Commission, on the failure of the rabbis to take an interest in the spiritual needs of Jewish soldiers, particularly those who were patients in hospitals:

> ... Have our clergy manifested such efficiency in behalf of the scattered Hebrews in the Republic? Let the thousands of Israelites in the army, who are as destitute of the consolations of their faith as if they resided among the Esquimaux, reply,—and bring a blush, if possible, over the features of a ministry who are partially answerable to the Almighty for their souls.
>
> Our clergy, with an etiquette which the holy prophets would spurn as an irrecoverable leprosy, will not go beyond the pave of the synagogue to perform their labors. They may yet insist on imitating the Episcopal Church by demanding a rectory which shall communicate with their temples.
>
> We respectfully suggest to our clergy that they should follow the example of the Christian Commission, and make an effort to provide our co-religionists in the army with the instruction and ministrations of their faith. If they do not, their culpable inactivity will be noticed more forcibly by our people than by a simple editorial.

> It may be stated, however, that application has been made for Jewish army chaplains and refused. Has the application ever been tried on the part of a United Jewish Clergy Army Commission? No minister needs official permission to visit any hospitals, where as much good can be accomplished as on the "tented field."

Allowing for the anti-clerical opinions of the only lay Jewish editor, all of whose competitors were rabbis, we must still admit that there was some truth to Cohen's allegations. Not all of the rabbis were as eager as Fischel to endure discomfort and inconvenience in order to minister to the soldiers.

66. *Mess.*, XI, No. 18, p. 144, May 16, 1862.

67. *Occ.*, XX, No. 7, pp. 325–8, Oct., 1862. The actual letter, No. 7870–1 of the Robert Todd Lincoln Collection, indicates that Lincoln's secretary wrote the Surgeon General for his opinion of "the legality and propriety of the request," concluding: "If possible the President would like this to be done." The Surgeon General approved.

Markens, in "Lincoln and the Jews," p. 116, states that the Rev. Sabato Morais of Philadelphia "had previously declined an appointment as Chaplain." Unfortunately Markens did not annotate his article. The writer has found no evidence for this assertion in the contemporary periodicals; but a letter from John Hay, Lincoln's secretary, to A. Hart, president of Morais' congregation, Jan. 9, 1864, (in Morais Collection), stating "your petition for his appointment is on file," probably indicates that Morais *sought* a chaplaincy appointment unsuccessfully. This is far different, however, from his *declining* a proffered appointment!

68. *Ibid.* The appointment was signed by the President on Sept. 10, and forwarded by the Surgeon General on Sept. 15. *Records of the War Dept., Office of the Adjutant General.* The commission, which is now in the possession of his grandson, was sent to Frankel two years later when his appointment was renewed.

69. Morais, *op. cit.*, pp. 73–4, Edward Davis, *The History of Rodeph Shalom Congregation, Philadelphia, 1802–1926,* pp. 61, 98–100.

70. *Records of the War Dept., Office of the Adjutant General.*

71. See the Rev. Leeser's pass, addressed to "Surgeons in Charge of USA General Hospitals, Department of the Susquehanna," requesting that he be permitted to visit sick Jewish soldiers, signed Mar. 30, 1864, Leeser Collection. See facsimile on p. 93.

72. *Occ.*, XXII, No. 5, pp. 234–5, Aug., 1865. Other details from miscellaneous clippings in the possession of Mr. Joseph Frankel of New York, grandson of Jacob.

73. *General Orders of the War Department, 1861–1863,* I, p. 177. Allen wore a uniform, as did certain other chaplains, because he had enlisted as an officer of the line before his election as chaplain.

74. For the military orders concerning the appointment and assignment of hospital chaplains, see *WROR*, III, II, pp. 67, 222, 276; IV, III, p. 496.

75. See Sandburg, *op. cit.*, II, p. 44, for pertinent quotations from Lincoln's correspondence on this subject.

76. *WROR*, III, I, pp. 712, 721

77. *Occ.*, XX, No. 7, pp. 325–8, Oct., 1862.

78. No. 18878–9 of the Robert Todd Lincoln Collection. The reply is contained in No. 19222–3.

79. Isaacs, Op. Cit., pp. 130–1. *JR* reported several times that Fischel intended to return to America, but these expectations were never fulfilled. See, for example, V, No. 22, p. 2, Feb. 24, 1865.

80. Markens, *op. cit.*, quotes the letter from Usher to Dessar. No source is given. Could

Kalisch have been the Reform rabbi whose chaplaincy application had worried Fischel a year earlier?

81. *Isr.*, IX, No. 45, p. 357, May 15, 1863, *Records of the War Department, Office of the Adjutant General, Vol. XI, Officers of Signal Corps and Hospital Chaplains.*

82. Letters from Rabbi Stanley Brav, Vicksburg, Oct. 23, 1947, and Mr. Harold Gotthelf (grandson of the rabbi), Vicksburg, Nov. 18, 1947; *Keneseth Israel 90th Anniversary Booklet.*

83. Cited in *Isr.*, IX, No. 45, p. 357, May 15, 1863.

84. *Isr.*, XI, No. 30, p. 237, Jan. 30, 1865.

85. *Isr.*, XI, No. 34, p. 269, Feb. 17, 1865.

86. *Isr.*, XI, No. 39, p. 309, Mar. 24, 1865.

87. *Records of the War Dept., Office of the Adjutant General,* and the Records of the Adjutant General of the Division of Military and Naval Affairs of the State of New York, Albany.

88. *Isr.*, IX, No. 43, p. 338, Apr. 31, 1863; *Occ.*, XXI, No. 2, May, 1863, p. 96.

89. This is the date on his passport. He told the army authorities at the time of his enlistment in 1863 that he was then 38! He undoubtedly wanted to avoid any question of his being too old to enlist.

90. *Anshi Chesed Board of Trustees Minutes, 1856–1866*, p. 414.

91. *Mess.*, VIII, No. 18, p. 141, Nov. 1, 1861. One of Sarner's plays (the only one registered in the Library of Congress' Union Catalogue) was published in New York in 1871. It is entitled *Prinzessin von Cariola, oder; Liebe und Zeistesstörung. Drama in 5 akten.*

92. Copy of the certificate in the *Records of the War Dept., Office of the Adjutant General.*

93. *A Record of the Commissioned Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Privates of the Regiments which were organized in the State of New York . . . To Assist in Suppressing the Rebellion*, 11, pp. 407–27.

94. Both documents are found in the *Records of the War Dept., Office of the Adjutant General.* Manuscript evidence can be disconcertingly erroneous: the board of chaplains also certified that Sarner was "a regularly ordained minister of the Lutheran Church"!! Were we not certain that he was a rabbi previous to and subsequent to his service in the army, and did we not know that he was in contact with contemporary Jewish periodicals (which would surely have received reports of his apostasy if such had been the case), there might be a possibility that the chaplains knew better than we. Perhaps they too assumed that a regiment composed of a majority of German Gentiles would elect a Protestant chaplain. It is barely possible that Sarner spoke such poor English that he could not make them understand he was a rabbi. Whatever the reason for such an error, it is enough to make a researcher shudder for the accuracy of other "certified" evidence.

95. *Archives Israelites*, XXV, p. 135, Feb. 1, 1864.

96. *Headquarters of the Army, Adjutant General's Office, Special Orders No. 330, Paragraph 36, Oct. 3, 1864.* Dr. Sarner apparently left camp before this order had been transmitted to him, under the impression that it would be forwarded. This made him technically absent without leave, and in March 1869, the Adjutant General's Office finally compared its records of his service, revoked the order for his honorable discharge on account of disability, and listed him as discharged for being absent without leave. *Records of the War Department, Office of the Adjutant General, Special Orders No. 63, Mar. 18, 1869.*

97. *Occ.*, XXII, No. 9, p. 420, Dec., 1864.

98. *JR*, V, No. 15, p. 2, Jan. 6, 1865.

99. *Isr.*, XI, No. 31, p. 244, Jan. 6, 1865.

100. *Isr.*, XI, No. 34, p. 269, Feb. 17, 1865.

101. For six months he was partner with S. H. Kleinfeld in directing a New York boarding school. *HL*, XVI, No. 3, p. 5, May 6, 1870; XVII, No. 4, p. 6, Nov. 11, 1870. He preached in Brevoort Hall, New York, on the High Holy Days of 1872. *Mess.*, XXXII, No. 15, p. 2, Oct. 11, 1872.

102. *Mess.*, XI, No. 5, p. 41, Feb. 7, 1862.

103. *Isr.*, XI, No. 5, p. 37, July 29, 1864.

104. The text is taken from a printed copy in the Confederate Museum, Richmond, inscribed "To Max Myers from his friend & well wisher M. J. Michelbacher." Many Christian organizations issued volumes of prayers and devotions during the war. It was not until the first World War that special volumes of Jewish prayers were published for use by soldiers.

105. Letter, Edwin Kursheedt to Sarah [?], Dec. 28, 1864, American Jewish Archives.

106. *Mess.*, XIX, No. 13, p. 2, Mar. 30, 1866.

107. Letter, Isaac J. Levy to Leonora Levy, April 24, 1864, American Jewish Archives. "Passover," "*Matzot*," and "*Seder*" are printed in Hebrew letters in the original manuscript. Unleavened bread for Passover was scarce in the latter years of the Confederacy—as was all manner of food! See the *Major Hart Diary*, April 8, 1865, (p. 18) where Hart, trying to get to Mobile from Richmond in those last desperate days, stops off in Charlotte, N. C., to celebrate the Passover with friends—having brought *Matzot* along from Richmond to supply his friends as well as himself with that rare commodity!

108. *Mess.*, XIII, No. 23, p. 195, June 12, 1866.

109. *Isr.*, IX, No. 15, p. 118, Oct. 17, 1862.

110. Told by Myer Levy's niece, Miss Miriam E. Levy of Philadelphia, in a letter to the writer, Mar. 22, 1949.

111. *Aunt Sister's Book*, pp. 7, 13. Isaac Lowenberg later moved to Natchez and became one of the town's leading figures, president of a local bank and mayor of the town in 1882–6. *UJE*, VII, p. 218. For a similar story, with Richmond as its locale, and "a pleasant, quiet, home *Shabbas*" the ambition, see Philadelphia *Jewish Exponent*, I, No. 11, p. 7, June 24, 1887.

112. Two letters from Lee are reprinted from Jones, *Personal Reminiscences, Anecdotes, and Letters of Gen. Robert E. Lee*, pp. 443–4, in Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *The History of the Jews of Richmond from 1769 to 1917*, pp. 161–3; a third, the one we have quoted, is in the possession of LeRoy R. Cohen, Jr., of Richmond. Also reprinted by Ezekiel is a statement by a certain M. Goldsmith about the Rev. Michelbacher's attempts, in 1864, to secure such furloughs on the basis of personal interviews with various political and military figures. The Jones volume is quoted as authority for a further story about religious furloughs: A company commander disapproved a Jewish soldier's application for leave to attend synagogue services with the comment, "If such applications were granted, the whole army would turn Jews or shaking Quakers." Lee is said to have endorsed it, "Approved, and respectfully returned to Captain with the advice that he should always respect the religious views and feelings of others" (Ezekiel, *op. cit.*, pp. 164–5). An answer to a letter by Michelbacher concerning Holy Day furloughs from General Beauregard's Assistant Adjutant General, Thomas Jordan, is printed in *JR*, I, No. 23, p. 2, Feb. 13, 1863. There is, unfortunately, no evidence as to the number of times that Michelbacher made such applications; those which are recorded, however, were spaced over the entire period of the war: Rosh Hashonah, 1861; Passover, 1863; Rosh Hashonah, 1864.

At least once, it would appear, the military situation was sufficiently static for General Lee to accede to the Rev. Michelbacher's request. L. Leon, a private in Company C of the First North Carolina Bethel Regiment, wrote in his diary, under date of Sept. 29, 1863:

> All quiet today. Brother Morris returned from Richmond yesterday, where he had been for ten days on a furlough. Before our Jewish New Year there was an order read out from General Lee granting a furlough to each Israelite to go to Richmond for the holidays if he so desired. I did not care to go. (L. Leon, *Diary of a Tar Heel Confederate Soldier*, p. 49.)

Leon was not so careless of his Jewish heritage as might seem. His diary is replete with references to other Jewish soldiers and officers whom he met, to the dates of Jewish holidays, and other such items (see pp. 12, 47, 48). He records with pride how curious some people were to see him, after they heard of his capture of a deserter: "Is there a Jew in your detachment that caught a deserter yesterday?" (p. 46).

113. *Isr.*, X, No. 29, p. 229, Jan. 15, 1864.

114. *Mess.*, XI, No. 7, pp. 4–5, Feb. 12, 1862.

115. *Isr.*, XI, No. 5, p. 37, July 29, 1864.

116. *Isr.*, VIII, No. 18, p. 141, Nov. 1, 1861. This letter was written by Herman Kuhn of Phoenixville, Pa., *Herman Kuhn*, pp. 42–3. See also *Mess.*, XI, No. 16, p. 125, Oct. 24, 1862: A Christian chaplain wrote a New York Jew about his son, "He is seriously ill, and I fear will not survive. All that medical skill can do, will be done for him. As to his *spiritual* welfare, I will see to that." The *Messenger*'s editorial comment: "This from a Christian to a Jew! Will not this—by no means isolated—case arouse our co-religionists to the necessity of providing for the spiritual interests of Jewish soldiers?" It was, naturally, a cause for concern among sensitive Jews, that some Christians might take advantage of impressionable young men suffering from wounds and disease in the military hospitals.

117. *Mess.*, XI, No. 5, p. 41, Feb. 7, 1862.

118. *Occ.*, XXIII, No. 7, pp. 293–4, Oct., 1865. There was a widespread impression in the post-war days that Jews had been taunted about their religion, especially in the hospitals. See *Mess.*, XIX, No. 3, p. 2, Jan. 19, 1866, for B. F. Peixotto's short story "The Ben Berith—A Reminiscence of the Late War," in which a Jewish soldier hospitalized for war wounds is urged to convert to Christianity to aid his recovery.

119. *Memoirs of Henry Beck*, 1864–5, pp. 1–7.

120. Letter, Emanuel to his mother, Apr. 9, 1864.

121. *Mess.*, XIII, No. 20, pp. 170–1, May 22, 1863.

122. *Autobiography of August Bondi 1833–1907*, pp. 71–2, 82, 87–8, 101, 123.

123. One wonders if this category would include the only rabbi known to have served as a line officer—Captain John Salominsky of the cavalry, who came to the United States in 1860 after participation in a Polish uprising, and joined the Union Army in 1861, intending to return to the rabbinate at the end of the war. His marriage to a Swedenborgian lady apparently made this impossible, so he remained in the military service, and was stationed at Fort Humboldt, Dakota, when last heard from. *Isr.*, XVI, No. 6, p. 6, Aug. 13, 1869.

5 ON THE HOME FRONT

1. Brief resumes of the activities of the Sanitary Commission are to be found in A. C. Cole, *The Irrepressible Conflict*, pp. 331–3, and J. G. Randall, *The Civil War and Reconstruction*, pp. 634–5. It is surprising that no adequate study of the Sanitary Commission has been made.

2. Sandburg, *op. cit.*, II, p. 609.

3. *JR*, I, No. 6. p. 2, Oct. 15, 1862. Fifteen other firms gave a total of $1,305.

4. *Isr.*, IX, No. 50, p. 398, June 19, 1863.

5. No. 38395, Robert Todd Lincoln Collection; *Denver Daily News*, July 27, 1897; *Baltimore Sun*, Apr. 27, 1865; Grossmayer Papers. Grossmayer's will, written during the Civil War, provided that his estate should be turned over to Lincoln for war relief purposes. It was, of course, changed after the war ended.

6. Elzas, *op. cit.*, pp. 220–2.

7. Moses Papers.

8. *Occ.*, XXIII, No. 12, p. 568, Mar., 1866; XXIV, No. 3, p. 144, June 1866.

9. Mrs. T. R. Leigh, "The Jews in the Confederacy," p. 179.

10. Mary Boykind Chesnut, *A Diary From Dixie*, p. 176.

11. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress; another fine expression of women's war work is to be found in Mrs. Commodore Levy's speech when she presented a flag to a New York artillery company; *JR*, I, No. 13, p. 2, Dec. 5, 1862.

12. *Isr.*, VIII, No. 16, p. 126, Oct. 18, 1861; *PAJHS*, No. 17 (1920), p. 124; *Mobile Tribune*, quoted in *Occ.*, XXIV, No. 3, p. 143, June, 1866; *Mess.*, IX, No. 21, p. 165, May 31, 1861; Selig Adler, "Zebulon B. Vance and the 'Scattered Nation'," p. 362.

13. Letter, Morais to Smith, May 11, 1863, Morais Collection.

14. *Philadelphia Enquirer*, quoted in *JR*, II, No. 9, p. 1, May 8, 1863; *Mess.*, XIII, No. 20, p. 171, May 22, 1863.

15. Quoted in *Sinai*, VII, No. 6, p. 172, July, 1862.

16. *JR*, VI, No. 10, p. 1, May 26, 1865.

17. Letter in Cohen Papers.

18. *JR*, III, No. 16, p. 1, Jan. 8, 1864.

19. *Isr.*, X, No. 26, p. 204, Dec. 25, 1863.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*

22. Clipping from an unidentified San Francisco newspaper, Marcus Collection.

23. *Mess.*, XV, No. 24, p. 190, June 24, 1864; letter, Alfred H. Adler to his cousin, Mar. 30, 1864, Marcus Collection.

24. *Mess.*, XV, No. 12, p. 98, Mar. 25, 1864.

25. *Anshi Chesed Board Minutes* (1856–1866), pp. 410, 413, 415; *Mess.*, IX, No. 20, p. 157, May 24, 1861.

26. *Temple Emanu-El Board Minutes* (1848–1868), May 11, 1862, *Sinai*, VII No. 4, p. 116, May, 1862. On Purim, 1861, Emanu-El raised $130.75 "in aid of the sufferers in Kansas," entry Mar. 3, 1861.

27. *JR*, III, No. 23, p. 3, Feb. 26, 1864.

28. Köhler, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

29. Typical contributions: Philadelphia Society for Visitation of the Sick and Mutual Assistance, $25 to the Volunteer Refreshment Establishment, Dec. 1861, and $100 to the Sanitary Commission, Sept. 1862 (*Society Minutes*); Anshi Chesed Congregation, New York, $50 to Soldiers' Relief Society, June 1862 (*Board Minutes*, pp. 450–1); Buffalo congregation, $175 to the Sanitary Commission, Dec. 1863 (*JR*, III, No. 14, p. 5, Dec. 25, 1863); Jewish Charity Ball of Philadelphia, $25 to Volunteer Refreshment Establishment, Jan. 1862 (unidentified clipping in American Jewish Archives); Beth Elohim Congregation, $250 to Brooklyn Sanitary Fair (*Mess.*, XV, No. 9, p. 67, Mar. 4, 1864).

30. *Isr.*, X, No. 23, p. 182, Dec. 4, 1863; No. 24, p. 187, Dec. 11; No. 26, p. 203, Dec. 25; No. 27, p. 21, Jan. 1, 1864; No. 31, p. 246, Jan. 29.

31. *Mess.*, XV, No. 17, p. 134, May 6, 1864.

32. *Mess.*, XV, No. 24, p. 190, June 24, 1864.

33. *Mess.*, XV, No. 22, p. 174, June 9, 1864.

34. *Mess.* XV, No. 8, p. 58, Feb. 26, 1864.

35. *Mess.*, XV, No. 17, p. 133, May 6, 1864; *JR*, III, No. 23, p. 2, Feb. 26, 1864.

36. *JR*, III, No. 25, p. 2, Mar. 11, 1864; *Mess.*, XV, No. 13, p. 102, Apr. 1, 1864.

37. *Mess.*, XV, No. 12, p. 98, Mar. 25, 1864.

38. See, for instance, *Isr.*, VIII, No. 34, p. 270, Feb. 21, 1862, where Wise reprints in full a Sanitary Commission speech by Judge Hoadly.

39. *JR*, III, No. 16, p. 1, Jan. 8, 1864. Two years earlier the Jews of Rochester had organized several benefits for war relief: *JR*, I, No. 4, p. 6, Oct. 3, 1862; *Isr.*, IX, No. 17, p. 131, Oct. 31, 1862.

40. *JR*, III, No. 26, p. 2, Mar. 18, 1864.

41. *Mess.*, XV, No. 9, pp. 66–7, Mar. 4, 1864. See also Myer S. Isaacs' letter, Nov. 19, 1863, to Rev. H. W. Bellows, Pres. of the New York Sanitary Commission, suggesting a policy of non-segregation, Schappes, *op. cit.*, pp. 493–4.

42. *Isr.*, X, No. 24, p. 187, Dec. 11, 1863.

43. *The Story of the First Fifty Years of the Mount Sinai Hospital*, 1852–1902, pp. 1–28.

44. *Isr.*, VII, No. 44, p. 350, May 3, 1861.

45. *Mess.*, XI, No. 9, p. 151, May 23, 1862; No. 23, p. 184, June 20, 1862.

46. *Mess.*, XII, No. 6, p. 46, Aug. 8, 1862; *JR*, I, No. 5, p. 2, Oct. 8, 1862; *Occ.*, XX, No. 8, p. 383, Nov. 1862; No. 10, p. 375, Jan., 1863; No. 11, p. 526, Feb., 1863; *Mess.*, XV, No. 23, p. 182, June 17, 1864; XVI, No. 6, p. 44, Aug. 12, 1864; *Occ.*, XXII, No. 7, p. 331, Oct., 1864; *Mess.*, XVII, No. 2, p. 13, Jan. 13, 1865.

47. *New York Tribune*, quoted in *JR*, I, No. 13, pp. 2–3, Dec. 5, 1862.

48. *Temple Emanu-El Board Minutes* (1854–1862), May, 1862; *Mess.*, XI, No. 19, p. 151, May 23, 1862.

49. *Mess.*, XI, No. 24, p. 194, June 27, 1862; XII, No. 2, p. 14, July 11; No. 3, p. 22, July 18; No. 4, p. 30, July 25; No. 6, p. 4–6, Aug. 8; No. 8, p. 54, Aug. 15; *Anshi Chesed Board Minutes* (1856–1866), pp. 450–l.

50. *Mess.*, XII, No. 3, pp. 20–1, July 18, 1862.

51. *Mess.*, XII, No. 24, p. 187, Dec. 19, 1862.

52. *New York Tribune, op. cit.*

53. *New York Times*, quoted in *JR*, I, No. 3, p. 2, Sept. 24, 1862.

54. *Mess.*, XII, No. 3, pp. 20–1, July 18, 1862.

55. *Mess.*, XVIII, No. 22, p. 169, Dec. 8, 1865.

56. *Isr.*, VIII, No. 15, p. 118, Oct. 11, 1861; No. 28, p. 222, Jan. 10, 1862; IX, No. 33, p. 258, Feb. 20, 1863.

57. *Occ.*, XIX, No. 9, pp. 415–6, Dec. 1861.

58. *Occ.*, XV, No. 9, pp. 412–3, Dec. 1862.

59. *Isr.*, IX, No. 16, p. 123, *Occ.*, 24, 1862; No. 17, p. 134, Oct. 31.

60. *Occ.*, XIX, No. 9, pp. 422–3, Dec. 1861.

61. *Mess.*, IX, No. 25, p. 196, June 28, 1861. The Jews of Washington found difficulty in raising funds to purchase a building to be used as a synagogue. On Feb. 17, 1863, they wrote other congregations, asking for help. This appeal was endorsed by Richard Wallach, Mayor of Washington, a member of the congregation. (Copy of appeal in Mikveh Israel Archives, Philadelphia.) Very few answers were received. *Occ.*, XXI, No. 7, pp. 273–285, Sept. 1863.

62. *Mess.*, XIII, No. 25, p. 211, June 26, 1863.

63. *Mess.*, XVII, No. 8, p. 59, Feb. 24, 1865.

64. Anne Marcovitch, "A History of Temple Beth El," pp. 3, 10.

65. *Savannah Daily Morning News*, Apr. 25, 1862.

66. Barnett R. Brickner, *The Jews of Cincinnati*, p. 165.

67. *Occ.*, XXIII, No. 5, pp. 234–5, Aug. 1865.

68. *Isr.*, XI, No. 20, p. 157, Nov. 11, 1864; XVI, No. 1, p. 6, July 9, 1869.

69. *Baltimore Sunday Herald*, May 24, 1896; *JR*, II, No. 23, p. 2, Aug. 28, 1863. In *The Autograph Collectors' Journal*, I, No. 2 (Jan. 1949), pp. 14–15, Alden S. Condict and Rhea Barzilay print the text of a letter Lincoln wrote to General Meade about the five condemned men: ". . . I understand these are very flagrant cases, and that you deem their punishment as being indispensable to the service. If I am not mistaken in this, please let me know at once that their appeal is denied."

70. *Mess.*, XIV, No. 9, p. 69, Sept. 4, 1863; *JR*, II, No. 24, p. 2, Sept. 4, 1863. Another eye-witness records additional details, although he is probably in error in referring to *two* Jewish men:

> The band of the regiment played the "dead march" while the procession was moving to the scene; and each prisoner, with his hands manacled behind him, walked in the rear of his coffin, which was carried by four soldiers, and placed in front of the grave. Two were Jews, and two were Roman Catholics and the rabbi and priest who accompanied them had a dispute about precedence, and urged their respective claims upon theological tenets but the commander of the provost-guard viewed the subject in a military light, and decided the novel question by allowing the rabbi to walk first, because his faith was the oldest and outranked the other. The last solemn rites were celebrated; each culprit sat upon his coffin; their eyes were bandaged, within a second the bullets from fifty muskets pierced them, and soon five mounds of earth covered their bodies. . . .
> H. N. Blake, *Three Years in the Army of the Potomac*, pp. 238–40.

71. See *Isr.*, XV, No. 22, p. 4, Dec. 4, 1868 for the Cincinnati monument; and *Isr.*, XIV, No. 21, p. 6, Nov. 29, 1867 for one in Chattanooga, Tenn.

72. Clipping from unidentified Richmond paper, George Jacobs Scrapbook.

73. Copy of circular in George Jacobs Scrapbook.

74. Rebekah Kohut, *My Portion*, p. 26.

75. *Occ.*, XXIV, No. 5, p. 239, Aug. 1866.

76. *Isr.*, X, No. 16, p. 122, Oct. 16, 1863; XI, No. 11, p. 124, Oct. 14, 1864.

77. *Isr.*, VIII, No. 35, p. 278, Feb. 28, 1862.

78. See, for instance, General Butler to M. S. Isaacs, Apr. 9, 1864, Aug. 3, 1864, Board of Delegates correspondence files. Nathan Grossmayer secured a pardon for Moses Waldauer, a Jewish deserter who had gone AWOL to visit a dying mother; papers in American Jewish Archives. Other cases will be referred to in later chapters.

79. *Mess.*, XVII, No. 9, p. 171, Mar. 3, 1865; No. 12, p. 98, Mar. 24, 1865; James A. Wax, *History of United Hebrew Congregation*, St. Louis, p. 33; *Shearith Israel Trustees Minutes*, VI, p. 520; Letter, Rev. Henry Kuttner to Leeser, Mar. 13, 1865, Leeser Collection; *Savannah Daily Herald*, Mar. 29, 1865, for the arrival of the *Matzot* in Savannah.

80. *Shearith Israel Trustees Minutes*, VI, p. 523.

81. *JR*, VI, No. 7, p. 2, June 5, 1865; *Occ.*, XXIV, No. 4, pp. 184–5, 189, July 1866.

82. *Ibid.* See also *Mess.*, XVII, No. 5, p. 36, Aug. 4, 1865.

83. *Occ.*, XXVI, No. 1, p. 44, Apr. 1868.

84. *Mess.*, IX, No. 21, p. 165, May 31, 1861.

85. *Ibid.*

86. *Mess.*, IX, No. 22, p. 172, June 7, 1861.

87. *Mess.*, IX, No. 23, pp. 181–2, June 14, 1861.

88. *JR*, I, No. 1, p. 4, Sept. 12, 1862.

89. *Mess.*, XII, No. 15, p. 114, Oct. 18, 1862; *JR*, I, No. 4, p. 4, Oct. 3, 1862.

90. *Ibid.*

91. *JR*, I, No. 22, p. 2, Feb. 6, 1863.

92. *Mess.*, XIII, No. 8, pp. 6–1, Feb. 11, 1863. See *Mess.*, XV, No. 24, p. 190, June 24, 1864, where a wounded Jew in a hospital at Portsmouth, Va., asks for help.

93. *Mess.*, XII, No. 9, p. 67, Aug. 29, 1862.

94. *JR*, I, No. 3, pp. 3–4, Sept. 24, 1862. See also the *Record's* editorial urging Synagogues and Jewish lodges to collect funds to provide substitutes for the Jewish poor, *JR*, VI, No. 3, p. 2, Mar. 31, 1865.

95. *Isr.*, IX, No. 11, p. 83, Sept. 19, 1862; No. 15, pp. 116–7, Oct. 17. The members of the Cincinnati "Allemania Society" organized the Second Company of the Second Ward Home Guard. All of its officers and members were Jewish. A large proportion of the Third Company were also Jewish. These outfits, of course, did not see action. Many of the men involved subsequently enlisted in the Army itself. *Mess.*, IX, No. 17, p. 133, May 3, 1861.

96. *Chicago Tribune* quoted in *Isr.*, IX, No. 8, p. 59, Aug. 22, 1862, and *Sinai*, VII, No. 8, pp. 228–9, Sept. 1862; see also Annals of Ramah Lodge No. 33, pp. 12–3.

97. *Chicago Tribune*, Aug. 16, 1862.

98 *Memphis Daily Avalanche*, May 20, 1861.

99. *Savannah Daily Morning News*, Feb. 23, 1863.

100. S. Wolf, *The American Jew As Patriot, Soldier and Citizen*.

101. *Mess.*, XIX, No. 19, p. 4, May 16, 1866.

102. *JR*, V, No. 15, p. 2, Jan. 6, 1865, story of the presentation of a sword to Captain Isaac Cohen by the company.

6 EXODUS 1862

1. Senator Chandler, quoted in E. Merton Coulter, "Commercial Intercourse with the Confederacy in the Mississippi Valley, 1861–1865," p. 386.

2. Joseph H. Parks, "A Confederate Trade Center Under Federal Occupation: Memphis, 1862 to 1865," p. 295.

3. See, for instance, *WROR*, I, XVII, Pt. II, pp. 123, 130, 155, 158, 163, 357, 368, 400, 522–3, 569, 575–6. A merchant would have had to employ a secretary to keep files of the regulations which were issued by headquarters!

4. General Hurlbut, in *WROR*, I, XVII, Pt. I, p. 230.

5. Coulter, *op. cit.*, pp. 391–2.

6. Sandburg, *op. cit.*, III, p. 15. The President was writing to his friend, Congressman William Kellogg of Illinois, explaining the reason for his refusal to issue cotton-buying permits which Kellogg had requested for certain of his friends.

7. William B. Hesseltine, *Ulysses S. Grant: Politician*, pp. 30–1; Sandburg, *op. cit.*, 11, p. 538.

8. *WROR*, I, LII, Pt. I, p. 331. Dana also mentioned the "vast population of Jews and Yankees" in the Memphis area. His motives in writing this letter to Stanton are not difficult to ascertain. He was dramatizing his reliability as a government-supporter in this hair-raising report in order to return to the good graces of Stanton, who had withdrawn his appointment as Assistant Secretary of War after Dana made a premature announcement of his good fortune.

Dana's own role as a cotton speculator is not very clear. He formed a partnership with Congressman Roscoe Conkling of New York and an obscure cotton expert, procured letters of introduction to Hurlbut, Grant, and Curtis, and proceeded on to Memphis, where he took up residence at "the Gayoso House, at that time the swell hotel of the town and the headquarters of several officers." Dana does not indicate whether he wrote his report to Stanton before or after he tried to capitalize on his political connections. It is entirely possible that he had supposed he would have a clear field in cotton-buying, and that his letter was a way of making the best of a bad bargain. In a post-script, Dana noted that Grant had been shown the letter and agreed "with all my statements and suggestions [about the Government's taking over the cotton business itself], except that imputing corruption to every officer, which of course I did not intend to be taken literally." Charles A. Dana, *Recollections of the Civil War With the Leaders at Washington and in the Field in the Sixties*, pp. 16–21.

9. *WROR*, I. XVII. Pt. 11. p. 424.

10. Told by Mrs. William Fineshriber of Philadelphia.

11. Speech by Senator Powell, Jan. 9, 1863, *Congressional Globe*, 37th Congress, 3rd Session, Pt. I, pp. 245–6; *New York Times*, Jan. 3, 1863.

12. There were, of course, many Jews in the mid-western regiments which took part in the Tennessee-Mississippi campaigns. Colonel Marcus M. Spiegel of the 120th Ohio Infantry Regiment was probably the highest ranking Jewish officer in the Department. He was wounded at Vicksburg only a few weeks after The Order was issued, rejoined his regiment over a doctor's protest, and died in action at Snaggy Point, La., in 1864. It is said that he was about to be promoted to Brigadier-General at the time of his death. *Occ.*, XX, No. 1, pp. 41–2, Apr. 1863; Simon Wolf, *The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier and Citizen*, p. 340.

Another young Jew in the Department, Lieut. Jacob C. Cohen of the 27th Ohio Infantry, had a literary bent which he indulged at a moment's notice. From August 1, 1862 to July 16, 1863, he wrote a number of articles for the *Messenger* describing the Tennessee and Mississippi campaigns from the viewpoint of a soldier who was bored to tears between battles, eager to meet people, happy when battles were ended. He described life at Corinth, Holly Springs, and Oxford, spoke of the speculators and of "the vast cotton operations which have disgraced our management of the conquered territory, and enriched a class of speculators generally of doubtful loyalty." *Mess.*, XIII, No. 16, p. 135, Apr. 24, 1863.

According to Cohen (*Mess.*, XIII, No. 23, p. 195, June 12, 1863), there were only about one thousand Jews, men, women and children in Memphis. They supported "two synagogues, three charitable societies, two clubs, besides a literary society, etc." These organizations had existed before the war. Apparently Cohen was not conscious of the flood of Jews supposed to have been swept into Memphis with its capture.

Cohen made no mention of The Order at the time of its promulgation. Later on, he contributed an amusing group of puns to entertain the *Messenger's* readers:

> . . . it is not strange that your correspondent should attempt to find something new to relieve the *ennui* which was making him a "used-up man." Consequently I honored the

> august U. S. Grant, commanding this department, with an application for a leave of absence. In a few weeks it came back with an ominous endorsement in Arnold's carmine, "not granted." I was not to be discomfited so easily, taking it for *Granted* that *Grant* would not *Grant* me a leave. I consequently took a circuitous path, avoided red-tape, obtained a leave (how, it is nobody's business), and in twelve hours thereafter one of U. S. Grant's "as a class" friends was speeding homeward.

Mess., XIII, No. 16, p. 135, Apr. 24, 1863.

After his discharge from the Army because of physical disability, Cohen remained in Memphis and became Assistant Adjutant General and Chief of Staff of Memphis' "Enrolled Militia." *Mess.*, XV, No. 6, pp. 42–3, Feb. 12, 1864.

13. From an interview with one of these men in *JR*, I, No. 19, p. 2, Jan. 16, 1863.

14. Communicated to Wise from Memphis by the men involved. *Isr.*, IX, No. 26, p. 202, Jan. 2, 1863.

In 1868, during the election revival of the episode, it was asserted that no Jews had actually been harmed. A Mr. A. Z. Rosenthal, then a notary public in Louisville, made a deposition swearing that he had been one of the deportees. *Louisville Jewish Sentinel*, June 12, 1868.

15. *WROR*, *op. cit.*, p. 506.

16. See, for instance, *Memphis Daily Bulletin*, Jan. 6, 1863, which published The Order and Kaskel's letter immediately following the Emancipation Proclamation.

The "storm" took many forms: delegations of Jewish notables from various cities; copies of the Jewish periodicals devoted almost exclusively to a consideration of The Order, and which were sent by their editors to the President, the War Department, and various Congressmen, letters and resolutions to the President from Jewish organizations and individuals.

The Board of Delegates of American Israelites was active, but played no essential role in having The Order rescinded. Kaskel had achieved his purpose before the Board even heard of The Order; Wise and the Western delegations were already in Washington. When the executive committee of the Board met, then, on Jan. 8, it was observing a ritual rather than considering an urgent problem. The resolutions which were sent to Lincoln (Nos. 21089–90, 21159 of the Robert Todd Lincoln Collection; *JR*, I, No. 19, p. 4, Jan. 16, 1863), protesting The Order and thanking him for his prompt action in rescinding it, reinforced Lincoln's supposition that the Jews were united in objecting to it; but the persons most intimately affected by The Order actually were responsible for the action which was taken by the President.

Wise naturally took up the cudgels against the Board in connection with the Grant affair. Events in Washington had proved to him, he said, that the Board was unnecessary; and their resolution of thanks, in the name of the Jews, was a misrepresentation of their position in Jewish life. And beyond that, Halleck deserved no thanks! *Isr.*, IX, No. 31, p. 244, Feb. 6, 1863.

The Jewish Messenger, on the other hand, closely allied with the Board, used the Grant case as an argument for strong support of the Board. If Washington was to be deluged by rabbis, synagogues, and laymen "with reams of foolscap, detailing the individual sentiments of a thousand or more independent, petty communities on this or that question, can we wonder that the officers of Government pay no attention to this mass of papers and signatures?" A strong, united American Jewry was needed to protect the Jewish name—"Gen. Grant would never have issued an order expelling 'all Jews' from his Department, if he were conscious that the Jews were an influential, a powerful community. . . had individuals remained at home and left it to a central organization properly sustained to represent the general body, the offending General might have been sternly reprimanded, perhaps dismissed." *Mess.*, XIII, No. 3, p. 20, Jan. 16, 1863.

17. Solomons was a close friend of Henry Hart, President of the Board of Delegates, and, naturally, Hart wired him for exact information on the status of The Order. See the exchange of telegrams and letters in the Board of Delegates files.

18. The details of Kaskel's activities and experiences in Washington are taken from *Isr.*, IX, No. 28, p. 218, Jan. 16, 1863, and from Markens, *op. cit.*, pp. 117–9.

19. *WROR, op. cit.*, p. 530. Emphasis added.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 544

21. *WROR*, I, XXIV, Pt. I, p. 9.

22. No. 21003 of the Robert Todd Lincoln Collection. Emphasis added. Bates might well be listed in the next chapter as one of those high officials who were victims of Judaeophobia. The B'nai B'rith resolution had been sent to him by Isidor Bush, an active Republican in St. Louis, who apparently thought Bates liked him: Bush signed his covering letter "with the highest esteem and true affection." In his note forwarding the resolution and letter to Lincoln, Bates also commented, "The writer of the within letter, *tho' a Jew*, is a man of personal respectability in St. Louis, & a member of the State convention." (Emphasis added.) Bates was an active Presbyterian; perhaps a religious prejudice moved him to dislike Jews. An entry in his diary for Mar. 17, 1862, refers to a recently published document proving that David (Levy) Yulee, Senator from Florida, had been involved in a "conspiracy of senators and others, to dissolve the union." Bates comments:

> That treacherous Jew, Yulee, has, for months back, been trying to "ly [*sic.*] low and keep dark [.]" But this letter, if it be genuine, spoils his disguise.

(Editorial marks by Howard K. Beale, editor, *The Diary of Edward Bates, 1859–1866*, p. 243.)

23. *Isr., op. cit.* Strauss, nowhere mentioned in the published reports, told Prof. Selig Adler of the University of Buffalo, that he, together with other Baltimoreans, had taken the short trip to Washington. It is entirely possible that representatives from other cities did the same.

24. *Isr.*, IX, No. 28, p. 218, Jan. 16, 1863. The previous day Washburne had proven himself even more staunchly Grant's defender, if in less conspicuous a manner. He had written to the President, urging him not to revoke The Order:

> House of Reps.
> Jany. 6, 1863.
>
> Mr. Lincoln:
>
> I see a report that you have revoked Grant's order touching the Jews.—I hope not. I consider it the wisest order yet made by a military command, and from my own personal observation, I believe it was necessary. As the friend of that distinguished soldier, Genl. Grant, I want to be heard before the final order of revocation goes out, if it be contemplated to issue such an order. There are two sides to this question.
>
> Truly yrs.
> E. B. Washburne.

(Robert Todd Lincoln Collection, Nos. 21026–7)

Washburne himself was not utterly free from suspicion as a speculator and investor in war commodities. See *Letters from Lloyd Lewis*, pp. 22, 27.

25. *Congressional Globe*, 37th Congress, 3rd Session, Pt. I, p. 184.

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 245–6.

27. Cited in *JR*, I, No. 19, p. 2, Jan. 16, 1863.

28. Cited in *Occ.*, XX, No. 11, pp. 491–3, Feb. 1863.

29. *Washington Star*, Jan. 7. 1863; *Washington Chronicle*, Jan. 8, 1863.

30. *New York Times*, Jan. 18, 1863.

31. *Mess.*, XIII, No. 3, p. 20, Jan. 16, 1863.

32. *Occ.*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 497, 501–2.

33. *Cincinnati Commercial*, Jan. 6, 1863; *cf. Isr.*, XV, No. 5, p. 4, Aug. 7, 1868, for a citation of the *Commercial's* defense of The Order at the time of the 1868 election.

34. *Cincinnati Enquirer*, Jan. 5, 6, 1863.

35. Both quoted in *Isr.*, IX, No. 27, p. 210, Jan. 9, 1863.

36. The opinions condensed into the next paragraphs are to be found in *Occ.*, *Isr.*, *Mess.*, and *JR*, for the various issues of Jan. and Feb. 1863.

37. *JR*, I, No. 20, p. 2, Jan. 23, 1863.

38. *Isr.*, IX, No. 34, p. 268, Feb. 27, 1863.

39. *Occ.*, *op. cit.*, p. 493.

40. *Mess.*, XIII, No. 3, p. 20, Jan. 16, 1863.

41. Because the Know-Nothing Party never took any position in reference to Jews, but concentrated on Catholics and foreigners, Jews were perfectly free, if they too were prejudiced, to support that party. Congressman Lewis C. Levin of Philadelphia, a national Know-Nothing spokesman, delivered several inflammatory speeches in Congress against Catholics and in praise of the Native American party. (*Congressional Globe*, 29th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 46–50, 63; 30th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 418–421.)

Congressman Philip Phillips of Mobile, on the other hand, was a staunch opponent of the Know-Nothing Party. A long article which he wrote against "Religious Proscription of Catholics," published in the *Mobile Register*, was a challenging analysis of the nature of prejudice; it was widely reprinted in the Jewish press. *Occ.*, XIII, No. 6, pp. 274–81, Sept., 1855; *Asm.*, XII, No. 15, July 27, 1855. Leeser praised the article but warned Jews against taking part in politics *as Jews*; the person who sent the article in to the *Asmonean*, on the other hand, urged a united Jewish opposition to the Know-Nothing Party.

It was ironic that Congressman Levin's wife and son should have been converted to Catholicism after his death. *American Catholic Historical Researches*, VII (1911), p. 189, cited in Ray A. Billington, *The Protestant Crusade, 1800–1860*, p. 217, the authoritative study of anti-Catholic prejudice during those years.

42. *Corinth* (Miss.) *Caucasian*, July 9, 1868, referred to in *PAJHS*, No. 34, p. 275; *Quincy* (Ill.) *Herald* quoted in *New York Times*, Oct. 13, 1868; *Chicago Tribune*, Sept. 2, 1868 (Lewis Mss.); *Illinois Staatszeitung*, quoted in *HL*, XII, No. 15, p. 2, July 17, 1868; *Kansas City* (Mo.) *Evening Bulletin*, quoted in *Isr.*, XIV, No. 39, p. 4, Apr. 3, 1868; *London Jewish Chronicle*, Sept. 6, 1872. An unidentified Richmond, Va., paper published an article entitled "A Contrast—Washington and Grant to the Hebrews," which included the following documents: The Order, the well-known letter of the Jewish congregations of Phila., New York, Charleston and Richmond to George Washington, and Washington's answer, which begins with the sentence, "The liberality of sentiment toward each other which marks every political and religious denomination of men in this country, stands unparalleled in the history of nations;" the

intention of the editor was clear. Clipping in the George Jacobs Scrapbook. Articles in the *New York Times* and *Herald*, and in the Jewish periodicals, which were used as an index to national sentiment, refer to editors' and correspondents' comments on the Grant Order in newspapers in Chicago, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Memphis, Springfield, and Clayton, Ill., Louisville, Newburg, Ind., Washington, and Boston. It was, indeed, *a cause célèbre*, and probably placed the Jews of America in a stronger limelight than ever before. The public discussion in 1863 was minor compared to that in 1868. There were many Jews who, like Adolph Moses of Quincy, regretted deeply the fact that "our people . . . should be so prominently paraded in this campaign;" *New York Times*, Nov. 30, 1868, quoting a letter written Sept. 3, 1868. The Order was even mentioned in the Rev. J. P. Neuman's eulogy of Grant at the grave! The Methodist pastor said that Grant had not written The Order, and that the deceased was not prejudiced against the Jews. *Phila. Press*, Aug. 5, 1885 (Lewis Mss.)

43. Simon Wolf, *The Presidents I Have Known*, pp. 65–6; *New York Herald*, June 23, 1868. The Rawlins letter was addressed to Lewis N. Dembitz of Louisville, Ky., who had voted for the nomination of Lincoln at the Republican National Convention in Chicago in 1860. Dembitz, the uncle of Louis Dembitz Brandeis, was a devoted and learned Jew, and the author of *Services in Synagogue and Home*, a guide to Jewish ritual. Markens, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

44. *New York Times*, Nov. 30, 1868.

45. *Boston Post* cited in Wolf, *op. cit.*, pp. 67–70; clippings in the George Jacobs Scrapbook. Ezekiel's letter was dated July 29, 1868, and the Union League warning, Aug. 24, 1868.

46. *Mess.*, quoted in *London Jewish Chronicle* , Sept. 6, 1872; *HL*, XII, No. 22, p. 4, Sept. 4, 1868; *Isr.*, XIV, No. 50, p. 4, June 19, 1868.

47. *HL*, XII, No. 21, p. 4, Aug. 28, 1868; *New York Times*, July 16, 1868; *Isr.*, XV, No. 5, p. 5, Aug. 7, 1868; unidentified clipping in the Moss Scrapbook. Reference to the last section of this chapter will give further justification for the attitude of the Tennessee Jews. Their right to urge Grant's defeat is unquestionable. Indeed, Jewish communities all over the country demonstrated a remarkable restraint in not throwing caution and party allegiances to the winds and waging a campaign "as a bloc" against Grant. The faith in Grant's good will evinced by those who voted the Republican ticket was admirable; fortunately the General did not disappoint them.

48. *HL*, XII, No. 22, p. 4, Sept. 4, 1868. See *Isr.*, XV, No. 5, p. 5, Aug. 7, 1868, for the proposal that such a meeting be organized in Cincinnati—Wise opposed it.

49. *New York Times*, Oct. 13, and Nov. 30, 1868.

50. An undated clipping in Judge Cohen's Scrapbook.

51. *New York Herald*, Sept. 1, 1868; also *Chicago Tribune*, Aug. 29, 1868 (Lewis Mss.).

52. Wolf, *op. cit.*, 67–70. Emphasis added. Wolf was so fond of the General that his next son, born in 1869, was given the name of Adolph Grant. Wolf was not the only Republican Jew who turned the attack against his own co-religionists. Another, writing to the *Dayton* (Ohio) *Journal*, said, "There are men of my faith who . . . deserve nothing better than Order No. 11." Clipping in the Moss Scrapbook.

53. Letter to the *Cincinnati Commercial*, reprinted in the *New York Herald*, Oct. 23, 1868.

54. Letter dated Oct. 15, 1868, one of a collection of Eckstein papers loaned to the writer by Mr. Edmond Uhry of N. Y., through the courtesy of Rabbi Louis I. Newman and Mr. Jeremy Newman. Eckstein and Geary had formed a cordial friendship before the war and maintained a desultory correspondence while Geary was in the Army and during his incumbency at Harrisburg. On May 6, 1868, Geary wrote Eckstein:

> ... It is a matter of regret to find that there are any difficulties in your way which will prevent your giving your usual ardent support to the nominee of the Republican Party. I hope, however, that a satisfactory solution of this matter may be made prior to the election by the General himself.
>
> As for my own part I always found the class of citizens to which you refer, to be *my* ardent supporters, simply because I always give them even-handed justice ...

In the Oct. 15 letter, the portion relating to The Order reads:

> I think you deserve the most exalted need of praise for bringing about an amicable understanding between the Israelites and General Grant, and I sincerely hope it may result to your advantage. I think I deserve a small portion also, but of course this is confidential, but I cannot help feeling somewhat gratified with a long career, in which a spot cannot be pointed out where I have ever sanctioned the prosecution of any-one on account of his religious views—nor will I ever do so.

Geary evidently wanted Eckstein to understand that he, also, condemned Grant for issuing The Order, but that political considerations prevented his speaking out frankly.

On Aug. 19, 1869, Geary wrote Eckstein of his efforts to secure an office for him:

> ... I have to state that I have done all in my power with the authorities at Washington, D. C., to have them do justice to you. What effects may be produced, I cannot at present inform you, but I will continue to interest myself in your behalf and keep you informed ...

55. *Isr.*, IX, No. 30, p. 236, Jan. 30, 1863; XIV, No. 50, p. 4, June 19, 1868.
56. DuBois Papers.
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Ibid., Isr.*, IX, No. 25, p. 196, Dec. 26, 1862; *Chicago Tribune*, Dec. 18, 1862.
59. *Ibid.*
60. Quoted in *JR*, I, No. 21, p. 2, Jan. 30, 1863
61. It is entirely possible that this was not written by Eckstein, but copied out by hand from a deposition which General Grant showed him when they had their conference in Covington, Ky. If Eckstein wrote it, why should he not have published it, rather than the vague story of satisfactory explanations which he received from Grant? Indeed if he had known the reason all along and believed Grant to be innocent of any intention to harm the Jews, why had he written to Geary of his inability or reluctance to support Grant? A letter from Grant, dated Aug. 24,1868, tells Eckstein, in part:

> ... Your determination relative to the publication, or rather nonpublication, of the substance of our conversation, suits me very well. Although I dislike to see what I say in conversation printed, yet, in this case, I could not have objected if you had deemed it advisable ...

Was Grant telling Eckstein to publish the "substance of our conversation," which he never did do? Or was he implying that reference to the spoken word was satisfactory, but that he would not permit him to publish any of the documents he had given him to read? These reservations cast a great deal of doubt on the nature of the paper found in Eckstein's files. If it were the only statement of its kind, it would not be very conclusive. But even without it, the *Cincinnati Commercial* correspondent and Rawlins offer sufficient evidence to clarify the episode.

62. *New York Herald*, June 23, 1868. It is typical of the defense of Grant that Rawlins should misrepresent an essential phase of The Order. Rawlins says very glibly, ". . . leaving all persons not justly amenable to its terms to be relieved on their individual application . . ." But there was no such provision in The Order; to the contrary, it expressly forbade this: "No passes will be given these people to visit headquarters for the purpose of making personal application for trade permits." Eckstein, also, or rather the document found in his papers, glosses over this strict provision which made any appeal by a Jew impossible. When Silberman of Chicago tried to telegraph headquarters, he was arrested! This was, indeed, one of the most damning features of The Order: Jews were to be so circumscribed and hemmed in that they could never secure trading permits. There was to be *no* appeal.

63. Washburne Mss., Library of Congress. This letter is referred to in *Letters from Lloyd Lewis*, p. 24. That memorial volume, the tribute of his publishers to the eminent historian who had hoped to write a complete biography of Grant, led the present writer to request permission from Mrs. Lewis to examine her late husband's files on Grant and the Jews. Eager to have the fruits of her husband's research used by other students, she very generously forwarded all pertinent material. Such data drawn from the Lewis Mss. is gratefully acknowledged.

The elder Grant's testimony ought to serve as an effective rebuttal of another story of the origin of General Order No. 11, cited in the Lewis Mss. from a document in Mr. Lewis' possession which he referred to as "Cadwallader":

> The exciting cause which led to its issuance was this:—While his headquarters were at Oxford, Miss. he was surprised by a sudden visit from his father then living at Covington or Newport, Ky. The general was glad to see him; showed him every possible attention; and enjoyed his society for a few days or two without unpleasant interruption. But several Cincinnati gentlemen of Hebrew persuasion soon appeared and notably Mr. Mack of the wealthy firm of Mack Bros. and posed as the personal friends of "Uncle Jesse." These the general also treated handsomely for his father's sake until he learned the real object of their visit to obtain special permits and privileges to buy and ship cotton. It seems that playing upon "Uncle Jesse's" cupidity, these men had entered into a partnership with him for that purpose, they agreeing to furnish all the capital needed, and he to obtain the trade permit from his son Gen. Grant. The impudence of these mercenaries was of course surprising but the most astonishing feature of the whole transaction was that the father could have been so ignorant concerning his own son. The general's anger was bitter and malignant towards these men and greatly intensified by the mortification he felt at their having entrapped his old father into such an unworthy undertaking. The first train for the north bore them swiftly homeward, accompanied by "Uncle Jesse" with a stupendous flea in his ear. This was his last visit to the Army. The order expelling all "Jews" from his department was issued immediately . . .

From his own testimony, Jesse Grant did not return home until January 5, 1863, when The Order had already been revoked; he could not, then, have been so summarily dismissed from Oxford by his son. Nor, indeed, as we shall see, was this the first ruling regarding the Jews which General Grant issued—it could hardly be true, therefore, that this alleged "deal" with which the Cincinnati Jews enticed Jesse Grant was the major factor which induced the General to issue General Order No. 11. Indeed, it strikes one as being a typical barracks' story, passed on from one soldier to another as "the real, inside story." Despite the fact that his father's attempts to make fortunes for himself during the war were gossiped about from one end of the country to the other, the story does such violence to the General's integrity, and all other evidence is so strongly opposed to it, that we must perforce reject it out of hand as an unfounded rumor.

64. *The New York World*, Aug. 18, 1863, cited in Lewis Mss., and *Letters from Lloyd Lewis*, p. 21. The *World* reporter's reference to the smuggling Jews was of a piece with reams of such material written during this period. Rarely citing names or other evidence, it was easy to dramatize crimes with the "Jewish" label.

65. There was yet another witness, referred to in the Lewis Mss.—the Rev. J. P. Neuman, who preached the Grant eulogy. He said: "The order issued during the war excluding certain Jewish traders from a given military district, did not originate with him, but came from higher authority and was not against the religion of the Jews . . ." (*Philadelphia Press*, Aug. 5, 1885). Mr. Lewis, however, considered Neuman to be poor authority for anything: "But Neuman was untrustworthy. Sherman scoffed at his funeral sermon proving Grant a saint." *Letters from Lloyd Lewis*, p. 32.

66. After this was written, the present writer discovered that Lloyd Lewis had reached the same conclusion. Letter, July 8, 1946, Lewis to Eisenschiml, Lewis Mss; *Letters from Lloyd Lewis*, p. 25.

67. *WROR*, I, XVII, Pt. II, pp. 421–2. Emphasis added. Isaac M. Wise also believed that The Order originated in the War Dept., and argued that a coterie of cotton speculators around Stanton inspired Grant to take steps against Jewish traders who were their strongest competitors. *Isr.*, XV, No. 22, p. 4, Dec. 4, 1868.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 163. Emphasis added.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 337. Emphasis added.

70. *New York Times*, Nov. 30, 1868. The letter was written Sept. 14, 1868. Emphasis added.

In an interview which Grant gave to Rabbi E. B. M. Browne at Long Branch on August 27, 1875, he said:

> . . . I think the Jew lives longer because he loves his life more. It is certain that the Jew takes no risk of life and limb, while even in the many railroad accidents Jews, though much more given to traveling, are rarely injured. And yet I have found Jewish soldiers among the bravest of the brave. The Jew risks his life only to show his patriotism and then he is fearless. The Jewish soldiers, as stated, I have found wonderfully courageous in our Army and in the Rebel lines as well. But there were army followers among us. It happened one day, that a number of complaints reached me and in each case it was a Jew and I gave the order excusing the Jewish traders. You know that during war times these nice distinctions were disregarded. We had no time to handle things with kid gloves. But it was no ill-feeling or a want of good-feeling towards the Jews. If such complaints would have been lodged against a dozen men each of whom wore a white cravat, a black broadcloth suit, beaver or gold spectacles, I should probably have issued a similar order against men so dressed . . . I have intimate friends among the Jews. I have appointed more Jews than any of my predecessors. At my father's house in Covington you could find quite often in social intercourse Jews of Cincinnati. Cincinnati has really quite a number of very intelligent Jews. . . .

71. Letter to the *Chicago Times*, quoted in *Isr.*, XIV, No. 49, June 12, 1868.

72. *In Memoriam: Jesse Seligman*, pp. 10, 20. See interview with Jesse Seligman on his friendship with Grant, *Philadelphia Press*, July 27, 1885. The Freund family of St. Louis preserves recollections of another Jew whom Grant liked, their ancestor, a baker in the St. Louis area, to whom Grant sold wood in his days as a farmer, and to whom he gave a contract for bread after the outbreak of war.

73. *UJE*, IX, p. 639; Simon Wolf, *The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier and Citizen*, pp. 164–70.

74. *DAB*, XVI, p. 572.

75. Simon Wolf, *The Presidents I Have Known*, pp. 63–98. One of the quaintest stories Wolf tells is this:

> One day I received a letter from a Jew in Jerusalem, who wrote me in jargon [Yiddish], which Henry Gersony, lately deceased, managed to decipher, and the request was that I should see the "King of the United States" and bring to his attention the fact that he, the Jew of Jerusalem, had a daughter whom he wished to be married, and he wanted to do the "King of the United States" the honor to have him contribute to her dowry. The request was so amusing that I stated it to the President, and he said, "Do you think this man is in earnest?" and I said, "None more so," and he promptly gave me a check for $25, which I forwarded to my correspondent. Subsequently I received a letter of thanks in Hebrew, also the portrait of General Grant in Hebrew letters, which I believe, will be found among the other Grant treasures on exhibition in the National Museum. (p. 94.)

76. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

77. Cyrus Adler and A. M. Margalith, *With Firmness in the Right: American Diplomatic Action Affecting Jews, 1840–1945*, pp. 100–11, 174–6.

78. *Ibid.*, pp. 100–1. Grant undoubtedly made this appointment out of a desire to placate Jewish opinion. Correspondence between Simon Wolf and Hamilton Fish, Grant's Secretary of State, indicates that Fish was extremely dubious about the propriety of the appointment. Wolf (not Peixotto) released the Grant letter quoted in the text to the press. Fish was so infuriated by its publication that he appears to have considered recalling Peixotto immediately. Wolf also disapproved—believing it to be "very wrong to ask our Government to aid and assist us as Jews. As American citizens we are entitled and of right can ask, but nothing incompatible with usage or International Law." Peixotto had apparently secured the backing of Joseph Seligman, Grant's close friend. and other prominent personages. The entire background of the Peixotto mission requires clarification. Letters in Fish Papers: Wolf to Peixotto, June 14, 1870; Wolf to Fish, Dec. 21, 1870; Peixotto to Seligman, Jan. 4, 1871; Fish to Wolf, Jan. 14, 1871.

The influence of internal political affairs on American foreign policy is well demonstrated by the letter which Eugene Schuyler, Chargé d'Affaires at Moscow, wrote to Fish on Sept. 29, 1872, accompanying the first of many consular reports on the Jewish status in Russia. Schuyler said to Fish that he was sending the report because "I have seen it stated that the Jews in the United States have shown some opposition to the reelection of President Grant, and I thought it might have some effect on them if the Government gave them another proof of the interest they voice in their welfare . . . I hope it will not arrive too late to be of service . . ." Schuyler's report is digested in Adler and Margalith, *op. cit.*, pp. 174–5.

79. *WROR*, III, II, p. 350.

80. *WROR*, I, XXIV, Pt. III, p. 119.

81. *WROR*, I, XVII, Pt. II, pp. 140–1. Emphasis added. See also *Home Letters of General Sherman*, pp. 229–30, 232, for further references to Jews as smugglers and profiteers.

82. *WROR*, III, II, p. 349.

83. *WROR*, III, II, p. 350.

84. *Home Letters of General Sherman*, p. 155. *Cf.* p. 136 for a letter which gives ample demonstration of the fact that he knew who Jews were and that he did not use the word as an epithet instead of a designative term.

On Nov. 17, 1862, Sherman wrote a letter to F. G. Pratt of Memphis, answering some of Pratt's suggestions about financial problems in the city. He concluded the letter, "Till then [when the Confederacy would have enough of war], let Union men feel confident in their real strength, and determination of our Government, and despise the street talk of Jews and secessionists." See *The American Hebrew*, Vol. 63, No. 7, p. 197, June 17, 1898, for Simon Wolf's belief that Sherman's reports prompted Grant to issue The Order.

The *Memphis Daily Bulletin* was far more fair-minded when it said, on Nov. 16, 1862, that "while we have many of this class of citizens [Jews] who are as loyal as our president himself, there are others who, for the sake of gain, will trade, and barter, and dicker with the enemies of the Government." The same words could well have characterized all of the citizens of Memphis.

85. Sam Shankman, *The Peres Family*, pp. 6–8.

86. *New York Journal of Commerce*, quoted in *Mess.*, XVIII, No. 12, p. 90, Sept. 20, 1865; *UJE*, VII, pp. 486–7.

87. For a good description of Irving Block, as well as of the type of military dishonesty which victimized Meyer, see S. McIlwaine, *Memphis Down in Dixie*, pp. 128–30.

88. Isaac A. Meyer, *My Life, Travels, and Adventures by Land and Sea*. The *Memphis Daily Bulletin*, Oct. 25, 26, 1862, tells the story of Isaac Levy who accused the Provost Marshall and an Army detective of arresting him for smuggling and then suggesting that he bribe them to obtain his liberty. The story was denied immediately, but such stories were current during the military occupation of Memphis.

89. Felsenthal reported to Einhorn that Tuska had denounced *all* the Northern Jews who came to Memphis, but after a long interchange of notes from Tuska and editorials by Einhorn, Tuska still insisted that he was not a secessionist, but had only referred to a few Jews who were guilty of illegal activities. *Sinai*, VII, pp. 199, 227, 257, 284; letter, Einhorn to Felsenthal, Sept. 3, 1862, American Jewish Archives.

90. Letter, Feb. 17, 1863, Leeser Collection.

91. *Occ.*, XX, No. 11, p. 487, Feb., 1863.

92. David Einhorn, *War with Amalek*, pp. 11–2.

93. This and other volumes cited are found in the *Records of the War Dept., Office of the Adjutant General.* Names are not cited because the War Department officials in charge of the records believed that embarrassment might result for descendants of the persons involved and refused to permit the writer to obtain photostatic copies of the pertinent pages. The persons themselves are unimportant; in this case, their religion was the important point. While the writer was turning pages in these aging records, he wondered how the Generals had been able to identify Jews so easily. Many of the names regarded as Jewish for the purposes of this study could just as well have been non-Jewish German names: Gunst, Brosman, Fisher, Buckhart, Schwartz, Finde, Brandenburg, Bloom, Kichen. The Loebs, Lazarus', Levys, and Wolffs were undoubtedly Jewish.

It is important to note that these and other records cited, with one exception, are localized in Memphis, which was not part of the Department of the Tennessee and was not included in the area covered by General Order No. Eleven. Court-martial records for the immediate area, Corinth, Oxford and Holly Springs, Miss., could not be discovered in the National Archives; they are probably irretrievably lost. But it is the author's conviction that the Memphis records are as dependable an index as the lost records would be, to Jewish malefaction in the area; they are intimately related, in addition, as background for the Sherman dispatches to Grant, which undoubtedly had a strong indirect influence on Grant's decision to issue The Order. For further light on Jewish business activities and law-breaking in Memphis, see James A. Wax, *The Jews of Memphis*, 186–1865, pp. 18–41.

94. Pp. 13, 18, 21.

95. Unfortunately an exhaustive study of the corruption in cotton-buying and smuggling in the Mississippi-Tennessee area has not yet been made. The results of such a study would be of great service in assisting us to determine the relative importance of the role of Jews. In 1863, however, a Military Court of Inquiry sat in St. Louis for five weeks, investigating the connivance of military officers in cotton-buying scandals. Evidence was uncovered which indicated that officers all the way up to the rank of colonel and general were implicated in the traffic, risking soldiers' lives to capture cotton stores, defrauding the Government of large sums of money obtained for confiscated cotton, and utilizing government transportation for the shipment of the merchandise. Among the hundreds of names of officers and civilians mentioned in the testimony (as reported in the columns of the *St. Louis Democrat*, Mar. 14–Apr. 23), none appears to be Jewish; two men whose names were not given, however, were referred to as Jews:

1) On the twelfth day of hearings, Apr. 2, 1863, Capt. William Finkler accused General Willis A. Gorman of complicity in cotton-trading, and referred to a Jew as his partner:

> My moral belief is, that General Gorman was interested in some cotton operations. On the 11th of February last the steamer Carl went down the river to Friars' Point and Yazoo Pass, and was absent three days. The captain reported to me when he came back that he had on board twenty-eight bales and two sacks of cotton, taken by order of General Gorman. Upon the arrival of the cotton at Helena I seized it. The General (Gorman) wanted me to order this cotton ashore—that he knew the owner. I told him I would not do it; that I had told them before that the use of Government steamers for private purposes was wrong, and I could not consent to it. He told me he had an order from the Secretary of War. I asked him to send me the order. He sent me his Aid, ordering me verbally to deliver to a Jew, who came with the Aid, the cotton I seized. I refused and was arrested and released from duty by General Gorman. General Gorman sent the cotton to Memphis, where it was seized and sold for the benefit of the Government . . . (*St. Louis Democrat*, Apr. 3, 1863).

2) On the nineteenth day of testimony, Apr. 10, 1863, Capt. J. H. Burnham was giving the details of a military expedition sent out by Col. C. E. Hovey, for the express purpose of securing cotton:

> Our company went down [on the 28th of July, 1862] in charge of Capt. Potter to Island 62 and brought up what was estimated at about 12 bales of cotton. It was taken from a man who passed for a Union man. He came up with us when we brought the cotton. He was a foreigner—a Jew, I think. I understood he had sent for us to come after the cotton . . . (*St. Louis Democrat*, Apr. 11, 1863).

It is interesting to note that in both cases high-ranking non-Jewish officers shared the guilt with Jews (if indeed the men in question were Jews).

The word "Jew" is mentioned no other time in the reams of testimony reported in the *St. Louis Democrat*, although two St. Louis Jews were called as witnesses to report on their transactions. One was M. Friede (testified on Apr. 10) who had gone to Helena and purchased cotton from civilians on permits obtained from Generals Curtis and Steele; Friede had no evidence to offer on illegal activities by military officers. The other Jew, Charles Taussig (testified on Apr. 14) reported that his firm, Taussig, Ansel and Co., had bought cotton in many places throughout the area on legal permits, and that he would submit to the court the names of persons he believed to be in possession of data about cotton-buying by army officers. Friede and Taussig were the only Jews called to the stand—were they too included in the "swarms of Jews" of whom Sherman complained? Friede was a St. Louis delegate to the Missouri state legislature, highly regarded by his fellow representatives (see reports of his speeches in *Isr.*, VII, No. 33, p. 202, Feb. 15, 1861; No. 36, p. 285, Mar. 8, 1861; *Sinai,* VI, No. 3, pp. 92–6, Apr., 1861). Taussig was a member of a very respectable family of German Jews in St. Louis, whose integrity and contribution to civic causes were unquestionable (see *The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz,* II, p. 40). Here, again, when specific persons are involved, rather than generalizations, the dishonesty of all Jews engaged in cotton-trading is not so certain as Grant and Sherman appear to have thought.

96. Pp. 34, 95.

97. P. 44.

98. Pp. 359–60.

99. P. 348.

100. Pp. 1, 26, 136–7.

101. *WROR*, I, XXXI, Pt. III, pp. 289–90. This order was first printed in the *Memphis Daily Bulletin* on Nov. 30, 1863, and appeared continuously until December 23. During this period, Loeb and Bros., one of the blacklisted firms, continued to advertise military clothing for sale, on the basis of "a special license from headquarters." *Ibid.*, Dec. 10, 18, 1863.

102. *Isr.*, X, No. 24, p. 188, Dec. 11, 1863.

103. A quite blatant example of the effect of prejudice is to be found in a dispatch from Brigadier General L. F. Ross to Major General John A. McClernand, from Bolivar, Tenn., July 25, 1862:

> The cotton speculators are quite clamorous for aid in getting their cotton away from Middlebury, Hickory Valley, &c., and offer to pay liberally for the service. I think I can bring it away with safety, and make it pay for the Government. As some of the Jew owners have as good as stolen the cotton from the planters, I have no conscientious scruples in making them pay liberally for getting it away. *WROR*, I, XVII, Pt. 11, p. 120.

104. *Cincinnati Enquirer*, Jan. 5, 1863.

105. *Isr.,* IX, No. 26, p. 202, Jan. 2, 1863. See also *Isr.,* XV, No. 5, p. 4, Aug. 7, 1868, for Wise's conviction that "The noise against the Jews at that time was a stratagem to cover the huge swindles practised on Uncle Sam's purse."

7 AMERICAN JUDAEOPHOBIA

1. See the excellent chapter on "Peter Stuyvesant Meets 'The Obstinate and Immovable Jews,'" pp. 43–57, in Anita L. Lebeson, *Jewish Pioneers in America.*

2. Abram V. Goodman, *American Overture: Jewish Rights in Colonial Times*, pp. 133–49.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 111–2.

4. Leon Hühner, "The Struggle For Religious Liberty in North Carolina, with Special Reference to the Jews," pp. 37–71; E. Milton Altfeld, *The Jews' Struggle For Religious and Civil Liberty in Maryland.*

5. Philip S. Foner, *The Jews in American History, 1654–1865*, pp. 32–3.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Tree of Liberty*, I, No. 5, p. 3, Sept. 13, 1800, quoted in Julia Miller, *Jews Connected with the History of Pittsburgh, 1749–1865*, pp. 26–30. See Schappes, "Anti-Semitism and Reaction, 1795–1800," pp. 109–37, for further illustrations.

8. Isaac Goldberg, *Major Noah*, pp. 111–2.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 241–2.

10. *JE*, IV, pp. 354–5.

11. *UJE*, VII, pp. 17–8. No satisfactory biography has ever been written about this fascinating figure in American Jewish history. Many details of his Naval career require explication.

12. *Isr.*, VII, No. 20, p. 159, Nov. 16, 1860, quoting the *Florence* (Alabama) *Gazette*. The article concluded, "He said he had always hated the Jews ever since they crucified our Savior, Jesus Christ; and upon uttering these sentiments, he was applauded by his Douglas and Bell auditors."

13. *Isr.*, IX, No. 22, p. 172, Dec. 5, 1862, quoting an unidentified Dubuque paper; *Burlington Free Press*, Dec. 8, 1861; *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, cited in *Mess.*, XVII, No. 6, p. 42, Feb. 10, 1865. Even the Chicago Superintendent of Police adopted the habit; he listed Jews among the types of criminals captured by his officers. *JR*, I, No. 21, p. 2, Jan. 30, 1863.

14. Frank Moore (ed.), *Rebellion Record*, III, p. 114.

15. *New York Herald*, Jan. 10, 1864, cited in *Isr.*, X, No. 30, p. 237, Jan. 22, 1864.

16. Quoted from an unidentified Christian religious periodical in *Mess.*, XII, No. 24, p. 189, Dec. 19, 1862.

17. *Isr.*, VIII, No. 5, p. 36, Aug. 2, 1861.

18. *Mess.*, XV, No. 8, p. 67, Feb. 26, 1864.

19. *Isr.*, VII, No. 38, p. 301, Mar. 22, 1861.

20. *Isr.*, XI, No. 12, p. 92, Sept. 16, 1864.

21. *Isr.*, XI, No. 19, p. 148, Nov. 4, 1864.

22. Quoted in *Isr.*, VII, No. 30, p. 238, Jan. 25, 1861.

23. Quoted in *Mess.*, XIII, No. 16, p. 137, Apr. 24, 1863, and in *Isr.*, X, No. 7, p. 53, Aug. 14, 1863.

24. *Newburg Journal*, Aug. 31, 1864, quoted in *JR*, V, No. l, p. 2, Sept. 23, 1864, and *Occ.*, XXII, No. 8, p. 369, Nov. 1864.

25. Quoted in *Isr.*, XI, No. 17, p. 132, Oct. 21, 1864.

26. Quoted in *Mess.*, XV, No. 24, p. 190, June 24, 1864.

27. Quoted in *The Hebrew*, I, No. 29, p. 4, July 1, 1864.

28. Although Belmont is never known to have been converted, he was, to all intents and purposes, a non-Jew. So far as can be discovered, he rarely displayed any interest in Jewish communal or religious life. In 1850, Wise was able to bring enough pressure on Belmont to extract a ten dollar contribution for his new synagogue in Albany, but he detected no real interest on Belmont's part: Wise, *Reminiscences*, p. 177. The editors were anxious to have Belmont's lack of Jewish affiliation clearly understood by the Republican press. *Isr.*, XI, No. 15, p. 116, Oct. 7, 1864; XIV, No. 35, p. 4, Mar. 6, 1868; *Mess.*, XVI, No. 17, p. 132, Nov.

4, 1864. See also, *Asm.*, XI, No. 18, p. 140, Feb. 16, 1855, for an anti-Jewish attack on Belmont when he was appointed Ambassador to the Netherlands.

29. *New York Herald*, quoted in *Mess.*, XVI, No. 17, p. 132, Nov. 4, 1864.

30. *Philadelphia Dispatch*, quoted in *HL*, VI, No. 22, p. 2, Aug. 18, 1865.

31. *Mess.*, XVIII, No. 16, p. 124, Oct. 27, 1865.

32. *Isr.*, IX, No. 37, p. 292, Mar. 20, 1863.

33. *Chicago Tribune*, Sept. 10, 1864, quoted in *Isr.*, XI, No. 13, p. 99, Sept. 23, 1864.

34. *Isr.*, XI, No. 46, p. 324, Apr. 17, 1865; *Mess.*, XVI, No. 17, p. 132, Nov. 4, 1864.

35. Lonn, *op. cit.*, pp. 266–7.

36. Quoted in *Isr.*, X, No. 44, p. 348, Apr. 29, 1864.

37. *JR*, II, No. 9, p. 2, May 8, 1863.

38. *Isr.*, X, No. 44, p. 248, Apr. 29, 1864.

39. Quoted in *Mess.*, XIII, No. 16, p. 137, Apr. 24, 1863.

40. Quoted in *Mess.*, XVI, No. 16, p. 124, Oct. 28, 1864.

41. Quoted in *Mess.*, XV, No. 5, p. 36, Feb. 5, 1864.

42. Quoted in *JR*, II, No. 1, p. 2, Mar. 13, 1863.

43. Quoted in *Mess.*, XV, No. 6, p. 44, Feb. 12, 1864.

44. Quoted in *Isr.*, IX, No. 35, p. 277, Mar. 6, 1863.

45. Quoted in *JR*, II, No. 2, p. 2, Mar. 20, 1863.

46. *JR*, II, No. 1, p. 2, Mar. 13, 1863.

47. *DAB*, XVI, p. 572.

48. Letter, July 29, 1863, in the possession of Mr. George S. Hellman of New York City.

49. Letter, July 3, 1861, in the Pennsylvania Historical Society.

50. *DAB*, II, pp. 169–70.

51. Quoted in *Isr.*, VIII, No. 5, p. 36, Aug. 2, 1861.

52. Quoted in *Isr.*, VIII, No. 7, pp. 52–3, Aug. 16, 1861.

53. *Ibid.*

54. Quoted in *Isr.*, IX, No. 33, p. 258, Feb. 20, 1863.

55. *Isr.*, IX, No. 41, p. 333, Apr. 24, 1863.

56. Quoted in *Isr.*, VIII, No. 11, p. 84, Sept. 13, 1861.

57. *New York Commercial Advertiser*, quoted in *Isr.*, IX, No. 22, p. 172, Dec. 5, 1862; *Mess.*, XII, No. 24, p. 188, Dec. 19, 1862.

58. *Cincinnati Commercial*, quoted in *Isr.*, VIII, No. 35, p. 276, Feb. 28, 1862; No. 36, p. 284, Mar. 7, 1862.

59. *New York Tribune*, quoted in *Mess.*, XII, No. 20, p. 157, Nov. 21, 1862.

60. *New York Herald*, quoted in *Mess.*, XIV, No. 3, p. 22, July 17, 1863.

61. *Hudson* (N.Y.) *Gazette*, quoted in *JR*, V, No. 7, p. 2, Nov. 11, 1864.

62. *New York Post*, quoted in *JR*, VI, No. 2, p. 2, Mar. 24, 1865.

63. Special Order No. 150, Headquarters Department of the Gulf, June 30, 1862, newspaper clipping in Phillips Papers in the Southern Historical Collection.

64. Quoted in *Mess.*, XV, No. 8, p. 60, Feb. 26, 1864; *Isr.*, X, No. 37, pp. 292–3, Mar. 11, 1864.

65. Simon Wolf, *The Presidents I Have Known*, pp. 8–9.

66. *Mess.*, *op. cit.* See *Mess.*, XXXIV, No. 24, p. 4, Dec. 19, 1873, for evidence that Butler did not give up the idea.

67. *Autobiography and Personal Reminiscences of Major-General Benj. F. Butler*, p. 514.

68. Letters from Butler to Isaacs, Feb. 4, Feb. 13, Apr. 9, Aug. 3, 1864, in Board of Delegates correspondence files. Isaacs' later letters have not been preserved, but he apparently took advantage of his writing acquaintance with Butler to attempt to secure the release of a

Mr. David or Davids (both spellings are used by Butler), who was captured by an Army Gunboat crew on suspicion of smuggling, his property confiscated and sold, and himself imprisoned. He was finally released, said Butler in his final communication to Isaacs, "not on account of any good in him, but because, not being able to prove anything more against him, than that he was a smuggler and Blockade Runner, and because of its being the custom of the Navy to release those caught running the blockade by water." One wonders what Isaacs had said in the man's defense to make Butler reply so vehemently. The portions of the Butler letters dealing with the David case were omitted by Isaacs in his *Messenger* articles, and by Max J. Kohler in his edition of this correspondence in *PAJHS*, No. 29 (1925), pp. 117–28.

69. Max J. Kohler, "The Board of Delegates of American Israelites, 1859–1878," pp. 121–128.

70. Wolf, *op. cit.* Wolf, on March 7, 1864, wrote the Rev. Dr. McMurdy (a friend of the General) that "my personal choice [for Republican presidential candidate in 1864] would be Gen. Butler, although he has not become acquainted with an honest, intelligent Jew. I trust the day may not be far distant when he will find a host, his admirers and adherents." *Private and Official Correspondence of Gen. Benjamin F. Butler* . . . , III, p. 497.

71. Parton, pp. 317–19.

72. Butler, *op. cit.*, p. 510.

73. *Ibid.*, pp. 433–4.

74. *JR*, IV, No. 14, p. 2, July 18, 1864.

75. *JR*, V, No. 16, p. 2, Jan. 13, 1865.

76. Emanuel Hertz, *Abraham Lincoln: A New Portrait*, 11, p. 957–8; Isaac Markens, "Lincoln and the Jews," p. 154.

77. See Sandburg, *op. cit.*, 11, p. 70; III, p. 64; 1V, p. 25, for references to the rumors about Butler's personal and familial profiteering. He is said to have admitted that his brother's fortune of some $200,000 was made in New Orleans. See Isachar Zacharie's report on a typical case in his letter to Lincoln, Jan. 14, 1863, in Appendix C.

78. The speech is reprinted in Herbert F. Eaton, *An Hour With the American Hebrew*.

79. See E. Merton Coulter's biography, *William G. Brownlow: Fighting Parson of the Southern Highlands*, for the fascinating details of Brownlow's erratic career.

80. Quoted in *Isr.*, VI, No. 36, p. 283, Mar. 9, 1860.

81. Another example is quoted in *Isr.*, VII, No. 29, pp. 229–30, Jan. 18, 1861.

82. Meade, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

83. Coulter, *op. cit.*, p. 386; *Mess.*, XI, No. 14, p. 111, Apr. 11, 1862.

84. *Parson Brownlow's Book*, p. 386.

85. Brownlow, *Portrait and Biography*, pp. 19–20, cited by Coulter, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

86. Quoted in *Isr.*, IX, No. 22, p. 172, Dec. 5, 1862; No. 23, p. 180, Dec. 12, 1862.

87. Speech at the Y.M.C.A. of New York City, May 19, 1862, quoted by Coulter, *op. cit.*, pp. 227-8.

88. *Cincinnati Daily Times*, Jan. 17, 1863, p. 2.

89. *Ibid.*, Jan. 21, 1863, p. 2.

90. Allan Nevins, *Ordeal of the Union*, II, p. 331.

91. Quoted in *Isr.*, VII, No. 38, p. 301, Mar. 22, 1861.

92. Quoted in *Isr.*, VIII, No. 35, p. 278, Feb. 28, 1862. Wilson's nomination as the Republican Vice-Presidential candidate in 1872 brought forth a protest similar to that aroused by Grant's nomination in 1868, albeit of less formidable proportions. Isaac M. Wise never forgot an anti-Jewish utterance. In 1872, he wrote that he would not vote for

Wilson because "his conceptions of justice, equality and liberty are so narrow and ungenerous," and reminded his readers that Wilson had been a Know-Nothing. *Isr.*, XIX, No. 9, p. 8, Aug. 30, 1872. Wise, being a confirmed Democrat, would probably not have voted for Wilson even if he had been a great Judaeophile. The Republican rabbi of Chicago, the Rev. Bernhard Felsenthal must have been confused about Wilson's attitude towards the Jews: in *Sinai*, VII, pp. 200–10, Aug., 1862, he wrote a tribute to Wilson as the Senator responsible for championing the revision of the chaplaincy laws in committee meetings.

93. C. F. Adams, *Charles Francis Adams. 1835–1915. An Autobiography*, pp. 94–5.

94. *Isr.*, XXIII, No. 1041 (New Series I, No. 10), p. 6, Aug. 28, 1874, quoting reports in *Nashville Republican Banner.*

95. See Sandburg, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 428–32, on Baker.

96. L. C. Baker, *History of the U. S. Secret Service*, p. 80.

97. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

98. Wolf, *op. cit.*, pp. 9–11.

99. Quoted in *Isr.*, IX, No. 33, p. 258, Feb. 20, 1863.

100. Henry Illoway, *Sefer Milchamot Elohim*, pp. 23–6. A similar episode occurred when General Dunstan, commanding Memphis in late 1864, cancelled "the usual drill and parade of the militia" on Yom Kippur, out of deference to the Jewish soldiers and "as a mark of respect to the occasion." *Memphis Bulletin*, Oct. 11, 1864, quoted in *Isr.*, XI, No. 17, p. 133, Oct. 24, 1864.

101. Quoted in *Mess.*, XI, No. 14, p. 111, Apr. 11, 1862.

102. Quoted in *Isr.*, XII, No. 9, p. 70, Sept. 1, 1865.

103. Quoted in *The Hebrew*, I, No. 29, p. 4, July 1, 1864.

104. Quoted *Ibid.*, No. 27, p. 1, June 17, 1864.

105. Quoted *Ibid.*, No. 26, p. 1, June 9, 1864.

106. Quoted *Ibid.*, No. 28, p. 5, June 24, 1864.

107. Quoted in *Isr.*, XII, No. 12, p. 93, Sept. 22, 1865.

108. *Daily Illinois State Journal*, May 19, 1865.

109. Quoted in *Isr.*, VIII, No. 14, pp. 108–9, Oct. 4, 1861; No. 15, p. 117, Oct. 11, 1861.

110. Quoted in *Isr.*, VII, No. 34, p. 270, Feb. 22, 1861.

111. Quoted in *Mess*,, XV, No. 9, p. 68, Mar. 4, 1864.

112. *New York Times*, Feb. 28, 1864, p. 3.

113. *Mess.*, XVI, No. 4, p. 28, July 29, 1864.

114. *Isr.*, VII, No. 17, p. 132, Oct. 25, 1861.

115. The text of their resolution is printed in *Isr.*, VIII, No. 35, p. 278, Feb. 28, 1872.

116. Quoted in *Isr.*, X, No. 26, p. 204, Dec. 25, 1863.

117. *Isr.*, IX, No. 1, p. 5, July 4, 1862. See also *Mess.*, IX, No. 19, p. 148, May 17, 1861; No. 22, p. 172, June 7, where the editors volunteer to collect such statistics.

118. *Mess.*, XVII, No. 23, pp. 188–9, June 16, 1865; *Occ.*, XXIII, No. 4, p. 185, July, 1865; No. 7, pp. 324–5, Nov., 1865.

119. *North American Review*, Vol. 153, pp. 761–2, Dec., 1891. Rabbi Stephen S. Wise made one of his early appearances in print with an answer to Rogers' letter in the February 1892, issue of the *Review*, pp. 249–50. Isaac Mayer Wise was as despondent as ever. He blamed the editor of the *Review* for printing an article such as Rogers', but would not even attempt to answer the charge. "We could give hundreds of names of Jews who served in the Union army [and he could!] but of what use would it be? To prove the falsity of a lie never yet prevented its repetition." *Isr.*, XXXVIII, No. 23, p. 4, Dec. 3, 1891; No. 26, p. 6, Dec. 24, 1891.

There was a fascinating, but little known sequel to Rogers' challenge. A veteran of the Union army named Simon Gerstman, otherwise quite unknown wrote to Rogers, objecting to his accusation against Jews and furnishing credentials which convinced Rogers that Gerstman had led a gallant career in the army. Rogers acknowledged his mistake and promised Gerstman that he would write a letter of retraction to the *Review.* Six months later Gerstman fell ill and mentioned the fact to Rogers in a letter (they had apparently established a regular correspondence). Rogers came to fetch him, and took him to his home in Niantic, Conn., and nursed him back to health. For once Wise had erred on the side of pessimism. In telling the story, he paid tribute to Rogers' change of heart. *Isr.*, XXXVIII, No. 25, p. 4, Dec. 17, 1891; No. 52, p. 4, June 23, 1892.

120. Simon Wolf, *The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier, and Citizen.*

121. *Isr.*, VIII, No. 36, p. 284, Mar. 7, 1862.

122. *Occ.*, XXII, No. 8, pp. 368–9, Nov. 1864.

123. Ella Lonn wrote her fascinating study, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, to investigate and evaluate this legend. The evidence which she has marshalled from an exhaustive search of contemporary sources demonstrates that many thousands of foreigners were resident in the Confederacy, loyal to it, and active in its military campaigns.

Frank Moore cited an interesting example (in *The Rebellion Record*, VI, p. 412, reprinted from the *Richmond Enquirer* of July 15, 1863) of the Confederate belief that all traitors were foreigners:

> Foreigners of every age and sex crowded the office of the provost-marshal, in Richmond, anxious to get passports to go North, by way of the blockade. The Jew, whose ample pockets were stuffed with confederate money; the Germans, with hands on pockets tightly pressed; Italians, with the silvery jargon; and the Irish woman, with "nine children and one at the breast," all beset the office and wanted passports to leave the country . . . It is not fair that those who have drained the very life-blood of our people, should be let off thus quietly, and not made to shed the first, at least, if not the last, drop of blood for the Government which protected them in the collection of their hoarded pelf.

An illustration of the general suspicion in which foreigners were held is a newspaper poem clipped by the Rev. George Jacobs and preserved in his scrapbook, entitled "Ho! Profundum," of which this is one verse:

> Tis noon—yet scarcely is begun
> Up in the treasury the run,
> Where Dutch and Yankee, Jew and Hun,
> Meet in stock jobbery.

124. R. E. Park, *Sketch of the Twelfth Alabama Infantry*, p. 10.

125. N. A. Davis, *The Campaign from Texas to Maryland with the Battle of Fredericksburg*, pp. 18–9.

126. See the authoritative biography by Meade, *op. cit.*, pp. 218, 280, etc. Although he never identified himself with Jewish causes or the Jewish communities of places in which he happened to reside, Benjamin always was pigeonholed as a Jew. When Sir William Howard Russell, the renowned British journalist, took a trip through the South at the outbreak of war, this was one of his comments about Louisiana:

> It is a strange country indeed, one of the evils which afflicts the Louisianians, they say, is the preponderance and influence of South Carolina Jews, and Jews generally, such as

> Moise, Mordecai, Josephs, and Judah Benjamin, and others. The subtlety and keenness of the Caucasian [sic.] intellect give men a high place among a people who admire ability and dexterity, and are at the same time reckless of means and averse to labor. The Governor is supposed to be somewhat under the influence of the Hebrews . . .

W. H. Russell, *My Diary North and South*, entry for May 29, 1861. See Korn, "Judah P. Benjamin as a Jew," for details of Benjamin's lack of interest in the Jewish community.

127. J. B. Jones, *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary at the Confederate States Capital*, I, pp. 165–6.

128. *New York Tribune*, Mar. 7, 1865. The editor of the *Tribune*, in reprinting this communication from the Richmond paper, took occasion to object to all attempts in the North to amend the U. S. Constitution for the purpose of recognizing Christianity as the official religion of the nation. This gave rise to a lively correspondence on the subject.

129. *SHSP*, XXVIII, p. 290. See also Cobb's reference to Benjamin as "an eunuch" in letter to Mrs. Cobb, Jan. 15, 1862, in Thomas R. R. Cobb Collection, University of Georgia Library.

130. M. J. Kohler, "Judah P. Benjamin: Statesman and Jurist," p. 79.

131. *Richmond Sentinel*, January 25, 1864, clipping from the George Jacobs Scrapbook.

132. See Lonn, *op. cit.*, pp. 335–8, 390–5, for the evidence which led Miss Lonn to conclude that "Jewish merchants had largely acquired possession of the stores" in all the larger cities except New Orleans. Most of the accounts she quotes are highly colored by prejudice and anti-foreignism, but can nonetheless be interpreted as tributes to Jewish enterprise and ingenuity. It depends upon one's point of view. She quotes the story, for instance, of a German Jew who had pitched a tent on the "sandy waste between San Antonio and Brownsville," far from the nearest town, to sell crackers, cheese, and whisky, to the passing troops (p. 338). The anecdote had been directed as an attack against Jews by its original narrator, who finished by complaining that the Jew demanded Northern currency for the refreshments but accepted, under pressure, Confederate money. No word for the "rugged individualism" of that Jewish peddler?

When Frederick Law Olmsted wrote his *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States* in 1856, he wrote, in the glib language of prejudice, that "a swarm of Jews, within the last ten years, has settled in nearly every southern town, many of them men of no character, opening cheap clothing and trinket shops; ruining, or driving out of business, many of the old retailers, and engaging in an unlawful trade with the simple negroes, which is found very profitable."

(Quoted in Burton Rascoe, *An American Reader*, p. 226.)

133. *SHSP*, IX, p. 122. Foote feared Benjamin's influence on Davis so strongly that he said "he would never consent to the establishment of a supreme court of the Confederate States so long as Judah P. Benjamin shall continue to pollute the ears of majesty Davis with his insidious counsels." *Richmond Daily Examiner*, Dec. 17, 1863.

134. *SHSP*, XI, p. 214; see also IX, p. 144 for another one of Foote's outbursts against Southern Jewry.

135. *SHSP*, X, pp. 8–9.

136. *SHSP*, X, p. 185.

137. *SHSP*, IX, pp. 122–3.

138. Jones, *op. cit.*, I, p. 213.

139. *Ibid.*, I, p. 221.

140. *Savannah Daily Morning News*, Sept. 16, 1862.

141. *Memoirs of Isidor Straus*, p. 16.

142. *Ibid.*

143. Letter from Huldah A. (Fain) Briant Yapers, Apr. 14, 1863, Santa Lucah, Georgia, in the Flowers Mss. Collection, Duke University Library. A similar incident occurred in Milledgeville, Ga., according to a report in the *Memphis Daily Bulletin*, Apr. 28, 1863.

144. *The Burckmyer Letters, March 1863—June 1865*, p. 236.

145. Letter, Barnsley to Reid, March 26, 1863, in Barnsley Papers, University of Georgia Library.

146. See Coulter, *The Confederate States of America, 1861–1865*, pp. 223–229, for many such citations. The two preceding notes are derived from his references. Coulter, incidentally, is the first Civil War historian, dealing with either the North or the South, to give even passing attention to anti-Jewish prejudice as a social phenomenon of the war period. Coulter's entire picture of the inflationary process in the Confederacy offers ample evidence that the role of the Jews was minor at best, yet he himself appears not to understand fully the nature of anti-Jewish prejudice from a psychological point of view. The quotation itself is from Putnam, *Richmond During the War; Four Years of Personal Observation. By a Richmond Lady*, p. 271.

147. *Battle-Fields of the South, From Bull Run to Fredericksburgh, with Sketches of Confederate Commanders, and Gossip of the Camps. By an English Combatant*, p. 15. This paragraph demonstrates the true nature of prejudice. The "English Combatant" had undoubtedly been told this by someone who referred to Germans as "Dutchmen" and German Jews as "Dutch Jews." Knowing nothing of this Americanism, he solemnly libels Dutch and Dutch-Jewish immigrants, without realizing that there could only have been a handful of them in the Confederacy.

148. *Two Months in the Confederate States, Including a Visit to New Orleans under the Domination of General Butler. By an English Merchant*, p. 126, cited by Coulter, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

149. *Richmond Sentinel, loc. cit.*

150. *Savannah Daily Morning News*, Feb. 23, 1863.

151. *Richmond Sentinel, loc. cit.*

152. Quoted in *Occ.*, XXIV, No. 6, pp. 282–3, Sept., 1866. The Jews of the North were also under the impression that anti-Jewish feelings were as strong in the Confederacy as in the Union. Isaac Leeser said that a reading of Southern papers gave one the impression that Jews and disaffected citizens were synonymous, that all smuggling was done by Jews, and that Judah P. Benjamin would never have been retained in office if the war had ended favorably for the Confederacy. *Occ.*, XXIII, No. 7, pp. 313–9, Oct. 1865.

153. The sermon was delivered on May 27, 1863, and reprinted in *JR*, II, No. 13, p. 1, June 5, 1863, as a curiosity.

154. See Professor J. G. Randall's first chapter, pp. 3–36, in *The Civil War and Reconstruction*, for a discussion of these problems.

155. See Professor Charles W. Ramsdell's excellent study of the economic problems of the Confederacy during the war, in *Behind the Lines in the Southern Confederacy*, pp. 14 ff. Professor Ramsdell comes to no conclusion as to the extent of unscrupulous practices (pp. 20–1); he does not even mention the accusations against Jews.

156. Cited in Coulter, *op. cit.*, p. 231. Even Southern clergymen were suspected of speculating! See the discussion on a bill to exempt ministers from conscription, Jan. 13, 1865, in *JCCS*, VII, p. 455.

157. Straus, *op. cit.*, pp. 15–7. Young Straus later went to Europe as an agent for a firm attempting to organize a systematic blockade-running fleet to supply the Confederacy with scarce goods. A large portion of the memoirs deals with his experiences in this regard.

In 1852, just before the elder Straus came to the United States, there were five Jewish families in Talbotton, but only eight men, not enough for a religious service. They had organized a Hebrew Benevolent Society and presented a silver ornament for a Torah-scroll to a N. Y. congregation, *Occ.*, X, No. 8, p. 414, Nov., 1852. All eight men were probably peddlers, operating in the surrounding country. That was the way Lazarus Straus reached Talbotton.

158. *Daily Richmond Examiner*, Jan. 7, 1864.

159. *JCCS*, VI, p. 598; *Daily Richmond Examiner*, Jan. 8, 1864. The same day the *Examiner* printed an unchallenged report that "very recently, two immensely wealthy Israelitish merchants on Broad Street, departed for the North leaving their wives and daughters to carry on the business of their stores."

160. *Daily Richmond Examiner*, Jan. 26, 1864.

161. *JCCS*, VII, pp. 454, 458, 465, 466, 490, 659.

162. Jones, *op. cit.*, II, p. 126.

163. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 304, 320.

164. *Ibid.*, II, p. 39.

165. *Ibid.*, I, p. 185.

166. *Ibid.*, II, p. 144.

167. It should be superfluous to comment that so unabashed a Judaeophobe as Jones ought not be regarded as a fair witness in any discussion of the role of Jews in the Confederacy. The editor of the 1935 edition of the Jones *Diary* felt that the Grant Order and the Jones comments were reliable evidence on the basis of the "where there's smoke, there's fire" theory of logic. "Certainly there is a strong presumption in the records of both sides," he states, "that fair-minded men felt the general charge of profiteering could be made against the whole class of Jewish merchants." (I, p. 289.) Grant in later days admitted his Order was unfair; Jones cannot possibly be regarded as a "fair-minded witness." The above mentioned editor cites only one other witness, Colonel Fremantle, who asserted that Matamoros (a town on the Mexican-Texas border!) was "infested with numbers of Jews whose industry spoils the trade of established merchants." (Fremantle, *Three Months in the Southern States: April–June 1863*, p. 14). There is a great deal of difference between commercial success and profiteering! In fact, one might almost be inclined to suppose that the "established merchants" were the real profiteers whose extortionist practices were mitigated by the "industry" of the Jews.

168. *Savannah Daily Morning News*, Sept. 16, 1862. One item in the resolution condemning "all newspapers giving currency to this slander and intolerance" and asking Jews to withhold their support from such newspapers, received a justifiable rebuke from the editor of the *News*. A newspaper which printed news about such events was, in his opinion, not necessarily guilty of sharing the opinions voiced. An editor could not be held responsible for the accuracy of his statements, let alone for sentiments expressed by others. He had performed a service to the Savannah Jews, he believed, by printing the report from Thomasville.

169. Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, *The History of the Jews of Richmond*, pp. 246–7. In 1865, the Rev. M. J. Michelbacher of Beth Ahabah was one of a number of distinguished Richmond citizens who signed a general appeal for an "adopt a soldier" plan in an effort to obtain more food for the military. Putnam, *op. cit.*, pp. 252–5.

170. See, for example, *Richmond Sentinel, loc. cit.*

171. *Isr.*, IX, No. 24, p. 188, Dec. 19, 1862. There is some doubt as to the authenticity of this report; the *Israelite* quoted no source. It might have been contained in a delayed

message from the South or transmitted by a Jew coming North, but Col. Adler, so far as we know, was confined in a Richmond prison by Oct. 19, 1861, on charges of Northern sympathies, supposedly revealed by his bitter criticism of his superior officer's military talents. He attempted to commit suicide in Libby Prison, but was unsuccessful. Nine months later he escaped to the North. That would be about June 1862. He was, then, already in the North when the report appeared in the *Israelite.* Over a year later the same periodical was asking for information concerning Adler's whereabouts, since letters for him had been addressed to the editorial offices. The paper described him as "a Hungarian gentleman styling himself Colonel Adler, who was arrested in Cincinnati as an officer of the Confederate Army." Adler was indeed a soldier of fortune! William C. Harris, *Prison Life in the Tobacco Warehouse at Richmond*, p. 87, quoted in Lonn, *op. cit.*, pp. 177–8; *Frank Moore, Rebellion Record*, III, p. 51, citing the *Richmond Enquirer*, Oct. 19, 1861; *Isr.*, X, No. 8, p. 59, Aug. 21, 1863.

172. *Richmond Sentinel, loc. cit.*

173. *Savannah Daily Morning News*, Feb. 23, 1863, p. 1. This gentleman evidently prided himself upon his expert knowledge of Jewish religious practice. The bulk of his letter was an explanation that whole regiments of Jews could be organized if the War Department would permit them to handle their own commissary problems! If they could obtain the animals for slaughter, and purchase their own utensils and keep them ritually clean, "professional butchers of their own—educated men," would handle the rest. He asked the Macon Jews to organize the "first Israelite Battalion of the Confederate army. Let them take for the battle flag—'*The Lion of the tribe of Judah*,' and the God of Moses, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will fight their battles for them, and tread our enemies beneath His feet." This suggestion will be a cause for levity among those who are familiar with the consternation aroused in American Jewish circles during the early years of World War II when pro-Zionists sought to organize a Jewish Army (it was finally done, as a Jewish Brigade of the British Army) whose personnel would be made up of Palestinian and refugee Jews.

174. Quoted in *Occ.*, XXIV, No. 6, pp. 282–3, Sept., 1866.

175. Quoted in *JR*, III, No. 23, p. 2, Feb. 26, 1864. The editor of the *Mobile Daily Advertiser and Register* (Nov. 5, 1863) had another answer: "If our fair friends will cease to patronize, instead of complain of the Jews, wear their old clothes, and give the money now spent in silks to thinly-clad and badly-shod soldiers, one source of speculation would soon dry up . . . Try it, and dry goods will fall to rational prices within six months."

176. Quoted in *Richmond Daily Whig*, Oct. 16, 1862.

177. *WROR*, I, XVII, pt. 11, pp. 272–4.

178. Hopley, *Life in the South . . .*, II, pp. 41, 188.

8 LINCOLN AND THE JEWS

1. *Isr.*, XI, No. 44, p. 350, Apr. 28, 1865; reprinted in Emanuel Hertz, *Abraham Lincoln, The Tribute of the Synagogue*, p. 98. Wise did not mention this conversation with Lincoln in his 1863 editorials on the Grant affair, but he did tell one of his colleagues, Rabbi Henry Vidaver of St. Louis, about it. Vidaver was the American Correspondent for the Hebrew monthly *HaMagid*, published in Germany. He wrote approximately the same version of the conversation that Wise referred to in his 1865 sermon, in his report on the Grant affair

which was printed in the Feb. 15, 1863, issue of *HaMagid*, p. 60. This would indicate that Wise had not deliberately delayed telling the story until Lincoln's passing. *The Jewish Record* was the only periodical which took note of Wise's remarks in 1865; it merely reprinted them under the title, "President Lincoln's Parentage," without comment, *JR*, VI, No. 7, p. 2, July 5, 1865. Wise's assertion has been known to writers for a long time, but since no other evidence has ever been discovered, it has not been given much weight in their writing about the mysteries of Lincoln's background. Wise may not have reported the conversation accurately, or may not have understood the meaning of the President's remarks. Perhaps Lincoln was joking about the descent of all men from Adam and Eve; again, Lincoln may have made some remarks about the universal character of the Bible, similar to those which he made to Abraham Kohn of Chicago, as we shall note later. It is almost incomprehensible that Lincoln should have said the exact words quoted by Wise without having made similar statements to other acquaintances.

2. Letter, Lincoln to Jonas, Feb. 4, 1860, reprinted in Appendix B, where all of the extant correspondence between Lincoln and Jonas is collected, with notations of the source of each letter. All quotations in the section about Jonas are from those letters, unless otherwise cited in the notes. Data on Jonas' life, unless otherwise noted, is rather general knowledge and has been treated in Markens *op. cit.*, pp. 123–8; Emanuel Hertz, *op. cit.*, pp. x–xi, and "An Intimate Friend of Lincoln"; Albert A. Woldman, "Lincoln's Jewish Friend."

3. *Occ.*, I, No. 11, p. 548, Feb. 1844—Joseph Jonas' narrative of his experiences on first coming to Cincinnati, and the gradual shift of his family from England to America.

4. W. A. Richardson, Jr., "Many Contests for the County Seat of Adams Co., Ill.," pp. 273–4.

5. Theodore C. Pease, *Illinois Election Returns 1818–1848*, p. 362.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 380.

7. Jonas was probably the first Jew in Quincy. It was not until 1852 that a sufficient number of co-religionists joined him to make possible the organization of a congregation. Their first step was to search for a Jewish ritual butcher. *Occ.*, X, No. 1, p. 57, Apr., 1852. There is no exact data on the earliest Jews in central Illinois. Rabbi Herman E. Snyder, in his *History of Temple Brith Sholom*, asserts that the earliest reliable evidence does not locate Jews in Springfield until 1855.

8. *Memoirs of Gustave Koerner*, I, pp. 479–80.

9. *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning*, I, pp. 239, 256.

10. *Quincy Whig*, Oct. 7, 1858, cited in Edwin E. Sparks, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates of 1858*, p. 389.

11. Letter in collection of the late Oliver R. Barrett, of Chicago. A photograph of the page from which these comments are quoted is printed on p. 288a of Hertz, *op. cit.* Hertz' assertion (p. xi) that this letter "establishes the interesting fact that Abraham Jonas was the first man to suggest Lincoln for the presidency, in a conference with Horace Greeley," is not supported by the letter itself. To the contrary, Asbury was the one who first mentioned Lincoln, and he was uncertain whether Jonas' support of the suggestion was based on friendship for him (Asbury) or genuine agreement with the proposal.

12. *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning*, I, pp. 402, 425, 432. This diary records the dates of many other occasions when Jonas and Browning appeared together on the political platform: pp. 100, 158, 160, 321, 341, 567, 627. In another connection (I, p. 38) Browning refers to his friend as "Col. Jonas." The origin of this title has not been ascertained.

13. Ibid., I, p. 440; Browning to Lincoln, Dec. 9, 1860, No. 4911 of the Robert Todd Lincoln Collection.

14. Sandburg, *op. cit.*, III, p. 485.

15. *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning*, I, p. 671. Browning was, by this time, in the business of securing favors for his clients from the government, but this case must undoubtedly be differentiated from the others. The Jonas family were friends, not clients. On Dec. 19, 1863, Browning records the fact that he went "to see Col Hoffman about Chas Jonas, a Prisoner at Johnsons Island," (I, p. 651). There are no further details; it is impossible therefore to tell whether this was at the prompting of the Jonas family or not, or whether it was to obtain his release or not. Jonas had been close to death during Aug. 1863, and Browning records the details of this illness (I, pp. 639–41).

16. Quoted from photograph in the Markens Collection. Markens is supposed to have found the document in the War Dept. Archives, Markens, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

18. *Diary of Orville Hickman Browning*, p. 672.

19. *New York World*, Sept. 24, 1864, editorial, "Mr. Lincoln's Unionism and Bunionism." All data and quotations in this section except where noted, are taken from the Zacharie-Lincoln correspondence, printed in Appendix C.

20. *New York Herald*, Oct. 3, 1862, editorial, "The Head and Feet of the Nation"; Oct. 21, 1863, editorial, "More Important Negotiations for Peace." Professor Fred H. Harrington asserts that Zacharie had been a grocer and was also a book-pirate, citing his publication under his own name of *Surgical and Practical Observations on the Diseases of the Human Foot*, N. Y. 1860, the entire text of which was lifted from "John Eisenberg's book of the same tide (London, 1845)." Harrington, *Fighting Politician: Major General N. P. Banks*, p. 247, n. 109. The writer must record his appreciation to Dr. Harringon for references in his volume which led the writer to the Banks Mss. in the Essex Institute, which in turn filled in many interesting details of the Zacharie-Lincoln-Banks story. Some of the letters cited below are printed in Dr. Harrington's article, "A Peace Mission of 1863."

21. A reproduction of this card is printed in Sandburg, *op. cit.*, II, p. 230.

22. *New York Herald*, Oct. 3, 1862.

23. The exact nature of Zacharie's position cannot be ascertained. According to a pay-receipt found among the Banks Mss., dated July 2, his salary for two months and 18 days service was $730.00, plus room and board for which bills were presented amounting to $342.00. His secretary was paid $365.00 for the same period of time. These payments were personally authorized by General Banks.

24. Harrington, *op. cit.*, pp. 126–7.

25. Letters, Zacharie to Banks, July 30, Oct. 16, Oct. 24, 1863, Banks Mss.

26. Letter, Banks to Col. Holabird, July 2, 1863, Banks Mss.

27. Letter, Banks to Seward, July 2, 1863, Banks Mss.

28. *Ibid.*

29. Letter, Zacharie to Banks, July 30, 1863, Banks Mss.

30. Letters, Zacharie to Banks, Sept. 8, 20, 1863; Letter, Chas. Johnson (Zacharie's secretary) to Banks, Sept. 24, 1863, Banks Mss.

31. Letter, Zacharie to Banks, Oct. 9, 1863, Banks Mss.

32. *Ibid.*

33. Letter, Zacharie to Banks, Oct. 16, 1863, Banks Mss.

34. *New York Herald*, Oct. 3, 1862.

35. Letter, Zacharie to Banks, Oct. 9, 1863, Banks Mss.

36. *Ibid.*

37. *Ibid.*

38. Letter, Zacharie to Banks, Oct. 24, 1863, Banks Mss.

39. *Ibid.*

40. *Mess.*, XV, No. 18, p.141, May 13, 1864.

41. Goodman Mordecai's narrative of the episode appears in *New York Daily Tribune*, Feb. 13, 1901. Lewis and Zacharie were staunch political friends—the former guaranteeing in a letter to Lincoln that he would assure funds for any Jewish groups which would campaign for Lincoln—the letter (No. 37631 of the Robert Todd Lincoln Collection) inspired by a visit Dr. Zacharie paid to the President.

42. *Mess.*, XVI, No. 16, p. 124, Oct. 28, 1864.

43. *JR*, I, No. 7, p. 2, Oct. 24, 1862. Nevertheless, A. S. Cohen, its editor, was writing to Lincoln, on Sept. 1, 1863, that "a number of my subscribers had waited upon me and requested me to correspond with you relative to your nomination for the Presidentcy. A number of them desired me to state that they could use considerable influence by *money and votes* to secure your success. Especially through an organization known as the *Bnai Berith* which has branches in every town and City in the Union. They desired to know what your views were in regard to the Subject. The *Record* with its powerful influence with that class of people was to be obtained and your patronage asked for it and its Editor . . ." Cohen to Lincoln, Sept. 1, 1863, Nos. 11483–4, Robert Todd Lincoln Collection.

44. Letter, Hay to Isaacs, Nov. 1, 1864, in Board of Delegates correspondence files. See also another letter by Isaacs on the same subject, dated Oct. 26, 1864, and Hay's answer dated Nov. 1, 1864, Nos. 37629–30 and 37796–7 of the Robert Todd Lincoln collection.

45. *New York World, loc. cit.*

46. *New York Herald*, Oct. 3, 1862. Compare this with George Denison's description: "His vest is of flowered velvet—his hair beautifully oiled—and his presence distills continual perfume sweeter than the winds that blow from Araby the blest." (*Diary and Correspondence of Salmon P. Chase*, p. 353.)

47. *New York World, loc. cit.*

48. Letter, Banks to Seward, July 2, 1863, Banks Mss. George S. Denison, Collector of Internal Revenue for Louisiana, was reporting on Zacharie's activities to Secretary Chase, meanwhile, in a most unfavorable manner. To him, Zacharie was just another one of the "host of speculators, Jews and camp-followers" who had swept into New Orleans to profit by the Union military occupation. He wondered how the President could "send here as his private correspondent a vulgar little scoundrel like Dr. Zachary—who takes bribes, and whose only object is to make money . . ." He accused Zacharie of profiting from the business dealings of Jews whom he sent into Confederate territory to spy out the land for him. This latter may or may not have been true, although Banks' instructions to Zacharie requested that he send trustworthy spies into Mississippi to ascertain information about the enemy's military strength and strategy. (See letter, Banks to Zacharie, Jan. 1, 1863, Banks Mss.) The Denison reports are to be found in *Diary and Correspondence of Salmon P. Chase*, pp. 353, 355–6, 375. General G. F. Shepley, writing to Butler about Zacharie's attempts to track down data which would reflect unfavorably upon Butler's previous administration of the Department of the Gulf, finished his letter by saying that "the Christ killers, as Andrew calls them, have it all their own way." (*Private and Official Correspondence of Gen. Benjamin F. Butler During the Period of the Civil War*, III, p. 14.)

49. Albert A. Woldman, "Lincoln's Jewish Doctor," p. 189. See also Whitelaw Reid to Zacharie, May 13, 1872, Banks Mss, for indications of Zacharie's activities as a Liberal Republican in the 1872 campaign.

50. Richard S. Lambert, *For the Time is at Hand*, p. 82. Lambert, apparently, quoted this from Monk's letter to a friend, describing his interview with Lincoln. No reference is given for the quotation.

51. Hammerslough, according to Markens, *op. cit.*, pp. 128–9, had frequent personal dealings with Lincoln during his Springfield years, attended the first Inauguration, called on Lincoln whenever he was in Washington, and once escorted Mrs. Lincoln's sister from Springfield to Washington. Unfortunately he never recorded his recollections of his relations with the President.

52. Markens, *op. cit.*, pp. 129–30. Rice lived in Jacksonville, Ill., from 1853 to 1861. He apparently was one of thousands upon thousands of Illinoisans whom Lincoln ran into from time to time and knew by name. Rice said he offered to present a suit to the President-Elect to wear at the first Inauguration, but that a Springfield firm's gift for that purpose had already been accepted. He had Lincoln's help in an effort to secure an appointment as military store-keeper for southern Illinois, but the office had already been given to someone else by Cameron before Rice consulted Lincoln. See *Lincoln Lore*, No. 1049 (May 16, 1949), for data on yet another of Lincoln's Jewish friends, Lewis Rosenthal.

53. Markens, *op. cit.*, pp. 133–4.

54. *Ibid.*, pp. 137–8.

55. *Ibid.*, pp. 138–9; A. J. Dittenhoefer, *How We Elected Lincoln.*

56. *Ibid.*, pp. 139–40.

57. Wolf, *The Presidents I Have Known*, pp. 4–49.

58. Markens, *op. cit.*, pp. 134–6.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 161; manuscript biography in American Jewish Archives; Louis A. Warren, "The War Headquarters of Lincoln," in *Lincoln Lore*, No. 998, May 24, 1948.

60. Myers' memorandum about his conference with Lincoln, in company with Judge Campbell, on April 5, 1865, concerning peace terms with the Confederacy, in Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

61. Sandburg, *op. cit.*, III, p. 232.

62. Markens, *op. cit.*, pp. 134–5. Raphall wrote to Lincoln on March 17, 1864, to thank him for a favor to his son-in-law, Capt. C. M. Levy. There is no indication of the nature of the favor; a C. M. Levy (the same or another) was dismissed from the military service by Court Martial on Oct. 9, 1863, and "forever disqualified to hold any office of trust or profit in the United States," according to a letter from Assistant Adjutant General S. F. Chalfin, dated July 16, 1864, found in the Robert Todd Lincoln Papers, No. 34507. In his letter, No. 31163 of that same collection, Raphall mentioned that he was sending Lincoln several photographs of himself "with sincerest prayers for your continued health and prosperity."

63. Markens, *op. cit.*, pp. 131–2. See also the very interesting description of Kohn's 70th birthday on May 7, 1863, in *Isr.*, IX, No. 46, p. 362, May 22, 1863. Kohn's daughter, who had married Rabbi Liebman Adler's son, endeavored to find the painting in the White House during the McKinley administration, but was unsuccessful in her search.

64. *JR*, I, No. 13, p. 2, Dec. 5, 1862. The letter itself is, to the writer's knowledge, not extant. The incident was brought to the attention of Admiral George Preble, who referred

to it in his *History of the Flag of the United States*, N. Y. 1894, and of (then) Governor McKinley who spoke of it in a speech at Ottawa, Kansas, June 20, 1895. McKinley spoke as though it were a silk flag, rather than a painting. H. L. Meites, in his *History of the Jews of Chicago* (p. 84) had the bright idea of reproducing the flag, implying that he had a copy of the original. The confusion about the nature of Kohn's gift, and its disappearance, have led many to believe that the entire episode was legendary. The discovery of Hay's detailed letter to A. S. Cohen in the columns of the *Record* is convincing proof of the historicity of Kohn's painting. It should certainly not, however, be called a "Jewish flag," as some writers have done.

65. Letter, Lincoln to Speed, Aug. 24, 1855, Massachusetts Historical Society.

66. Letter, Lincoln to Canisius, May 17, 1859, Chicago Historical Society.

67. *Isr.*, XI, No. 44, pp. 349–so, Apr. 28, 1865. Many Protestant preachers condemned Lincoln for having witnessed "immoral" theatrical performances. Some of them almost felt that the assassination was divine punishment for his sin. See quotations from such sermons in Sandburg, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 357–9. It is interesting to compare Julius Eckman's attack on wealthy San Francisco Jews who insisted on frequenting the theater on Friday nights, reprinted from the Gleaner in *Mess.*, XV, No. 9, p. 66, Mar. 4, 1864. It was said, in New York, that if Lincoln had been a Catholic or a Jew, he would not have been at the theater that night, but in the church or synagogue. (F. N. Wolff, *Four Generations*, p. 20.)

68. *JR*, VI, No. 5, p. 1, Apr. 21, 1865; *Isr.*, XI, No. 43, same date.

69. *Ibid.*

70. *Occ.*, XXIII, No. 2, p. 84, May, 1865; No. 3, p. 115, June.

71. San Francisco *Daily Alta California*, Apr. 16, 1865, reprinted in Hertz, *op. cit.*, pp. 138–9.

72. St. Louis *Daily Missouri Republican*, Apr. 19, 1865.

73. *JR*, VI, No. 5, p. 3, Apr. 28, 1865.

74. *Ibid.*

75. *Board Minutes of Temple Beth Israel*, 1862–1868, pp. 50–1. Similar resolutions were adopted by most of the congregations throughout the North, recorded in their minutes, and published in the local press. The reaction of Southern congregations is, for the most part, unrecorded, because congregational life was so disrupted that no minutes were kept at the end of the war. Three Charleston Jews, however, participated in civic exercises (Markens, *op. cit.*, p. 149); the Temimi Derech congregation of New Orleans passed resolutions which were published in *Mess.*, XVII, No. 17, p. 141, May 5, 1865, and had a memorial service at which an address was given by Col. P. J. Joachimsen of the Union Army (text in Hertz, *op. cit.*, pp. 29–38); Rabbi Bernard Illowy gave a memorial sermon in his New Orleans synagogue, Shaarey Chesed (text *ibid.*, pp. 16–3). The writer has not been able to verify Markens' statement that Michelbacher gave a memorial address at Richmond (*op. cit.*, p. 149).

76. *Isr.*, XI, No. 43, p. 339, Apr. 21, 1865.

77. *JR*, VI, No. 5, p. 2, Apr. 21, 1865.

78. Most of the sermons preached in Lincoln's memory are reprinted in Hertz, *op. cit.* Those which Hertz did not uncover in his research and which have been located by the writer are as follows:

(1) *Samuel Adler*, Apr. 19, 1865, longer excerpt than Hertz (*JR*, VI, No. 5, p. 3, Apr. 21, 1865).
Samuel Adler, June 1, 1865 (*JR*, VI, No. 12, p. 1, June 9, 1865; *Mess.*, XVII, No. 22, p. 181, June 9, 1865).

(2) *Samuel M. Isaacs*, Apr. 15, 1865 (*JR*, VI, No. 5, p. 1, Apr. 21, 1865). June 1, 1865 (*Mess.*, XVII, No. 22, p. 181, June 9, 1865).
(3) *Isaac Leeser*, Apr. 19, 1865 (*Occ.*, XXIII, No. 2, pp. 84–6, May 1865). Apr. 22, 1865 (*Occ.*, XXIII, No. 4, pp. 154–65, July 1865).
(4) *M. H. Myers*, Apr. 17, 1865 (*JR*, VI, No. 5, p. 2, Apr. 21, 1865).
(5) *Isaac Noot*, Apr. 19, 1865 (*JR*, VI, No. 5, p. 2, Apr. 21, 1865). June 1, 1865 (*JR*, VI, No. 12, p. 2, June 9, 1865).
(6) *Morris J. Raphall*, Apr. 19, 1865, prayer not given in Hertz' text (*JR*, VI, No. 5, p. 3, Apr. 21, 1865). June 1, 1865 (*JR*, VI, No. 2, p. 1, June 9, 1865; *Mess.*, XVII, No. 22, p. 181, June 9, 1865).
(7) *Leon Sternberger*, Apr. 19, 1865 (*JR*, VI, No. 5, pp. 2–3, Apr. 21, 1865).

These sermons were reported in part or entirety, but the periodicals recorded dozens more in brief summaries or passing mention. There was probably no synagogue in the entire North which did not conduct services, and no rabbi or cantor who did not deliver a sermon on Lincoln's death.

The *Record* was the only periodical which attempted to publish the complete texts, or at least summaries, of all the memorial sermons which were preached in a single city—New York in this case. It also printed reports from Philadelphia and other cities. The *Messenger*, *Israelite*, and *Occident* complained that they had not the space to print everything sent to them, but the *Occident* suggested that a special volume be published in memory of Lincoln by some Jewish organization, preserving all of the sermons. *Isr.*, XI, No. 45, p. 357, May 5, 1865; No. 46, p. 365, May 12; *Mess.*, XVII, No. 18, p. 148, May 12; *Occ.*, XXIII, No. 6, p. 286, Sept.

An interesting problem was posed for Jews by President Johnson's designation of June 1 as the National Day of Mourning for Lincoln, because that was the second day of the Shavuot Festival. It had previously been set for May 25, but when it was discovered that that date was a minor Christian holy day, it was postponed. The Jews felt aggrieved that their festival was ignored (*Mess.*, XVII, No. 17, pp. 139–41, May 5, 1865; *JR*, VI, No. 7, p. 2, June 5, 1865). Most of the Orthodox and Conservative rabbis alluded to the fact that Jewish tradition prohibits mourning or sorrow on a feast-day, and said, therefore, that they were reluctant to mention Lincoln's assassination.

Judaism was rarely taken into consideration in matters of state. Lincoln's reference to Christianity, it will be remembered, in his first Inaugural, was attacked by Wise. Another such instance was a message which he addressed to the armed forces, commending the observance of Sunday rest and worship (Sandburg, *op. cit.*, III, p. 374, with evidence that the order was written by Stanton). The *Messenger* asked that equal opportunity be given to Jews to observe their Sabbath:

> . . . We trust measures will be taken to afford Jewish soldiers immunity from guard duty on their Sabbath, and to exempt them on that day from all labor that is not strictly necessary. Arrangements could readily be made to exclude them from the provisions of the "Sunday" order, so that for six days in the week they should discharge the duties of soldiers, and be permitted to rest on their Sabbath. If the President should deem the Jewish soldiers—inasmuch as they have no distinctive regimental organization—too insignificant to consider their claims in a "general order," it might at least be made the subject of a recommendation to commanding officers, so that soldiers of whatever religious faith may be treated on an equal footing . . . (*Mess.*, XII, No. 20, p. 157, Nov. 21, 1862)

B. Behrend of Narrowsburg, N. Y., wrote to Lincoln along similar lines and sent a copy of his letter to Leeser. See also *JR*, I, No. 6, p. 2, Oct. 15, 1862, for an editorial condemning McClellan's message to his army on the Emancipation Proclamation for its references to Christianity.

79. Hertz, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
80. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
81. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 160.
84. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
85. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
86. *Ibid.*, p. 135.
87. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
88. *Ibid.*, p. 154.
89. *Ibid.*, pp. 96–7.
90. *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10.
91. *Ibid.*, pp. 111–12.
92. *JR*, VI, No. 5, p. 3, Apr. 21, 1865.
93. Hertz, *op. cit.*, pp. 161–2.
94. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
95. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 162.
97. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
98. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
99. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
100. *Ibid.*, pp. 117–8.
101. *Ibid.*, p. 139.
102. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
103. Markens, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
104. M. H. Newmark, *Sixty Years in California, 1853–1913, Containing the Reminiscences of Harris Newmark*, pp. 338–9.
105. Markens, *op. cit.*, p. 147.
106. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
107. Clippings from unidentified Pittsburgh papers in Judge Cohen's Scrapbook.
108. Markens, *op. cit.*, pp. 132–3.
109. *Ibid.*, p. 128.
110. *JR*, IV, No. 5, p. 2, Apr. 28, 1865.
111. *Occ.*, XXIII, No. 4, pp. 172–4, July 1865. The original of this letter is not among the papers of the Leeser Collection, so the author cannot be identified with any positive assurance. A letter to Leeser, however, from one David Haas (or Maas) of Trenton, dated May 27, 1865, referring to the attitude of some Northern Jews towards the South, may be a clue to the identity of the author of the letter which Leeser published. The pertinent passage of the Trenton letter is as follows:

> Your favor of yesterday is at hand and I am happy to find that our sentiments on the subject referred to in mine of a previous date are generally in accordance.—I supposed that I would be too late for the next month's Occident with the communication I took the liberty of sending you, but it will do as well for the next month, and perhaps as you

say it will be better at that time when the furor which seems to have maddened some of our people will have passed over.—The intolerance betrayed by many persons, in whom a better state of feeling might have been expected, during the recent sectional struggle is most extraordinary, and very inconsistent in such of them as profess Judaism, and have suffered so much from the intolerance of others. The only excuse for them is, that they were afflicted with a species of insanity which deprived them momentarily of their reason. The fit will pass over, and they will be astonished at their own folly.—

112. *Occ.*, XXIII, No. 44, pp. 162–3, July 1865.

113. Paul M. Angle, "The Building of the Lincoln Monument," in Lincoln Centennial Association Papers, p. 29.

114. H. E. Snyder, *A Brief History of the Jews in Springfield, III., and of Temple B'rith Sholom; Isr.*, XI, No. 50, p. 397, June 9, 1865.

115. *Isr.*, XII, No. 1, p. 5, July 7, 1865.

116. From duplicate receipts in the Illinois State Historical Library, numbered as follows: 13½, 113, 246, 371, 465, 555, 667, 962, 1042, 3571, 4644, 4808. This data was secured through the good offices and diligence of Mr. Morton A. Barker of Springfield, Ill.

117. Copy of his letter in Morais Collection.

118. Hertz, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

119. *Mess.*, XVII, No. 19, p. 155, May 19, 1865; No. 21, June 2.

APPENDIX B

1. Robert Todd Lincoln Collection of Lincoln Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Paul M. Angle (ed.), *New Letters and Papers of Lincoln*, p. 164.

4. Robert Todd Lincoln Collection, *op. cit.*

5. Lincoln Collection, Illinois State Historical Library.

6. Robert Todd Lincoln Collection, *op. cit.*

7. *Ibid.*

8. Lincoln Collection, Illinois State Historical Library (which also possesses a copy of the book, inscribed, "To Hon. Abraham Jonas/with respects of/ A. Lincoln").

9. Robert Todd Lincoln Collection, *op. cit.*

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.*

APPENDIX C

1. All of these letters are taken from manuscript originals in the Robert Todd Lincoln Collection of Lincoln Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, with two exceptions noted.

2. Nicolay Papers, the Library of Congress, from photostat in Collection of the Abraham Lincoln Association.

3. Paul Angle (ed.), *New Letters and Papers of Lincoln*, p. 368.